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Prime Minister Trudeau reports on NATO summit meeting

Following his attendance at the NATO heads of government meeting in Brussels and visits to the European Economic Community countries of Denmark and Luxembourg at the end of May, the Prime Minister reported as follows to the House of Commons on June 2:

...This was only the third meeting of the council conducted at a head-of-government level in the 26 years in which this organization has been in existence. Honourable members will recall that a brief summit session took place last year following the very successful twenty-fifth anniversary foreign ministers' meeting here in Ottawa. The Ottawa meeting produced the Ottawa Declaration. This declaration was signed by heads of government in Brussels a few days later. Because of competing events here in Canada which will be well remembered by all who engaged in them, and which culminated on July 8 of last year, I was unable to travel to Brussels for that signature occasion.

The council meeting this year took place on Thursday and Friday of last week and was attended by the heads of government of 14 of the 15 member countries. The occasion was a useful one, for it permitted heads of government to be briefed on the current political situation in Europe as well as on the state of military preparedness of NATO....

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This meeting...gave me an opportunity to emphasize to our NATO allies that it is in the interest of the alliance and in the interest of Canadians that our political adherence to NATO remain firm and that our military contribution remain effective. By effective, I mean both cost-effective and military-effective. The purpose of the defence structure review is to ensure that those goals are met. I may say that the contribution of the Canadian armed forces in Europe is highly prized. The professionalism of our troops and airmen is recognized by each member of the alliance, and it was impressed upon me by some of my NATO colleagues how disappointed they would be should any Canadian government at any time

take any steps to lessen the effectiveness of the Canadian military contribution.

During the course of the meeting I proposed that there be more frequent opportunities for heads of government to consult with one another and that this opportunity should permit consultations of an informal kind for these, in my experience, were of great value. I used the Commonwealth heads-of-government meeting experience as an example as I put forward this proposal.

I am happy to report...that the suggestion was taken up in positive terms immediately by the President of the United States and by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. During the ensuing discussion, by far the greater number of countries indicated their interest in the idea.

EEC office to open in Ottawa

I had the opportunity in Brussels to meet on a bilateral basis with President Ford and several other heads of governments. The meeting also allowed me to meet the president and two of the vice-presidents of the European Community, with whom I talked rather extensively about the formal support the commission gave to the Canadian proposal on the establishment of a contract agreement with the European Community. With the same objective in view, I also went to Denmark and to Luxembourg. Both visits completed the series of discussions I had in the capitals with the heads of the governments of all the member countries of the European Economic Community. During these visits, I could explain that Canada was willing to negotiate the establishment of official relations with the community; in return, I received the assurance that the matter is being considered favourably. During my discussions with the chairman of the commission, I was informed that the community will open an office in Ottawa before the end of the year.