

NATO

use our resources for some long-range projects such as those suggested by Mr. Reid. They refer to the increased development of the underdeveloped part of the world or the "third world", as some call it. We could do this and I suppose some say it would be much better if we did. But it has been suggested by some, and I agree with them, that if we did that sort of thing we would lose a great deal of our influence in the third world. We would very likely come to be regarded as a military province of the United States. Our money would be none too welcome because some might think strings were attached to it—strings going all the way back to Washington. If we offered any troops for peacekeeping purposes they would be regarded with suspicion. If we were to follow this policy our excellent record in peacekeeping would not be maintained.

Also, Mr. Speaker, most Canadians object to the idea of a free ride. Most Canadians have ethics. I think most Canadians—I did not say all—feel that we ought to carry our weight and that we ought to carry our part of the load in the matter of defence.

Where in the world is a conflict now, or in the immediate future likely to break out between the Soviet Union and the United States? There is the Near East of course; that is a distinct possibility. But the greatest danger is in Europe. The greatest danger spot is Germany. This is where vital spheres of influence of the United States and the Soviet Union overlap. Here is the place where in future as in the past we must contribute to peacekeeping operations. There is no doubt in the world that that is the most important peacekeeping operation. NATO, Mr. Speaker, is the world's most important peacekeeping operation today. I think it is generally agreed that NATO for the past 20 years has kept the peace by preventing Soviet expansion. But is this now necessary? Even the Prime Minister says yes by implication.

From 1963 to 1968 nearly everyone thought the Soviet Union had given up force as a means of obtaining her political objectives. However, Czechoslovakia proved them wrong. The motives of the Soviet Union are different from our motives. I referred to this before. We must not make the mistake of thinking that their motives are the same as ours. At present the Soviet Union is greatly increasing her conventional military capability. It is my understanding that at present the Soviet Union has nearly three times the number of

tanks that NATO has in central Europe, as well as larger numbers of aircraft and considerably greater numbers of men. If the military principle of having a ratio in forces of two and a half to one is followed, it is clear that the Soviet forces are equipped not for defence. If they are not equipped for defence what is their purpose, particularly if they consist of large conventional forces equipped with increasing numbers of conventional weapons?

We are not told that existing NATO forces are capable of holding a Soviet thrust in Germany or Denmark. It is generally thought that neither side wants to start a nuclear war. It is hoped at the present that if the Soviet Union starts some misguided military adventure, Soviet forces can be held up until negotiations start. Of course, we know that the danger areas are Berlin or the Baltic.

It appears that President Nixon is not making a determined effort to settle political problems in Europe with the Soviet Union. If this works it is thought that troops can be reduced on both sides. But until this is done NATO forces must be kept at least at present levels. All NATO countries, and also Sweden, think NATO should continue. Bearing that in mind we must ask, is Canada's continued presence in NATO the best way or a good way even of carrying out our objective of doing what we can to prevent a war between the Soviet Union and the United States? First of all, it is futile to stay in NATO without supplying troops to NATO. It is like the old rhyme:

Mother, may I go out to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter.
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But don't go near the water.

I do not think anyone will pay much attention to us unless we supply troops to NATO. Conversely, if we do not supply troops we will not wield much influence. Who pays attention to those giving gratuitous advice? Who will pay attention to us if we will not put our money where our mouth is? If we want to exert much influence in NATO we must at least keep up our present troop strength. After all, our NATO forces constitute only 10 per cent of our total armed strength. We are said to have about 100,000 men in our armed forces. Only Denmark spends a smaller percentage of her gross national product on defence than does Canada. She spends 2.6 per cent and we spend 2.7 per cent of our G.N.P. on defence.

[Mr. Nesbitt.]