

It fulfilled its obligations brilliantly and I believe it created a strong impression on the delegates from the other member countries. This was due, in the main, to the members of the delegation, but also to the drive and the competence of the leader of the delegation, our colleague, Senator John Aird. The delegates were unanimous in praising the way in which he led their work.

I also share the feelings of gratitude expressed by Senator Aird to Mr. Peter Dobell, director of the Parliamentary Centre for Foreign Affairs and Trade. The help he gave the delegation contributed greatly to its efficiency.

Before dealing with the main themes of the deliberations of the Assembly, I should like to say a few words about the visit the delegation made to West Berlin where we were the guests of the local German authorities.

This short trip of less than two days nevertheless impressed me greatly.

I wonder how many Canadians know that Berlin remains, constitutionally or legally, in the same situation as it was at the time of the allies' victory in 1945, over 23 years ago. Berlin is still under military occupation by the four allied great powers: the United States, Great Britain, France and Russia. It is still divided in four sections where each of these powers maintain its own occupation troops. East Berlin is, of course, the Russian sector. Do people know generally that this is why only airplanes of the countries which have occupation troops there can go to West Berlin? Do people even know that Lufthansa aircraft, for example, cannot land at the West Berlin airport?

The wall, of course, is the main attraction for casual visitors. What strikes us is not mainly that dull wall but what it means to keep it there. When we remember the prospects for an easing of tension which appeared to be bright in the spring of 1968 and which the occupation of Czechoslovakia has so deeply shattered, the wall of shame should have been a warning to us and it must remain one against the illusion of a forthcoming détente. I am not suggesting that we should give up that objective. The pursuit of an easing of tension and the maintenance of a deterrent force are not conflicting objectives. What I am saying is that the maintenance of the wall is evidence that the authorities of the Warsaw Pact, of East Berlin more perhaps than Russia itself, are not ready to take a chance on an ideological confrontation between the East and the West, the essential requirement for a true easing of tension or at least for peaceful

coexistence. This confrontation attempted in Czechoslovakia showed that after 50 years of bolshevism, in spite of scientific and even economic progress, the inborn love of freedom and the desire for liberalization, that broke out in Czechoslovakia and would truly like to reveal themselves in Russia and elsewhere, are the most serious threat to Soviet dictatorship and imperialism.

This brings me naturally to one of the most debated questions in the North Atlantic Assembly, i.e., the invasion or occupation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet military forces.

Was there to be seen in such an event a direct threat to NATO? In the opinion of all, such brutal action should be considered as a defensive reaction rather than as an act of aggression. As I suggested, it could be that East Germany, more than Moscow, wanted to nip in the bud the liberalization program of the Czechoslovak communist party. East Germany is obviously afraid of the comparison that her nationals could establish between their situation and that of their brothers in the Federal Republic. She did not want to be faced with a similar problem along her frontier with Czechoslovakia. Also, as may well be imagined, the Soviets look askance at a similar movement taking form within the party or within the Soviet cultural circles. But the fact remains that the aggression against Czechoslovakia has shown, according to the delegates' views, that Russia will never hesitate to resort to strength to achieve her ends, if she thinks there is no other alternative.

Therefore, those events have drawn closer together the members of the North Atlantic Alliance. Except for Canada who officially refuses to commit herself on account of her re-examination—I was going to say her alleged re-examination—of her defence policy and of her foreign policy, and for France who stays outside the integrated NATO forces, all countries seemed more convinced than ever of the necessity to maintain the alliance, to strengthen and to improve the efficiency of its military strength, by the light of the experience drawn from the events of August 1968.

The second subject of concern for the representatives is the increase of NATO's conventional forces in Europe. It is recognized that the superiority of the NATO forces in relation to the Warsaw Pact is only due to their nuclear striking force, and that the conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact countries are really superior, in number at least, to those of NATO. It is most important to remedy this inferiority which would enable the