

There are, of course, other theatres of possible trouble throughout the world in which Canada is allied with the United States and other countries for the defence of freedom. And it is important that the increased attention that must now be paid to the defence of North America should not have the result of distracting us from these other areas of the world which may prove equally important to the security of us both. So far it has been possible for us in Canada to shoulder our heavier responsibilities for continental defence without reducing the commitments we have made under the North Atlantic Treaty for the defence of Western Europe. At the present time we have stationed in Western Europe a division of jet fighters of the Royal Canadian Air Force and a brigade group of the Canadian Army. By sending them to Europe and by sending them on time we have fulfilled to the letter the commitments we made more than two years ago in the North Atlantic Council. It may be that, with the development of new weapons, some readjustment of the military dispositions and of the strategic planning of all the countries in the North Atlantic Alliance may become possible. We in Canada are convinced, however, that it would be a mistake of the gravest kind ever to permit changes to be made in our dispositions which would lead countries of Western Europe to the belief that they were being abandoned. Apart from the solemn obligations which bind us to our friends there, the strategic importance of Western Europe to North America and to the whole free world is so great that it must not be allowed to fall into enemy hands. And the power and the willingness of those countries to help effectively in their own defence would be fatally undermined if they came to believe that we North Americans were flirting with the idea of withdrawing from Europe. If we show by our decisions that we believe that Europe can and will be defended, our European allies will be much more able to play the crucial and difficult part that has been assigned to them in the North Atlantic Alliance.

What Canada has been able to do in helping to build up an effective deterrent force in Western Europe has been made easier because of our close historical ties with countries in that part of the world. The two main racial strains in our population are Anglo-Saxon and French. And, notwithstanding our complete independence, we have maintained relations of exceptional closeness both with the United Kingdom and with France. London and Paris remain capitals of special significance to Canadians.

Our interest in Asia and our concern for Asian affairs have been of more recent growth. Indeed, it is not many years ago that the countries of Asia seemed to most Canadians to be vague and shadowy areas of no great relevance to our country's fate and fortunes. All that has now greatly changed. And the rapidity of the change is in marked contrast to the deep roots of your American interest in the Far East. After the Revolution when the portcullis of the English mercantile system was rung down against American trade, the merchants of Gloucester and Salem and Boston found new outlets for their commerce in Far Eastern ports which lay outside European control. The voyages which their ships made in great parabolas to Canton and Calcutta meant that from a very early date Americans living on the eastern seaboard, as well as Americans on this coast, felt that their interests were affected by events in Asia. It is true that our Canadian ports on the Pacific have for many years conducted a vigorous trade with Asia. But there has been no comparable tradition