

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered to a meeting of the Council Deputies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in London, on June 25, 1951.

I am very glad to be given the opportunity to meet with the Deputies of the North Atlantic Council. The decision to establish the Deputies was one of the wisest the Council has made. It should rank in importance with that to establish an Integrated Force under General Eisenhower.

When the Council met here thirteen months ago, it was apparent that the kind of co-ordination of NATO activities essential for the success of the whole undertaking could not be provided by the necessarily infrequent meetings of Ministers. Since that time, the variety, complexity, and difficulty of NATO problems have vastly increased. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the role of the Deputies, not only in tackling those problems one by one, but also in giving continuity and direction to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a whole. The Deputies, however, to discharge their important responsibilities, need the backing of and to be endowed with effective authority by the governments which they represent. They need also leadership and that has certainly been provided by your Chairman, Mr. Spofford.

To my mind, perhaps the most important attribute of the Council Deputies is their competence to deal with the many related aspects of the task of co-ordinating the civilian side of the NATO effort, and its relationship with the military agencies of the Treaty. Certainly in the course of your work you have had to consider military, economic and political problems of great importance and variety, and you have worked with a degree of cohesiveness which parallels the best traditions of "Cabinet solidarity". We all recognize that this group has responsibilities which are quite distinct from that of a Cabinet in any of our Governments. There is, however, a similarity in the fact that, although your final action takes the form of recommendations, these recommendations have a very great importance since it is unlikely that any NATO Government would reject a course of action which had the unanimous approval of your Council. It is that factor which underlines the great responsibilities which attach to your deliberations. It is that fact, too, which makes it all the more important that an effective link should be established between the Council Deputies and the subordinate agencies of NATO, so that in coming to your decisions here on which recommendations to Governments are based, you are acting on the best advice available. As a former Civil Servant, I have a lively appreciation of the value of adequate preparation and expert advice before final decisions are taken. I think, therefore, that the recent steps to strengthen the organization by the establishment of the Defence Production Board and the

Financial and Economic Board, and the plans which I understand are now under consideration for strengthening the International Staff, will greatly facilitate your own work in the months to come.

NATO Reorganization

The importance of the Deputies has, of course, been increased by the re-organization of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization top structure announced last month. The Canadian Government is pleased that its proposals to this effect - after a careful and collective study of the problems involved - have met with the approval of the Deputies and their Governments. The new organization is simpler than the old. The lines of responsibility are clearer. Although a good organizational system is not an end in itself, it will without doubt help the governments here represented to do the job which the Treaty requires, and on which the people in all our countries are counting so heavily.

Collective Defence - the Integrated Force

It is little more than two years since the North Atlantic Treaty was signed and less than two years since it came into force. Much has been accomplished in this time. During this short period, NATO has pursued the unique task of building a system of collective defence in peacetime. Perhaps the grave practical problems involved in establishing the Integrated Force in Europe tend to make us forget the historical and dramatic importance of this decision. I think one would have to go far back into history for a peacetime precedent for the integration into one international force of units of so many nations.

It would be tragic indeed if we were not able to carry this development forward, effectively and speedily. It would also be dangerous to our very existence as free political societies, because only by collective military strength can we hold at bay the forces of potential aggression, and thereby give ourselves time and opportunity to establish peace on a stronger foundation than force.

We have been given, already, two years for this purpose. That is a short enough period - against the background of history - to do what we have done. Against the background of the danger which faces us, however, it is a longer time, and we should be impatient that we have not been able to do more.

In that impatience lies one of our hopes for further progress. In it also lies dangers which may divide and weaken our association; dangers of invidious comparisons and consequent irritations. We must have confidence in each other's desire and determination to make this coalition effective; broadly and fairly based. Confidence, however, can only be established by results. If my own country, for instance, does not carry its fair share of the total burden, the association will be weakened, and in a more than material sense. That applies to all of us. It means that we should be completely frank in analysing difficulties and in exchanging views. It means also that we should understand each other's problems, and appreciate any special difficulties which may arise. The Deputies can be of very great importance here. The feeling of friendly solidarity among you which has developed makes it possible, even easy, for you to discuss questions without reservations, and without fear of recrimination. You can also explain to your own governments the positions and the attitudes of other members, when difficulties arise, and thereby help to resolve them.

