

### Need for Prior Consultation

In saying that Canada has no intention of doing anything that would add to the difficulties of our friends, as I said at NATO, I was simply recognizing the need for prior consultation with our friends before policy decisions are taken on important questions. Indeed, there is a NATO requirement for such consultation, and that is why I concluded my statement at The Hague on the China issue by urging close consultation in New York among NATO delegations on this matter before and during the forthcoming General Assembly.

We are watching the situation closely, and Canadian policy will be predicated on a number of factors. For example, the effect on the stability of countries in Southeast Asia must be assessed with care, and particularly in the light of the current critical situation in Indochina. I shall refer to this new crisis in that area in a few minutes. Canada shares with other Western countries the same basic interest in helping the developing countries of Southeast Asia to maintain their independence and national identity. In addition, we have a special interest in this area through our role in the International Control Commissions in Indochina.

### NATO: A Healthy Evolution

It is against this background of our relations with the Communist world that I would like to report on the NATO ministerial meeting which I attended in The Hague last week. The foreign ministers of the NATO countries have an opportunity each spring to review the international situation and the state of the alliance. We all realize that it is necessary to keep the nature of the threat under constant review so that the Western response may be appropriate, not only in a military sense but, equally important, in ideas and policies. Therefore I firmly believe that it is not a sign of "disarray", as it is sometimes called, but of progress and sensible evolution that there are any thoughts in the Western alliance as to how our countries should react to the new opportunities as well as to the pitfalls presented by the current situation vis-à-vis the Communists.

We have heard far too much about NATO being at a crossroads and suffering from various kinds of malaise. The fact is that the alliance is going through a healthy process of sorting out the different and often vigorously expressed ideas of its members on the state of the alliance and what should be done to bring it up to date. Would it be healthy if it were otherwise, if we were merely clinging to the conceptions of the past and not trying to keep up with the times in a flexible way as befits free peoples?

At The Hague there was general agreement that, in the next few years our main aim must be to ensure that NATO can meet the requirements of a world very different from when the alliance was founded. NATO has its old myths. Events are overtaking them rapidly and if the alliance is to survive, we all must face the new realities. In the words of the Prime Minister at the NATO Council in January: "We must learn to deal with the difficult job of peace making while maintaining the force necessary to deter war."