

NATO

optimistic interpretation and that the statement could also mean that there could be a reduction of our troops in Europe but not a complete withdrawal. According to my colleague who sits behind me and to my left, it means that Canadian forces will definitely be left in Europe but, as I say, I hope the reduction will lead to a complete withdrawal.

As a member of the External Affairs Committee I participated in the complete study of the NATO question, including the two months' study in Canada and the two weeks' study in Europe. In reply to some of the criticism that was levelled against that committee I wish to say that I feel the study the committee made in Europe was extremely valuable. If the Canadian government is going to spend millions of dollars in Europe through defence and external affairs, it is important that the elected representatives of the Canadian people find out how this money is being spent and why.

As a result of our studies I came to the conclusion that we should remain a member of the NATO alliance and that there should be a withdrawal of our troops from Europe. I would like to discuss both of these propositions. The Prime Minister said that our foreign policy should come first and that our military policy should follow our foreign policy objectives. I fully agree. I feel that our foreign policy objectives should be peace between nations, justice between nations, and security for nations from aggression, intervention and domination, and I believe that in pursuing those objectives we should remain in the NATO alliance.

At present in Europe there is a situation that is potentially dangerous for world peace. There is much at stake in Europe which contains the two most completely devastating armed camps in the world, the Warsaw Pact nations and the NATO troops. It is in Europe that a minor incident could easily escalate into a major war quicker than in any other place in the world.

If the confrontation is between the Warsaw Pact and NATO then Canada should be sitting at the council table within NATO to make sure that the policies of NATO are those of détente and disarmament vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact, rather than of war. Our policy within NATO should be one leading toward détente, as the Harmel report has said and as NATO itself has said on several occasions. It should be a policy of trying to bring about disarmament and limitation of arms with the Warsaw Pact countries. I

[Mr. Allmand.]

would hope that Canada, within NATO, will continue to pursue that policy, especially now following the Czechoslovakian incident which some members of NATO seem to interpret as an opportunity for increasing our armaments in Europe. I would be opposed to that. I would hope we would not use it as an opportunity to escalate the arms race in Europe but would keep cool and try to still bring about some disarmament and some détente.

● (4:30 p.m.)

If our policy within NATO is one of détente, then I think our military role in NATO must follow our political role. Therefore I would think the only policy for Canada in NATO consistent with a policy of détente is to withdraw our troops from Europe and earmark for NATO troops that will be stationed in Canada.

I should like to discuss the reasons for that policy. Some members who have spoken in this debate, one of whom was the Leader of the Opposition, have said they would like someone in this house to prove it is better for our security to have troops in Canada than to have troops in Europe. Well, if by withdrawing our troops from Europe we bring about a situation of détente, then that in my opinion would be protecting our security. I believe it is in the interests of our security to try to reduce the confrontation in Europe and try to bring about a détente. Therefore I think it is much more in the interests of our security to have our troops here in Canada than in Europe. I do not think it is a natural situation in peacetime for the troops of a country situated across an ocean to be placed in a country in Europe and strung along a so-called front, what would almost appear to be a wartime front.

I also feel that we in Canada with our limited resources are trying to play too many roles. We are not a large country. We are a country of approximately 20 million people. Yet, we find our forces in five areas of the world. We find them within Canada playing a possible defence role. We have troops stationed here for several purposes. We play a military role in the Atlantic and we play a military role in the Pacific with the Pacific arm of our navy. We are playing a peace-keeping role in the United Nations and we have troops in Europe. I have not mentioned the fact that we also have an Arctic Ocean frontier.