

#### NATO DISMEMBERMENT RISKY

We have, in the Government of Canada, carefully considered this argument in its various manifestations. We have concluded that dismemberment of NATO's forces in Europe at this time would be risky and even dangerous. In spite of improved relations with the West, the Russians have continued, and are still continuing, to develop their already formidable military power. NATO's defence arrangements in Europe have obliged the Soviet leaders increasingly to accept that there can be no alternative to settlement in Europe. We cannot be sure that their earlier appetite for expansion would not revive if NATO were to lower its defences.

And what would be the political effect in Germany, if the German Government could no longer point to the military support of its allies represented by the forces of the seven NATO nations which are stationed in Germany? In such circumstances, could we expect a German Government to agree to the non-proliferation treaty?

Nor can we overlook the danger of conflict arising out of accident or miscalculation. The continent of Europe remains divided; and Berlin is isolated 100 miles within Communist territory. In spite of this potentially explosive situation, peace and stability have prevailed in Europe during a period in which wars large and small, have broken out with distressing frequency in most other areas of the world. This remarkable – and to us essential – peace in Europe is due, in very large measure to the stabilizing influence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And NATO's strength continues to deter the Soviet Union and its ally, East Germany, from exercising their local military superiority to choke off Berlin.

Last summer, Alastair Buchan, speaking at the Banff Conference on World Affairs, expressed his concern over the danger of Western troop reductions in the following terms:

“...It means not only the end of any flexibility in dealing with European crises; it also means the end of any pretension on the part of NATO that it can protect the security of German citizens in the event of any form of aggression against Germany, with a consequent lowering of German confidence in the alliance. It also means a distinct loss of bargaining power with Eastern Europe, since there are no signs of reductions of military forces in the Warsaw Pact....”

After a careful re-examination of the whole problem since last August, can there be any doubt that, for the present, strong allied forces continue to be required in Europe: first, to preserve stability in that divided continent; and secondly, to promote continuing movement toward improved relations with the Soviet bloc countries? NATO's prudent defensive stance in Europe has contributed to the increasing normalization of East-West relations, and we look forward ultimately to Soviet agreement to a settlement in Central Europe which could be sustained without the presence of Soviet forces. We believe that to achieve these several ends a balance of forces must be maintained in Europe.

Such an approach does not exclude working for balanced force reductions, either by agreement with

the Russians or by mutual example. Such reduction could be undertaken without disturbing the present balance and Canada would welcome any progress which could be made in this direction. Indeed, we shall be discussing this matter in Brussels at the NATO meetings in December. If the war in Vietnam were to end, we could make progress toward mutual reductions. Until then and the end of such problems as the Middle East, we shall have to pursue our present policies.

#### FORCES BASED IN CANADA

We have also examined the suggestion that Canada consider restricting its contribution to NATO to forces based in Canada. The argument in favour of such a course of action has its attractions. The European nations have grown in military and economic power and are no longer totally dependent, as they were when NATO was founded, on outside aid. Canada's contribution is now, in consequence, relatively far less important to the defence of Europe than it was. But this approach ignores the fact that most of the smaller NATO countries are in roughly the same position as we are; making small contributions which alone are not essential, and under pressure, as we are, to find new sources of revenue for other government activities.

The basis of an alliance is that all members contribute in an appropriate manner. And, since we believe in the continuing importance and promise of the alliance, we see no alternative to continuing to make an appropriate contribution, at the present time, to NATO's forces in Europe.

We are, of course, aware of the attractions of contributing forces to NATO from Canadian territory. In fact, our anti-submarine forces in the Atlantic already represent such contribution, in that at the same time they are committed to NATO and also are an important element in North American defence. With the development of new means of transport, it becomes increasingly possible technically to contribute land forces based in Canada. Moreover, air-transportable forces would fit in well with strategic defence plans which are being developed for the defence of Europe. However, I do want to add a word of caution. Our existing capacity to transport forces to Europe within a meaningful time-period is limited and sufficient air-lift capacity to transport a brigade group such as we now have in Europe – even with light weapons only – would be expensive to acquire. Moreover, any decision to contribute forces solely from Canada rather than to maintain some in Europe must be worked out in a responsible manner with our allies so that the cohesiveness of the alliance and the confidence of its members will not be jeopardized by our action.

#### NORTH AMERICAN DEFENCE

Although Europe remains in an important sense our first line of defence, we have had to be concerned about the direct defence of our continent ever since the development of a significant Soviet bomber threat to North America. The main point here – the inescapable fact – is that geography has linked us inextricably with the United States. It is almost incon-