

GOVERNMENT  
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# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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No. 51/34 THE OTTAWA MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

A statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, broadcast over the Trans-Canada network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, September 21, 1951.

The North Atlantic Council has finished its Ottawa work and the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings has returned to its between-session peace and calm. Tourists can again wander around without security passes, and the delegates and advisers of the eleven visiting governments are on their way home.

So much has been said already about this meeting that I am wondering what I can usefully add. It was a good meeting and its results were all that we could have expected. There was one very important concrete decision taken, but many other steps were taken, the importance of which will not become apparent for some time. After all, these Council meetings are now as regular and normal as sessions of Parliament, and we should not expect dramatic, headline decisions every time we gather together. So though this session may not have been a spectacular one it was a valuable one in the best tradition of international democracy and much good work was done.

During these five days we looked at the world through bifocal lenses. For most of the time we have been examining the urgent defence problems near at hand. They are, of course, and must be, our first concern for if we don't solve them we may not have any peaceful, more distant plans to worry about. However, during part of our session we ventured to look also at the remoter future, with all its hopes and possibilities; and we considered what steps could be taken to make that a better future by furthering the development of the North Atlantic community in a way which would promote the welfare of all its peoples.

The North Atlantic Organization has already had great success since the Treaty was signed more than two years ago. During that time we have learned that if the aggressive forces of Communist imperialism are to be held in check, our collective defences in the North Atlantic area must be strong. If the Communists now attack this growing strength as provocative, they do so merely to deceive and divide us, because our strength and unity is their greatest fear. We know that to Soviet Russia, whatever its propagandists may say, not our strength, but our weakness, is the greatest provocation.