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THE NEW NATO SITUATION

Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the National Newspaper Awards Dinner, Toronto, April 16, 1966.

I am grateful, Mr. Chairman, for the very kind invitation extended to me by the sponsors of the National Newspaper Awards Dinner. It is particularly interesting to be here when the National Newspaper Awards are given. I should like to extend my personal congratulations to those receiving awards for particular merit in a year which has, I understand, seen a great many entries in the competition.

I am also happy, Mr. Chairman, to be present at a banquet bringing together representatives of both the English- and French-language press. I repeat my congratulations to those writers in French whose outstanding merit has been recognized in various ways in this year's awards.

I have noted that there has been a growing tendency on the part of newspapers in one language group to carry articles reflecting the current points of view in newspapers of the other group. This is a welcome contribution to the growth of understanding between different sections of the country.

I have a natural interest also in the part played by the press in the formulation of public attitudes about foreign policy. As the Minister responsible for external affairs, I can explain the nature and background of current Government policy. The debate about the national interest in world affairs should, however, be conducted in much wider terms by all who feel an interest and have a viewpoint to express. The press has a particularly important task in this field of stimulating and focussing this discussion. I hope that, in gathering news and in commenting on its significance, newspapers will not be unduly influenced by the expression of views elsewhere. I hope that they will subject all developments to a rigorous examination in terms of Canadian interests and viewpoints. This is one of the greatest contributions which the press can make to the expression of public attitudes which will help to guide the formulation of policy.