



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO

Statements issued on April 4, 1954, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, by the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent; the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson; the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Brooke Claxton; and the Canadian Permanent Representative on the North Atlantic Council, Mr. L.D. Wilgress.

Statement by the Prime Minister

April 4 marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. It is an anniversary of special importance to Canada because NATO was, and is, one of the foundation stones of our Canadian foreign policy. We believe now, as we did when the Treaty was signed, that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization offers one of the best means for the effective defence of our freedom and for developing habits of peaceful co-operation that will bind the Atlantic community closer together.

It was in response to a real and immediate threat to world peace that NATO was created just five years ago today. Since then the Organization has made remarkable progress in building up unity and strength. It has established permanent machinery to provide continuous consultation between member governments. It has brought into being in Europe an integrated defence force under a Supreme Commander and this force is now twice as large and more than twice as effective as it was in 1951.

Member countries have committed themselves to specified contributions of forces and their defence plans are submitted to an annual review by the Organization as a whole.

This pooling of defensive resources is unprecedented in peacetime. We can be proud of the real progress demonstrated by this co-operative achievement. We can also be thankful, for, to NATO, is due in large measure the advance the free world has made from the fear and instability of five years ago.

Because of the very real peril which existed when NATO was first formed in 1949, the efforts of member nations have had to be concentrated on the building up of our defensive forces. While we shall continue to maintain and strengthen these defensive forces, I think it is accurate to say that we now have reached a stage in the development of NATO where increasing attention can be applied to the non-military side of the Organization which was designed not