

## NATO Report

**Mr. Stanfield:** This was the theme of the meeting. It simply underlines the inappropriateness of the announcement made by the Prime Minister. I agree with the emphasis the ministers placed upon the role that NATO was always supposed to have played, or at least for some time back, in connection with the resolution of social problems. I agree that this is an area in which NATO has fallen short of expectations. I hope these words were not simply constituting a pious wish, and that NATO will in fact give the emphasis indicated regarding the contribution it might make toward a solution of such social problems.

I would favour any reorganization or reshaping of NATO which would make the alliance more effective in achieving a détente between the west and the east, which was the theme of the meeting. This was certainly an area in which Canada should have been happy to participate, instead of weakening the alliance at the opening of the meeting on such a détente.

The minister referred to the importance the ministers in Washington attached to talks between the Soviet Union and the United States on the limitation of offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapons. This proposal will carry the support of everyone; everyone will approve of this. But will it increase the chances of success in negotiating such limitation, for conventional weapons to be reduced at the very time there is some hope, perhaps, or certainly some serious intention of discussing this sort of thing? I suggest that, by choosing this time to announce a weakening of its contribution to NATO, the government of Canada has also weakened the possibility of successful negotiations regarding the limitation of nuclear weapons.

The minister says that he and the Secretary of State for External Affairs explained to our allies the outcome of our defence policy review as it will affect our approach to NATO in the future. I am glad the two ministers were able to explain this in Washington, because the Prime Minister was not successful in explaining it here, and the minister was not successful in explaining it in the house today.

The minister has added nothing to what we already knew in this respect. It would be very interesting to speculate on what the ministers said to the representatives of our allies in NATO, and what explanation and precision they were able to give with regard

to the announcement made by the Prime Minister shortly before the ministers went to Washington.

• (2:20 p.m.)

I think one has to say that the Prime Minister's statement either meant a great deal or possibly very little. The statements attributed by the Minister of National Defence to his colleague in Washington add nothing to what the Prime Minister has already said. I believe that, in view of the importance that the alliance is attaching to exploring the possibilities of a détente, the government of Canada should retract its decision to withdraw troops from NATO at this time, or announce its intention to do so commencing next year. There are a number of reasons for this; but a sufficient reason for the government of Canada's indicating its intention to continue, for the time being at least, its full support of NATO, would be the contribution that Canada would thereby make to the possibility of the alliance effectively achieving a détente between the east and the west which, after all, is what we all want.

I have to say that the statement made by the Prime Minister has weakened the possibility of a détente, and the vague statement made by the minister as well as the apparently vague generalizations expressed to the ministers in Washington have changed nothing in that regard.

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I understand from the statement of the minister that he and his colleagues explained to the representatives of our allies in Washington precisely what was meant by the proposed planned and phased reduction of the size of our Canadian forces in Europe. I wonder if he left them as much in the dark as we have been left on this subject. I do not believe any member of the opposition at least has the haziest notion of what planned and phased reduction is in process. We do not know whether the words used by the Prime Minister are words of political compromise or whether they cover up a serious intention and plan to change the role of Canada, as we in this party have made clear from time to time we believe it should be changed.

I suggest to the government that it is time not just to talk about a phase two, but to let the country into its confidence as to precisely what it has in mind and to consult parliament about this. The Prime Minister has made a statement which has been heralded as a