

joining that coalition, we have accepted certain formal commitments that would have been unthinkable fifteen years ago. They would have been equally, or even more unthinkable for some of the other members, notably the United States. The change is, I think, one measure of our growing maturity of outlook and of our recognition of the essential interdependence of all free peoples. We have learned, in Canada, from harsh experience in two wars, that the absence of a prior and formal commitment does not mean isolation from conflict; that, on the contrary, it is more likely to mean unprepared involvement, long months of getting ready after the fighting has begun, while a thin line tries to hold. Next time there may be no time and we cannot rely any longer on a thin line.

That is why the Atlantic democracies, in contrast to 1939, now seek strength and union before trouble begins in the hope that by doing so they can prevent it. Today NATO, which embodies that unity and is gathering that strength, is our greatest deterrent against aggression and, therefore, until the United Nations is permitted to operate as it was designed to operate, our best hope for peace. That is its only purpose and that is why it is consistent with and is complementary to the United Nations, on the Charter of which it is firmly based.

If, therefore, today the people of Canada are agreed, as they are agreed, to consider an attack on Norway or on Turkey as an attack on their own country, and are willing to accept commitments, political and military, to go to the help of the victim of that attack, it is solely because they hope by these pledges and the strength and resolve that lies behind them to make any such attack unlikely; or if it comes, unsuccessful. This surely is a better peace-policy for a state, than by isolation and weakness to encourage the aggressor to think he can pick off his victims one by one. The greatest provocation to Soviet Communist aggression today is not strength but weakness. We are removing that provocation.

In NATO, Canada is a member of an international team. It is not easy to work out by agreement the part that each member shall play on that team; the exact contribution that each shall make to the defence of all. In the NATO organization we discuss these matters continually and frankly, with the frankness of friends. The problem is not only one of increasing our strength but also of sharing the burden. The decision ultimately on what can and should be done must, of course, rest with the separate governments. NATO is not superstate. But in making its own decision each government is in honour bound to give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the NATO agencies.

I can explain how this is done by describing what is going on at this moment. At the Ottawa meeting of the NATO Council in September last, we looked at the military plans and requirements drawn up by the Military Committee on which all the members are represented. It was felt then that these plans should be carefully reviewed by a group of highly competent political personages; that they should also analyze the capabilities, political and economic, of the separate countries and make recommendations as to what each might do to ensure the fulfillment of the plan by a given date. Because we are a 12-nation Council, all 12 governments were represented on this Committee. But because we knew that