

to reconcile two main objectives.

The first of these was to emphasize — in a measured and practical manner — our condemnation of Soviet action in Czechoslovakia.

The second was to co-operate with our allies in producing a response to this action which was designed to influence in a constructive way the thinking of Soviet leaders — to encourage them to resume the dialogue with the West rather than resort to the use of force in seeking solutions to problems.

*The Minister of National Defence also made an opening statement to the Standing Committee, in which he said :*

1. First, I should like to express my thanks to the Committee for inviting me to appear here today, and to say how pleased I am to have an opportunity to discuss with you the aftermath of the grave events of last August, and to go over with you in particular the meeting in Brussels attended by my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and myself.

2. Before going into the defence aspects of the NATO ministerial meeting, you might find it helpful if I were to recall to your attention a little of the background and past history of Canada's defence involvement in NATO. In spite of our somewhat isolated geography, Canada has been involved during this century in two world wars and in several smaller ones. This experience has led to the acceptance by Canadians of two basic defence principles. First, that peace and prosperity for Canada depends on peace in the world and that Canadians have a responsibility to promote and preserve peace in the world; and, second, that the only sensible approach for Canada in the pursuit of peace is to work collectively with like-minded nations.

3. We applied these principles to Europe during the precarious decade following the Second World War. The prospects for continued peace were uncertain, and our European friends were in military and economic disarray. In the early years of NATO Canada responded, on the military side, to the pressing needs of co-operative defence by providing, under Mutual Aid, *matériel* sufficient to equip two and a half army divisions; we trained over 5,000 pilots; we provided over 1,000 aircraft and 25 naval ships. Forces were assigned or earmarked in all three environments: naval forces for service in the North Atlantic, a Brigade Group in Germany backed up by the balance of a division in Canada, and an Air Division in Central Europe.

4. As our allies have grown in strength and self-assurance under the climate of confidence made possible by the alliance, we have been able, in consultation with them, to reduce our share of the European defence burden, both as a proportion of the total effort and in absolute terms. Although our force commitments are now less than they were initially, this has been compensated to a significant degree by extensive improvements in weapons and equipment. The Canadian forces now based in Europe constitute a relatively small but militarily significant and identifiably Canadian contribution to alliance defence.