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CANADA AND THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

An address by Mr. A.D.P. Heeney, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, delivered to the Canadian Club of Montreal, on March 19, 1951.

The establishment of the North Atlantic Alliance, just two years ago, was, I believe, the most important diplomatic event since the end of the war. The rapid building up of the strength of that Alliance offers the most solid ground for hope that a third world war can be prevented. And, if Soviet aggression cannot be deterred, this combination of Atlantic nations affords the only firm basis for the successful defence of the free world.

It is, perhaps, particularly appropriate that one should speak of the Atlantic community to a Montreal audience. Montreal is Canada's most cosmopolitan city. Its roots of race and culture lie deep in the soil of the countries who make up the Alliance. The main Atlantic gateway to Canada, Montreal conducts by far the greater part of its multifarious external affairs in the vast ocean area covered by this North Atlantic Treaty. Atlantic trade, in one way or another, probably contributes more to the Montrealer's dollar than to that of the citizens of any other centre of Canadian commerce. In a cultural and in a business way, Montrealers should need no reminding that, in a special sense, they belong to the "community" of the North Atlantic.

Because of Communist imperialism this Atlantic community and the things for which this community stands are now in grave jeopardy. To meet this threat to their survival the Atlantic nations have forged the North Atlantic Alliance. In the consequences of that pact Canada is inextricably involved.

For all its importance to all Canadians, there is as yet I think no general appreciation in this country of the extent to which our future - as a nation and as individuals - is bound up with the success or failure of this new association of the West - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - "NATO" as we call it. More than upon any other single factor the peace of the world, for many years, is likely to depend upon our capacity and willingness in these twelve North Atlantic countries to make our Alliance work. If it is to work, it will require not only the efforts of our political and military leaders; it will need, as well, the steady, intelligent and spirited support of public opinion in all the Atlantic countries.

If war, as Clemenceau said, is too serious a business to be left to soldiers, peace and security, by the same token, is far too serious to be left to politicians and diplomats.