

Report on NATO and OECD Meeting

Brezhnev's speech of last Friday strongly suggest that the Soviet Union is adopting a more forthcoming stance on force reductions.

The ministers agreed that further clarification is needed to establish if enough ground exists for negotiations to start. Ministers agreed that their governments would continue to intensify explorations with the nations of Eastern Europe on a bilateral basis. If I may say so, incidentally this is one of the things our Prime Minister was doing when he was in Moscow. They also agreed that deputy foreign ministers or other senior officials should meet in Brussels at an early date to review the results of the exploratory contacts and to consult on the substantive and procedural approaches to mutual balanced force reductions. Canada supported these moves and called for more direct action. In response to a Canadian proposal, ministers expressed their willingness to appoint at the appropriate time a representative or representatives to conduct further exploratory talks with the Soviet Union and other interested governments. Let us hope that the response from the Soviet Union and its allies will show an intention to negotiate actively and without delay on this issue of vital importance to security and stability in Europe.

I took advantage of my presence at the meeting to have bilateral talks with some of my colleagues from member nations. Of special interest to the House will be the frank and forthright talk I had with Mr. Patricio, Foreign Minister of Portugal. I made clear to him the firm attitude of the Canadian people to Portuguese colonial policy in Africa. I gave him a report of the conversations I had with black African leaders in March. I urged Portugal, as I have done on previous occasions, to move toward self-government for its African territories in its own interest as well as in the interest of humanity as a whole.

From the NATO meeting in Lisbon I went to the OECD ministerial meeting in Paris, at which I was accompanied by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

The meeting concentrated upon the economic outlook, the establishment of a high-level group on problems of trade liberalization, and development assistance. On the economic outlook the mood was one of restrained optimism. A better rate of increase in GNP for member nations was foreseen, particularly in North America. I was struck by the extent to which member nations share common preoccupations and problems, unemployment, inflation and threats to the physical environment. These will continue to plague us and the meeting found no easy solutions. Ministers agreed without dissent that full employment cannot be bought at the price of inflation. The need to break the inflation psychology was stressed, and I urged the organization, as a body above domestic politics, to continue and intensify both its studies of the problem and its efforts to increase public understanding of the insidious dangers of inflation.

There was a full discussion of the Secretary General's proposals for the creation of a high-level group to assess

[Mr. Sharp.]

current problems in international trade, to consider how these problems might be met, and to set out various options for their solution. The Secretary General's initiative was also aimed at maintaining the high degree of liberalization achieved in international trade and the prevention of backsliding. The initiative received very wide support and ministers agreed to the creation of the group. I made clear our intention to contribute to the work of the group and our expectation that it will pave the way for further progress in multilateral trade without infringing on the responsibilities and prerogatives of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This last point was developed by most other speakers and is reflected in the communiqué.

I would now like to table copies in English and French of the communiqués issued after the NATO and OECD ministerial meetings.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin by welcoming back the minister after his long and interesting sojourn at very important gatherings in many parts of the world. I thank him for sending me a copy of his statement. I would have thanked him more heartily had I received it a few minutes before he began.

That the first item in his report should have been, as it was, a reference to Pakistan was most appropriate. It may be that this is not the most important problem in the world but it is the most immediate and could, indeed, become the most important. So I approve of the emphasis he placed on this matter by dealing with it first. I note that he has had conversations in New York. I note too that he will be discussing this very important matter with the very distinguished foreign minister of India. I say to him that I hope the government will not be too tentative, too tepid and too timid in looking upon this problem as one of the great human tragedies and that it will not get itself ensnared in excessive international legalism.

An appalling human tragedy is taking place in India today, and I hope we will not content ourselves with assistance of a financial nature for the immediate problem. We cannot look upon as a permanent situation the present circumstances where one country is required to look after millions of people from another. In other words, while the immediate need is humanitarian, a long-range political solution must not be pushed so low in priority that the countries of the world will see another displaced band of refugees living forever in someone else's domain.

I hope the Canadian people will receive further evidence that the government is assisting powerfully and with feeling the efforts to abate the human suffering that is going on in India today. I hope the government will speak frankly to both India and Pakistan, as friendly nations should, and make it clear that this terrible problem must be given the very best attention and the greatest earnestness that it can be given. I hope the Canadian people will do all they can. I think it was John Keats who referred to the civilized man as one for whom the