

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 65/7

CANADA AND THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

An Address by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the
Cleveland Council on World Affairs, Cleveland,
Ohio, U.S.A., on March 4, 1965.

It is now some 16 years since the Atlantic Alliance came into being. It was formed in response to a specific challenge. The nature of that challenge may have altered. Its impact has certainly been blunted. But I do not think there is anyone who would argue that the challenge as such has disappeared. I take it, therefore, as the starting point of my remarks this evening, that the unity and integrity of the Alliance is something in which all of us continue to have a vital stake.

This is not a plea for immobility. Over the past decade and a half, there have been significant changes in the world environment in which the Alliance is operating. There have also been significant changes in the balance of strength within the Alliance itself. It is only natural that, if the Alliance is to continue as a dynamic partnership, the implications of some of these changes should find reflection in its arrangements. It is within those parameters that I see the current debate on the future of the Alliance.

The Canadian attitude to the Alliance has been shaped, as might be expected, by elements in our history and our experience as a nation. Twice in the past half century, Canadians have fought on European soil in the defence of our common freedom. I think it is fair to say that out of that experience Canada's international personality was born and our recognition that we had a continuing part to play in the world beyond our borders. We participated with the United States in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe. And when that continent was once again being threatened -- this time by Communist power -- we were among the founder members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The Atlantic world provides a natural frame of reference for Canada. While much of Canada's national life is influenced by contact and interchange with our powerful neighbour to the south, historic ties take us back across the Atlantic to Britain and France, our two founding nations. In this our historical evolution has been somewhat different from yours. For we have never wished to turn our backs on Europe and the realities of Canadian life have continued to this day to reflect our dual national heritage.