



CANADA

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## CANADA AND NATO

In a statement to the External Affairs Committee of the Senate on March 15, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, said the impression was widespread that, in 1969, the NATO alliance would come to an end or "that member states must formally recommit themselves to NATO or that the Treaty must be revised". Mr. Martin denied this assertion, and rejected the notion that the "only significance of 1969 is that the North Atlantic Treaty provides in that year (the twentieth anniversary of its ratification) it becomes legal for members to withdraw on giving one year's notice of intention".

Part of Mr. Martin's address follows:

...There are some critics who consider that NATO, as an organization founded to resist possible Soviet aggression, is handicapped by its past and not equipped to promote a peace settlement. Others say that NATO is obsolete and no longer needed. Some even go so far as to argue that NATO's mere existence obstructs the movement towards a peace settlement.

### NATO BENEFITS

It seems to me that before reaching any conclusions one has to consider the benefits which NATO provides.

First, NATO's combined military strength has deterred possible Soviet military or political penetration of Western Europe. At a time when relations with the U.S.S.R. may be slowly improving, the maintenance of effective deterrent forces is a form of insurance against the danger of an unexpected recurrence of Soviet hostility. Nor can we afford to overlook the fact that Soviet military power in Eastern Europe, far from being diminished, has over the years been augmented and perfected. This is a

fact to be set on the scales in assessing how we should respond to the more forthcoming Soviet political posture. The Soviet Union's own actions suggest that they find no incongruity in combining military preparedness and political negotiations. Should we be any less flexible? Sure of our strength, can we not more confidently work to improve East-West relations? And has past experience not demonstrated that allied solidarity and strength have caused the development of Soviet interest in a European peace settlement?

It is true that the strength of the countries of Western Europe has grown enormously since the alliance was formed. Nevertheless, these countries together - let alone separately - could not match Soviet military power. I believe it significant that France, while withdrawing from NATO's integrated military structure, has indicated its intention of remaining in the alliance even beyond 1969. Moreover, France, while it has required the withdrawal of United States and Canadian Forces from French territory, has not advocated their withdrawal from Europe.

Secondly, I wonder if the Soviet and Eastern European leaders have not come increasingly to regard NATO as a stabilizing force in Europe. They may well look to NATO - and the Warsaw Pact for that matter - to prevent the emergence of nationalist elements in Europe. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this approach appeared in some Yugoslav and Polish journals last year, when there was speculation that French action in NATO might lead to its break-up. These journals wrote apprehensively of such a development, showing concern that the countries of Western Europe would, in such a circumstance, develop their own national forces, which would not be subject to the constraints of international command.