

## **North Atlantic Council Ministerial Session, Paris, December 1953**

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THE North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial session in Paris from December 14 to 16, inclusive. M. Bidault, the French Foreign Minister, was Chairman. Canada was represented by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Brooke Claxton, and the Permanent Representative of Canada to the North Atlantic Council, Mr. L. D. Wilgress. They were accompanied by officials of the Departments of External Affairs, National Defence, Finance and Defence Production.

The text of the Communiqué issued at the end of the session is annexed below.

The last time the Ministers attended meetings of the Council had been in April of last year. The Ministerial session in December was, therefore, timely in a number of ways. It offered a good opportunity to review NATO policy in the light of the developments in Soviet policy in the past nine months. The imminence of the proposed Four-Power meeting in Berlin lent added importance to this review since the subjects of discussion in Berlin would inevitably involve the collective security of all the NATO countries. Moreover, as the Three-Power meeting in Bermuda had immediately preceded the Ministerial session of the Council, it was possible for the Council to take the Bermuda discussions into account in making its own review.

### **Exchange of Views on the International Situation**

The Ministers continued at this session their past practice of exchanging political views on current questions of common interest, and developed this practice further by having an informal discussion in restricted session, attended only by the Ministers themselves, the Permanent Representatives and one adviser to each Delegation. These off-the-record discussions, in which the participants spoke their minds freely, made a worthwhile contribution to the cause of better understanding between member countries.

There were two main conclusions. The first was that, regardless of any changes that may have taken place in Soviet tactics, there was as yet no evidence that the objectives of the Soviet Government did not remain basically hostile to the free world. Therefore, given the facts of Soviet military power, it had to be assumed that the present threat to the free world would continue for a long time to come. The second conclusion was that the policy of the NATO countries in these circumstances must be to pursue the twin aims of building the defensive and economic strength and political unity of the Atlantic community, while at the same time seeking to negotiate on outstanding differences wherever possible (as, for example, at the proposed meeting in Berlin). The Council was convinced that the Atlantic alliance had already been instrumental in preserving peace but that the defensive forces must be further reinforced if they were to provide an effective long-term deterrent against aggression. In this connection, the vital importance was stressed of completing the arrangements for European unity and collective security, including the institution of the European Defence Community, which would make possible