



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 66/24

A REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH IN THE VITALITY OF NATO

Statement at Brussels on June 7, 1966, opening the Meeting of NATO Ministers, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, as President of the North Atlantic Council.

... The conjunction of recent events was not foreseen when it was decided last December to accept the invitation of the Belgian Government to hold this meeting in Brussels. It is especially appropriate that we are meeting at this turning point in our Atlantic affairs in this city. For it was from Brussels in 1948 that the nations of Western Europe sent forth their historic message of hope and of courage - the first call for common action to meet a common threat. The Governments of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom "resolved to afford assistance to each other, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, in maintaining international peace and security and in resisting any policy of aggression". They further resolved "to associate progressively in the pursuance of these aims with other states inspired by the same ideals and animated by the like determination". The Atlantic Treaty a year later was the direct consequence of this call from Brussels.

It has also been in Brussels that the seeds of the European movement were sown. The institutions of the European Communities centered in this city testify to the success and promise of this movement. We meet, therefore, in an environment which has solid European and Atlantic foundations. Progress at this meeting towards harmonizing our national views and interests - and we must make progress if the alliance is to continue to serve our common good - will enrich the best traditions of this city, of this country and the transatlantic community which NATO represents.

We meet at a critical moment in the history of our alliance. NATO has faced crises before and surmounted them. But our present crisis is of a different order; our problem this time is more internal than external. It arises out of the decision taken by one of the respected members of our alliance to withdraw from the integrated military structure. The other members of the alliance, known colloquially as "The Fourteen", wish to continue to contribute