

NATO

First, I say that the time has come for a complete withdrawal of Canadian troops from Europe. It should be remembered that when Canada signed the NATO agreement in 1949 that did not impose any obligation on us whatsoever to maintain armed forces in Europe. As a matter of fact, not until the Korean War broke out in 1950 was the question of sending Canadian troops to Europe raised. Although we had signed the NATO agreement, our defence expenditures in 1950 were still in the neighbourhood of \$300 million. They have now risen to about \$1,800 million.

When Canadian forces were sent to Europe they were sent there to meet an emergency situation. No government spokesman suggested at that time that what was being done constituted a permanent obligation on the part of Canada to continue maintaining armed forces in Europe. There was a good argument for sending Canadian troops to Europe in 1950 and 1951. They were sent there to strengthen NATO ground forces, and their presence lent military support to NATO. That situation has altered radically in the last 20 years. I submit that what made sense in 1949 does not necessarily make sense today. In 1949 there was a great, monolithic Communist empire stretching throughout a great part of the world. Today that Communist monolith has been fragmented. There is a split between the Soviet Union and Mainland China. Eastern European satellites are no longer as responsive to Kremlin orders as they were at one time. Yugoslavia has broken away; Rumania and Czechoslovakia have been seeking closer ties with the west. There is greater demand on the part of eastern European countries for a détente than there was 20 years ago.

Some argue that the action of the Soviet Union last August shows that there is still a great threat of Communist aggression. I think the invasion of Czechoslovakia was not a sign of Russian strength but of Russian weakness. The fact that the Russians had to display their hand and the fact that they had to keep their satellite in line by the use of force indicates that this great structure of World Communism is no longer as united or monolithic as it once was.

It should also be remembered that western Europe is no longer prostrate and defenceless as it was 20 years ago. I visited Germany in 1945, in 1948 and again in 1951. I flew there with a group of parliamentarians. As a matter of fact, I visited Berlin during the blockade

and the R.A.F. flew us in. Without doubt Germany at that time was open to any aggressor and there was a need to strengthen NATO forces in Europe. That concept made good sense and we supported it. Today West Germany is the third most powerful military nation in the world. As the Prime Minister himself admitted, the populations of the NATO countries in Europe number some 300 million people with an annual gross product of \$500 billion. It is therefore farcical to say that one Canadian brigade and six Canadian fighter squadrons are essential for the safety of western Europe.

The fact that France, which has been invaded three times in the last 100 years, has withdrawn its troops from NATO command shows that the situation in Europe is not what it was 20 years ago. Canada is neither a European nation nor a great power. I feel that we are going along with NATO because of our ingrained habit of tagging along behind the United States or Great Britain, or both. We have developed this habit of paying our dues so that we can belong to the NATO club. I suggest these are expensive dues and the money could be used in more meaningful ways to promote peace and security throughout the world.

It should be remembered that conventional forces are far less important now than they were when NATO was formed. Nuclear missiles have now produced what Sir Winston Churchill called the balance of terror. The two great superpowers have the ultimate weapons of destruction. These will largely be the deciding factor in determining the future of mankind. In this nuclear confrontation the United States, as the leader of the western powers, has an advantage in strategic weapons of four to one and in tactical nuclear weapons of seven to one.

● (4:20 p.m.)

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that every argument that has been put forward by the Prime Minister for a phased and planned reduction of our forces in Europe argues logically and rationally for a withdrawal of our forces from Europe. The Prime Minister himself has stated that we do not have a military but a political role. If we have no military role and mainly a political role, why then should we continue to maintain a force in Europe which is no longer required under the present circumstances? The money to support such a force might better be used in other fields of international affairs.