Broader Vision of the North Atlantic Community

Although the building of collective defence is at present the main activity of NATO, the Canadian Government and people do not

look upon the Treaty merely as a military alliance. Canadians see the Treaty as an expression of the reality of the North Atlantic community and of the determination of that community to strengthen its free institutions, to promote conditions of stability and well-being, and to defend the liberty of each of the nations belonging to it. Our common defence is the immediate and urgent goal of the North Atlantic Treaty. But there is no reason why we should lose sight of the farther horizon - the ultimate creation in the Atlantic area of a great community of free nations. In the face of a common danger, under the stern remorseless threat to our survival, we twelve nations of the Atlantic have come together to pool our resources that we may survive. In the process we are developing new working institutions, and, what is possibly even more important, a common desire to make them work. They concern not only purely military things, but inevitably too, the economics and the politics of joint effort. In our struggle for security from a very present threat, we are developing a new consciousness of Atlantic unity, the results of which may far exceed our immediate purposes and expectations. May we not in these past two years have taken at least the first steps toward something much greater and more positive - a genuine community of the Atlantic?

This is a long-term objective which, of course, has to be subordinated at present to the exigencies of the immediate situation in which we find ourselves. We are defending ourselves against a threat which is not regional, but global. It is undeniable that the increased defence efforts to which we are each committed in the North Atlantic area were directly stimulated by the Communist aggression in Korea. Korea also has shown us that an Atlantic Alliance cannot isolate itself from Pacific questions. It is not necessary for me to emphasize the difficulties with which we are faced, the inter-relationship of those difficulties, and the importance of giving the most serious study to any new steps affecting the future course of action of our organization. A year ago the NATO powers embarked on a policy of deterring further Soviet expansionism at a time when Western strength was really inadequate to the task and when the Soviet reaction could not be foreseen with any degree of certainty. This policy has had its effect and, with the gradual, if somewhat uneven, growth of Western strength during the ensuing year, we are undoubtedly in a better position as a group than at the outset. This does not, however, mean that the dangers of the situation have been overcome, or that the NATO powers can afford to undertake new commitments without carefully examining each new proposal in the light of our increasing but still inadequate armed strength, and without the fullest consultation on all political aspects. Since we are now approaching what is considered by all parties to the Treaty to be the period of greatest danger it behoves us all to take new decisions with full knowledge of the issues involved - political as well as strategic. In those decisions, we will often have to consider and to balance short-term and long-term factors.

A second potential danger is the fact that the course of international developments, and the technique of Communist strategy, may cause the focal point of our attention to be drawn away from the area which, I think, remains the one of principal concern - Western Europe. In recent months the limelight has tended to shift to the Far East, and more recently to the middle East as a result of the Iranian crisis and the problem of the relationship of Greece and Turkey to Western defence planning. Although the Soviet Union may have played some part in bringing to a head these Middle Eastern problems, the problems themselves are not of the Soviet Union's making. They do, however, lend themselves admirably to the Soviet practice of fishing in troubled waters and diverting attention from more vital areas. We should perhaps remind ourselves more frequently that the need to preserve the integrity of Western Europe and the United Kingdom, as the Eastern frontier of the Atlantic community, was what originally inspired the formation of NATO and remains to-day its principal objective. This does not

mean that the Middle East and other areas are not matters of deep concern, or that action is not urgently required to build adequate machinery for strengthening resistance to aggression in this and other vital areas. It does, however, mean that these essential and related tasks should not distract our attention from the area which we are specifically committed to defend, or the longer-term aims which our alliance must ultimately seek to attain.

In conclusion, may I congratulate you on the contribution that the Deputies are making to both these shorter-term and longer-term aims.

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