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CANADA AND NATO

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Geographically Canada is a North American country, but culturally, economically and strategically it is an integral part of the North Atlantic community of free nations. Canadian culture is essentially that of the British Isles and France adapted to the New World environment. The vast majority of the Canadian people are of European stock; over eighty-six out of every hundred Canadians spring from countries whose shores are washed by the North Atlantic; almost fifty out of every hundred are from the British Isles; and over thirty out of every hundred from France. Eighty-five out of every hundred dollars worth of Canadian exports go to countries on the North Atlantic littoral, and about the same proportion of Canadian imports come from this region. Historically, Canada's fate has turned on the outcome of every major European war since settlement by Europeans began on these shores some three hundred and fifty years ago.

The Origin of the North Atlantic Treaty

Canada could not therefore avoid being concerned with the tragic drift of events after the Second World War, precisely because her safety was at stake.

Soviet Obstruction - Within less than two years of the signature in San Francisco of the Charter of the United Nations, in 1945, the hopes of people everywhere for universal peace had given place to growing anxiety and fear. The Security Council which had been given primary responsibility for the maintenance of security, was already ham-strung by the deliberate tactics of the Russian representatives. Before the end of 1947 it had become plain to all that, to further their own ends, the Soviet Government were determined to block and undermine their former allies and to propagate their communist gospel by any and every means of subversion and external pressure.

Communist Expansion - One by one the countries bordering on the Soviet Union were being brought under the ruthless domination of the Kremlin. The Iron Curtain seemed to be moving steadily westward and, in February, 1948, free Czechoslovakia disappeared into the darkness of the Russian night. The heroic effort of men of goodwill to carry into the building of world peace the dynamics of the Grand Alliance which had won the war had failed of its central purpose--to establish a firm foundation for universal security. The United Nations had had a fair record of accomplishment--a splendid record in many fields, but it had never been designed to compel the acquiescence of a Great Power, and it had become increasingly evident that the United Nations was not able to guarantee the keeping of peace.

It was against such a sombre background of disillusionment and in an atmosphere of widespread anxiety that