

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 51/29 NATIONAL DEFENCE PLANNING

An address by the Minister of National Defence,
Mr. Brooke Claxton, delivered before the Kiwanis
Club of Ottawa, on June 26, 1951.

...I would like to discuss defence planning in terms of men, material and money to meet the objectives which we have set.

It is not a military secret that you cannot use men, materials or money twice. We cannot do everything we want for our defence and the same is true in every country. Defence planning involves deciding on the way to use the resources that are put at the disposition of national defence and the three armed services in the best way we can. Defence planning is always a question of calculating risks and of using our resources to the greatest advantage to meet those risks.

In defence planning we work together closely with the member nations of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, so as to arrive at an overall and balanced programme of collective security. Our object is, through united strength, to prevent aggression; our object is peace and not war.

The objectives of our national defence are; first, the defence of our homeland against direct attack; second, to carry out steps that we may agree to under the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and third, to maintain and build up the administrative and training establishments and the mobilization stores to enable us to do an all-out job in the event of an all-out war.

With the assistance of the map, let us first look at the problem of local defence.

It is conceived to be very unlikely that at the outset of a general war the only possible aggressor would make a major attack on the North American continent with a view to its permanent occupation. But it is considered that an attack might be made by air or by submarines. There are two avenues of air attack which are considered most likely.

The first might be from the northwest - from Siberia - swinging across Alaska, either to the east of the Rockies into the industrial centres or to the west coast cities.

The second approach might be from northern Europe across Iceland, the tip of Greenland, Labrador, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and down to the industrial centres.