

*North Atlantic Treaty*

We would not be facing reality in our discussions if we did not admit with complete frankness what the threat is that we are preparing to meet. It is obviously a direct attack upon the free nations of western Europe which presents the most immediate threat. Only by keeping in our minds what the situation is there today can we appreciate the sense of imminent danger in which the democracies carry on their daily activities.

The heavy armour of the largest land forces in the world is massed along a line which is only a little more than twenty miles from the North Sea port of Hamburg, only one hundred and thirty miles from Holland, only one hundred and fifty-five miles from Belgium, and one hundred and thirty-five miles from France. The soviet armies are only a short march from the North sea, the English channel, and the Atlantic seaboard.

It was in the face of that ominous reality that the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg met in Brussels a year ago this month and signed a fifty-year treaty which bound them together in a military and political alliance for collective defence. Last July the nations which met at Brussels were joined by the United States and Canada in discussions which have since been expanded to embrace the North Atlantic pact which is now before us in draft form for consideration. Since then other nations have been asked to join and others will be.

I think it is worth pointing out, such is the rapid movement of events, that what we are now doing follows very closely the proposals of Mr. Winston Churchill made three years ago this month at Fulton. Hon. members of the house will recall how at that time many people who have no sympathy for communism were extremely critical of the practical suggestions which he put forward in that speech.

Since that time the inexorable march of history has convinced most of those who were critical at that time; and once again events have proved the clarity of his vision, and the wisdom of his judgment. As we examine the situation with which we are confronted today, and as we realise that other nations have been asked and other nations will be asked to join in signing this pact, there are considerations which should be in the minds of those who will be discussing in Washington next week, not so much the terms of the pact, but the way in which its terms can be carried into effect.

I have mentioned the imminent threat of those armed forces which are poised so close to the frontiers of Holland, Belgium and France. A number of hon.

[Mr. Drew.]

members have flown across that line on the way to or from Berlin, as I have; and they saw, as I did, the massing of armour along that line in a way which gave anything but the suggestion of a promise of peace. But as we examine the possibilities of preserving peace, and as we think of those flat plains of western Europe, it would be well to bear in mind that there is a great natural defence line running across the north of Italy, through the south of France and across the north of the Iberian peninsula. The importance of the territory south of that mountain barrier should certainly be borne in mind by those who discuss the steps which will be taken to preserve peace in Europe and elsewhere throughout the world in the months and years ahead.

Those who meet in Washington to discuss the final terms of this pact will be considering, not only the words which give it form, but also the realities to which it relates and the military factors which it embraces.

The basic principle incorporated in this pact, so far as collective defence is concerned, is that an attack on one is an attack on the freedom and integrity of all. The fact that the United States is not only willing to ratify such a pact, but is giving wholehearted leadership in making it a reality, is an event of the greatest historic significance for the whole world.

There is every reason to believe that if it had been certain, as has already been pointed out, in 1914 and again in 1939 that the vast productive power and human energy of the United States would be brought into the struggle against aggression, those wars might never have been started.

The outstanding reality of the pact, therefore, is that the United States now stands ready to throw its enormous productive and military power into the combined efforts to preserve the indivisible freedom of the western world. That in itself undoubtedly offers the greatest hope of peace. But every nation which signs that pact must play its full part and contribute its own thought and action to the strengthening and improvement of collective measures for defence.

For that reason, as we discuss this pact today, it is essential that all of us bear in mind exactly what the pact proposes.

In addition to the undertaking to combine for their joint defence, the signatory nations will also undertake:

1. To strengthen their free institutions, promote conditions of internal stability and encourage economic co-operation.

2. To consult each other if the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of them is threatened.