

North Atlantic Ministerial Session — Paris, May 1956

THE North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial session in Paris on May 4 and 5. The agenda was confined to a review of the non-military aspects of the work of the Alliance and the delegates were the Foreign Ministers of each NATO country together with their Permanent Representatives on the Council. Canada was represented by Mr. L. B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs and Mr. L. D. Wilgress, Canadian Permanent Representative to NATO.

Discussion at the meeting reflected a general realization among all the members of NATO of the threat posed to the solidarity of the Alliance by the new Soviet tactics of "peaceful co-existence". The Ministers recognized that the collective defence efforts of the Alliance, which had successfully deterred Soviet aggression, still had to be maintained in the light of what is known of Soviet military capabilities, and in the absence of progress in the settlement of outstanding problems, including the reunification of Germany in freedom and progress towards disarmament under an effective control system. However, it was also agreed that the Atlantic powers needed to examine what new measures they could take to strengthen their unity and render more effective the co-operation of the Alliance in the non-military field.

Special Committee Appointed

After reviewing the international situation and in particular the recent changes in Soviet tactics and their implications for the Alliance, the Council decided to appoint a special Committee "to advise the Council on ways and means to improve and extend NATO co-operation in non-military fields and to develop greater unity within the Atlantic community". Mr. Pearson, Mr. H. Lange, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, and Mr. G. Martino, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy were asked to serve on the Committee.

In commenting on the meeting in reply to questions put to him by *Le Monde* of Paris, Mr. Pearson said:

The Ministerial meeting just concluded could result in the strengthening of the solidarity of the Atlantic community, provided all the member governments are really prepared to make the necessary effort. As you know, a committee of three Ministers has been entrusted with the heavy responsibility of examining how the Atlantic community could best organize itself to advance the non-military objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty. Some proposals have already been made in this direction and I would hope that every government will now set about giving urgent attention to the various ways in which the solidarity of our Alliance could be strengthened, especially through improved methods of consultation. In so far as this task is approached by all the members with imagination and sincerity and in no spirit of complacency, I believe that this meeting could mark the beginning of a new advance towards the building up of the Atlantic community.