

Summation

I have appreciated this opportunity to discuss some of the considerations affecting the Government's policy towards NATO. It seems to me that these support the argument that the continuation of the alliance will actually facilitate progress toward an eventual European peace settlement and can, in the meantime, assist in the improvement of East-West relations. A recent European visitor to Ottawa with a profound understanding of European problems put the issue to me very clearly. "NATO is essential to us," he said. "What other organization links Europe and North America, brings Germany into an alliance relationship with the other nations of Western Europe, prevents France and the other larger Western European states from dominating their neighbours, and makes it possible for the Western European nations to treat on a basis of equality with the Russians?"

I have also outlined certain considerations which suggest that the withdrawal of Canadian forces from Europe could disturb the fabric of co-operation and hence prejudice NATO's ability to contribute to the development of the kind of conditions in Europe necessary in the long run for the achievement of a European settlement. The maintenance of appropriate Canadian forces in Europe also serves to increase our links with the countries of Europe, which are so necessary in a world moving toward continentalism. At the same time, I should remind you of what I have said about achieving mutual reductions of forces between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.

I have indicated that the precise nature of our contribution to the alliance is under constant review. Our future commitment will take into account the relevance of that commitment to collective security and to the major political objective of a peaceful settlement in Europe.

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