



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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A STEP NEARER AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

An Address by Prime Minister L.B. Pearson at the Opening of the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Ottawa on May 22, 1963.

... It is 12 years since the North Atlantic Treaty Council last convened in these Parliament Buildings of Canada.

At that time the Alliance faced many and grave problems. It had yet to demonstrate its real capacity to fulfil even its military role. But the promise of immense collective strength in the partnership of European and North American nations was there to be realized. There were no obstacles then, as there are none now, which the resources of the North Atlantic Treaty countries could not surmount, if sustained by hope, determination and faith.

We are here as men of peace. But we are here also to declare our full and forthright support of what is in great measure a military alliance. There is nothing strange or contradictory in this. For in the very first line of the treaty that welds us to a common purpose, we affirm our "faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and our desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments".

It is in that spirit that I welcome this session of the Ministerial Council to Canada, whose two mother countries are both members of NATO.

The dual nature of Canada's cultural heritage and the intimacy of the links which bind us so warmly to Great Britain and to France are elements in our national make-up which we cherish. Each of our cultural streams has benefited from and been enriched by the presence of the other flowing so closely by its side. From the ebb and flow of European history both the Anglo-Saxon and the French peoples have benefited. It should not be difficult, therefore, to appreciate how much Canadians value the dual character of their national personality.

But our country - to adapt a current expression - is multilateral as well as bilateral in character. Our citizens, whose family trees have roots in France and the United Kingdom, have been joined by many others with family ties in one or

another of all our North Atlantic partners - and, of course, in many other lands too. These others have come to join their strength to ours in the creation of a free society in which all Canadians can live and work together. In fact, as in aspiration, we in Canada have given credibility to the central conception of our Atlantic Alliance; a belief in word and in deed in the interdependence of co-operating peoples.

Today it is easy and understandable to point with anxiety to centrifugal tendencies in NATO. But, in spite of this and other difficulties, our defensive Alliance has succeeded in deterring aggression and promoting security. But to survive - this has been said so many times - NATO must comprehend much more than military defence, central as that undoubtedly is to our joint effort. It must include the closest possible unity of purpose in the solution of political, economic and social problems of concern to us all. If it does not, NATO will weaken and eventually disappear.

NATO must also press ahead with efforts through co-operative action to raise the levels of economic and social well-being, not only of the Treaty countries alone but also of the countries in less fortunate areas in the world.

It must give the lead in working toward the time when all men will recognize in their hearts and be guided in their actions by the noble principles of the United Nations Charter.

The wealth of promise now open for all mankind will never be realized unless nations come to accept the fact of their interdependence and act on that fact.

The degree and complexity of this interdependence is a distinctive characteristic of our era. It could have no similar meaning for the relatively uncomplicated conditions of former times. The science and technology of a few years have brought the multiple interests of each nation into a maze of interlocking contacts with those of other nations. This is a central and compelling factor of our time.

Today the world has the means of adapting itself to this essential factor by international co-operative effort. It is the only means that makes sense, but that does not prevent us from too often following the older techniques of exclusive national action.

Since we last met in Canada in 1951, new institutions have been developed within the framework of our Organization. In a new complex of working bodies, many important facets of our separate national activities have come to be explored on a continuing collective basis. Meanwhile, too, a devoted and talented international staff has been built up under a distinguished Secretary-General and performs invaluable service in the study of cultural, scientific, economic, military and political matters.

In all our policies and in all our planning we must keep very much in mind the grim reality of the universal destruction of nuclear war. Therefore, our decision in the military field for the prevention of war through adequate deterrence must be coupled along with the removal of the fears of the political causes that today make such armed deterrence necessary.

I acknowledge with gratitude what has been done in both these fields but I register no cause for complacency. The threat we set out to meet when NATO was born, and the wider world purposes we have agreed to serve, have taken a formidable subtlety and difficulty since our early days. Both the peril and the promise of 1949 remain. We have kept the one in check but without realizing the other as much as we would like.

I do not and you do not believe in miracles. Fundamental changes in the angry disbeliefs and the festering animosities of the cold war will not take place overnight, or without stubborn and unremitting perseverance on our part. It is folly to expect the awful dangers of the nuclear age to go away while we merely sit back, answer jet with superjet, missile with anti-missile, charge with countercharge. Rather, in dealing with the Communist world, the NATO partners must keep on trying to solve political problems, one by one, stage by stage, if not now on the basis of confidence and co-operation, at least on that of mutual toleration based on a common interest in survival.

We must direct the best of our talents towards uncovering, exploiting and building upon every conceivable point of common interest between East and West. There is no alternative to utilizing all the genius of our statecraft to wed the power of our collective strength to reasoned and forward-looking policies, and thus to give our diplomacy its best chance of reducing tensions and fostering international understanding.

We must of course maintain the strength, the power, required to deter any fatal adventures by those who might otherwise misjudge our resolve to seek peace and preserve freedom.

Nevertheless, to think that we can guarantee this peace by collective action, even collective action based on power alone, is a delusion. To think that we can protect ourselves by individual action based on national power alone, is an absurdity. In 1961, President Kennedy, on a visit to Canada, spoke with eloquence of the nakedness, in today's world, of a single country seeking to stand alone. "It is clear", he said, "that no free nation can stand alone to meet the relentless threat of those who make themselves our adversaries." I am sure all agree completely with that. In 1963, "Each nation for itself and God for us all", is not only silly; it could be suicidal. So the Atlantic nations must come together, in one Atlantic Community. The West cannot afford two such Communities, a European one and a North American one, each controlling its own policies and each perhaps moving away from the other as a common menace recedes.

One of the most hopeful and most exciting developments of the postwar period has been the coming together of European nations; a process not yet completed. As a result of this, a united Europe should play, and can play if it desires to do so, an equal part with North America in the direction and development of the Atlantic Alliance.

It would, however, be a sad day for peace and security if a united Europe or a United States were to play a separate role. Therefore we must examine very closely into the relationships that bind us together across the Atlantic. Changes that have been wrought since our last meeting in Ottawa point to the need for some redefinition of Atlantic relations. The public discussion that is taking place on this subject is a reflection of the healthy nature of the free societies which support our Alliance.

On the military defence side, it would certainly seem that the moment for some recasting of NATO policy, including nuclear policy, has arrived. In this recasting, nuclear-arms policy and conventional-arms policy should be carefully studied together as inseparable elements in any sound strategic design. It is also true that, despite the impressive advances of the past few years, the twin problem of political decision-making and of political consultation, so essential in an era of apocalyptic weapons, has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. The proposals of the U.S.A. now before the Council offer a framework in which these problems can be tackled.

Equally it would repay us to see what changes are needed to improve our co-operation in the economic field. In the twentieth century, perhaps more than ever before, harmonization of economic policies is indispensable for political and defence collaboration.

We are not going to settle all of these issues in this short meeting. Nevertheless, we will make satisfactory progress and I hope that in that progress we will be guided by a precept enunciated by a well-known American writer, Mr. Henry Kissinger:

"The test of leadership is not tomorrow's editorial,
but what history will say of us five years from now."

I believe that five years from now history will say that this Council meeting marked one more good step in the evolution of the Atlantic coalition, for the security of its members and for peace in the world....