

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



CANADA

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 66/12

FRANCE, CANADA AND NATO

Excerpts from a Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the
Rotary Club, Windsor, Ontario, March 21, 1966.

On March 10 the Canadian Ambassador in Paris was called in to receive a note setting out the position of the French Government regarding France's future participation in NATO. Today I shall summarize the main lines of the French position and give a general indication of the principles which will guide the Canadian Government in the discussions which lie ahead with France and our other allies.

The French note received by Canada states that France intends to withdraw all its remaining land and air forces from NATO commands. Its naval forces had been withdrawn already. France also requires the removal from French territory of all NATO military headquarters, including SHAPE itself. Finally, France requests the withdrawal of foreign forces and installations from France, unless the forces are placed under French operational command, a condition which they themselves recognize is unacceptable.

The implication for Canada is that we shall have to relinquish our air-base at Marville and the Air Division headquarters at Metz and to re-locate these forces and facilities elsewhere. Other Canadian forces in Europe are not directly affected.

I know you will recognize immediately the far-reaching nature of the French decision. I use the word "decision" because the French authorities have made it clear that they are not anticipating counter-proposals. The French Government have, in effect, decided to withdraw from integrated military arrangements within NATO. They are evidently prepared to negotiate only on the modalities and timing for giving effect to the French decision. This will apply to the Canadian bases at Metz and Marville.

We have known from President de Gaulle's press conferences over the last few years and from action which he has already taken to withdraw French naval forces from NATO command that the French Government was dissatisfied with the military arrangements in NATO.