

I told them that NATO was no such thing; that it was formed only after the United Nations had proved ineffective to guarantee our security against the dangers that threatened us; that strong support for it would remain a firm principle of Canadian foreign and defence policy until the international situation or the United Nations made regional security pacts unnecessary.

I also did my best to convince them that the United States had no intention of attacking the U.S.S.R. or trying to use NATO for that purpose. I pointed out that if the United States were the aggressive, military, imperialist state they claimed it to be, there would be no Canada today, except as an American satellite, and that, as they should know, we were not.

The Soviet leaders also talked a lot about Germany. They stated bluntly that they would not permit that country to be unified unless she withdrew from NATO.

We should not force Germany to remain in NATO, said Khrushchev. I replied that all we asked was the right of a Germany united by free elections to decide what her future course would be.

But there would be no such elections - or no such unification - Khrushchev warned me - until a European security system of the kind proposed by his government had replaced NATO.

Well, that was the kind of frank discussion we had, and I think it was useful - and revealing.

Such a forthright talk, however, did not affect in any way the friendly welcome we received. Our hosts could not have done more for our comfort and entertainment. The warm and generous hospitality for which the Russian people have been noted - and long before the Communist revolution - seemed, and I think was, genuine. It was difficult to doubt the sincerity of the rank and file when they protested their passion for peace. But the people of all nations want peace. Their desire in this regard is only politically important when they can bring it to bear effectively on the policy of their Governments.

For Canada, specifically, those with whom I talked expressed high regard; respected our achievements in war and peace. They are not unaware, I may say, of our strategic location as their neighbours across the Pole. Mr. Khrushchev for instance, averred that if there were ever another world war, Canada would have no geographical immunity from attack. He thought that this should make us all the more anxious to be on good terms with both our neighbours.

I replied that we were well aware of our strategic position, and also of the fact that we could never feel really secure if either of our two neighbours were hostile to us - or to each other.

I made it clear, however, that in coming to Russia to explore the possibilities of understanding in issues on which we differ; or the prospects of trade and increasing contacts, we had no thought in any way of loosening our historic and friendly ties with nations with whom we have been so closely associated as proven friends over the years.