

Just as Canada found the answer to its vital problem in the North Atlantic Treaty, Mr. Bevin found the answer to the problem that was confronting him in the Brussels Pact which was concluded in March, 1948. By this treaty five countries of Western Europe, namely, the United Kingdom, France and the three Benelux countries joined together in an alliance for mutual assistance should any of their countries be the object of armed attack.

In the meantime developments in the United States had been moving favourably in the direction of an alliance wider than that of Brussels. Senator Vandenberg introduced a resolution in the United States Senate which recommended "the association of the United States with such regional and other collective arrangements as are based on continuous self-help and mutual aid, and as affect its national security". When we remember the long tradition of the United States against entangling alliances and the strength of isolationist feeling which had prevented the United States from being in at the beginning of both of the two World Wars, it was obvious that the passing of the Vandenberg resolution in June, 1948, was an event of historical significance. This finally set the stage for the North Atlantic Treaty.

This treaty was signed on April 4, 1949, by twelve countries who declared their determination to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They also declared their intention of seeking to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. Finally they declared their resolution to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security.

You will see from this that the North Atlantic countries banded together for two purposes; the first, the important and urgent purpose of providing for their own security without which they cannot work towards the second, which is the stability and well-being of the members.

The North Atlantic Treaty is not in conflict with the United Nations Charter. Article 51 of the Charter recognizes the right of a country to take collective measures in self-defence if satisfactory arrangements cannot be secured through the machinery of the United Nations. The North Atlantic Treaty is nothing less than the exercise of this right to collective self-defence in the face of a very real threat of aggression. It was an effort to permit the aims of San Francisco to be realized by demonstrating to a potential aggressor that any attempt to take advantage of the power vacuum in Europe would be resisted by a group of nations acting collectively.

For both Canada and the United States the undertakings in the treaty represented marked departures from traditional policy. Yet the treaty was approved by a nearly unanimous vote in Congress and unanimously by the Parliament of Canada. The treaty came into force a few months after it was signed. Since then the North Atlantic countries have been bending their efforts to the realization of the goals set forth in the treaty.

Good progress has been made towards the realization of the first of these goals - the provision of security. The North Atlantic countries are gradually building up their collective strength. Total defence expenditures of the NATO countries have more than tripled since the treaty was signed.