

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Report of the Paris Meeting, April 23-26

Text of the radio broadcast by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, over the CBC, May 3, 1953.

I am glad to have this opportunity to report briefly to you on the last session of the North Atlantic Council which began in Paris on April 23 and concluded on April 26, and at which, with my colleagues, Mr. Abbott and Mr. Claxton, I had the honour to represent Canada.

The meeting was not spectacular. The value of NATO however, cannot be measured by the achievements of three days, but only by comparing our present strength and solidarity, after four short years of collective effort, with our position of defensive weakness and strategic disunity in 1949 when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed.

If the meeting was not spectacular, neither was it controversial. The fourteen nations making up this coalition for peace, deeply conscious of the high stakes involved in their joint effort, sought to reach, and did reach, agreement on the matters discussed. The excellent preparatory work done in Paris by the Permanent Council and the international staff under Lord Ismay made such agreement much easier to achieve.

It was a useful and constructive meeting. During it the Council dealt with practical problems and decided on further measures for strengthening and improving our collective defence.

It was, furthermore, a timely meeting because it was of the utmost value for the Ministers representing 14 governments to be able to exchange views just now when the signs and portents, the signals and smoke screens, on the international horizon are perhaps more difficult to interpret than at any other period in NATO's short history.

No previous meeting of the Council has been marked by such sober confidence in the growing capacity of the North Atlantic community to defend itself and preserve the peace. The feeling was strong that if the policies we have already begun are continued with patience and persistence and wisdom we have the right to hope that war can be avoided.