

The Address—Mr. Pearson

forces, not merely some of them, should be integrated under collective control which should extend to all weapons and to every sector of the coalition front, including North America. In my view, Mr. Speaker, in the light of circumstances which face us at the present time, although I know they are changing rapidly, nothing less than that will do to hold this coalition together.

I would go further and state my opinion that there are two things which Canada should categorically refuse to accept. One is that of any one member of the alliance, however powerful, exercising a special custody and control over any special category of weapons in possession of Canadian forces. In my view, we should insist on the same Canadian custody and control of these weapons as of any others that our forces may have, always, of course—and I do not want to be misunderstood on this score—within the collective arrangements assumed generally and which I have suggested should be more far-reaching even than at present.

If I may reduce this to concrete terms, Mr. Speaker, it means that we should not accept what are sometimes called “baby nuclear bombs” for R.C.A.F. planes which could be dropped, or any nuclear missile which could be used, only on orders from the United States rather than from a NATO authority. I suggest that is now the situation in which we find ourselves today. It seems to me that the continued refusal of the United States to make any concessions of any kind to collective authority over nuclear weapons, as she has done over other weapons—and the same attitude is adopted by the United Kingdom—will prejudice the whole NATO collective defence idea. Indeed, we have evidence that it has already prejudiced that idea.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What was my hon. friend's reference to the United Kingdom?

Mr. Pearson: I suggested, Mr. Speaker, that the United States and the United Kingdom should accept the same collective authority and control over nuclear weapons in the possession of NATO forces as they do over other weapons, and that if they refuse to do, either of them, that they will prejudice the collective idea of NATO as, indeed, is happening now in the case of France.

The second proposition which I would make is that Canada should reject, although this is bound to affect the nature of our participation in NATO forces—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Before the hon. gentleman continues I am sure he knows the difficulties in connection with this matter; my hon. friend has experienced them for a number

[Mr. Pearson.]

of years. If the United States or the United Kingdom refused, what should Canada do then?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that this proposition should be put up to the United States and the United Kingdom. I know that it has been put up to the United States in the past, and I have had some experience with this. However, I would also point out to the Prime Minister that in the past, up to four or five years ago, nuclear weapons consisted only of hydrogen bombs; strategic weapons, weapons of nuclear destruction for strategic purposes.

But in recent years that situation has changed. We now have tactical nuclear weapons. They may soon even be in the possession of platoons. If the United States in these circumstances is going to insist on control of every tactical weapon in the hands of every NATO force it will be difficult to keep this defensive alliance strong. The proof of this is surely the attitude adopted by a very important member of the alliance—France—at the present time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not want to keep interrupting, because I know we are having the benefit of the hon. gentleman's ideas, but if it is not accepted by the United States, then what should Canada do? That is the question I asked.

Mr. Pearson: Our responsibility is to do everything we can to get it accepted, and if the government does that and then finds it cannot get it accepted, then it is the responsibility of the government to report to the house and decide what should be done. The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that I would be the last man in the world to do anything which would weaken or break up the NATO coalition. It is because I feel that this attitude of the United States is at present weakening the coalition, and might even break it up, that I want to see our government and other members of the alliance try to bring about the collective control of these weapons if they are to be used at all—and I hope they are not going to be used at all.

The second proposition which I suggest that Canada should reject and which, if it is maintained by others, is bound to affect our participation in NATO forces, is that anything less than complete integration of these forces under a NATO command will suffice.

Perhaps the Prime Minister underestimates the power and influence of the Canadian government in these matters, and perhaps at the present time our government could exercise a decisive influence in bringing these matters to the attention of the council in a way which would bring about a satisfactory solution. I am now thinking about the