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EXTÉRIEURES.

STATEMENT ON MOTIONS,
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE MITCHELL SHARP,
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
DECEMBER 13, 1971.

"EUROPE"

Mr. Speaker:

In the course of three days in Brussels last week I attended the December Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, continued our conversations with the European Economic Commission and had meetings with the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Schumann, and the Acting Foreign Minister of Greece, Mr. Palamas.

Western Europe, with Britain on the threshold of the Community and already being drawn into its councils, is the scene of some of the most dynamic developments in the world today. The negotiations for the enlargement and deepening of the Community in their final stage are paralleled by East-West negotiations over the status of Berlin, and by promising moves toward a modus vivendi between the Federal German Republic and the German Democratic Republic. These developments, taken together, are bringing about a Europe more soundly based economically and with a healthier and saner political climate.

Progress on Berlin is the most dramatic of these developments. Since the Second World War, Berlin has been a focus of the East-West confrontation and unsettled relations between the Federal and Democratic Republics of Germany a major stumbling-block in the search for détente.

Without the active support of NATO, Chancellor Brandt would have been unable to negotiate, on a basis of equality, the treaties with the USSR and Poland nor could the Federal Republic, acting alone, have any real hope of reaching a modus vivendi with the German Democratic Republic.

It is against this background of forward movement in Central Europe that the NATO Meeting should be seen. The two major preoccupations of the Alliance, and I believe of the Soviet Union and the countries of the Warsaw Pact, are the holding of a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the negotiation of mutual and balanced force reductions, usually referred to by the acronym MBFR.

On the Conference, Ministers re-affirmed the position they adopted at the June meeting, that NATO countries are ready to enter upon multilateral preparations for a Conference when a satisfactory conclusion of the Berlin talks has been reached. Meanwhile they agreed to keep in touch with the Finnish Government which has offered Helsinki as a site for conversations on this subject. Two of the stages needed for a Berlin settlement have been concluded. The Soviet Union has made conclusion of the final stage contingent upon ratification of the Warsaw and Moscow Treaties. This may be expected within the next few months.

What is important, however, is the process set in motion by the Conference concept. The Conference, whenever it is held, and whatever its outcome, is only one element

of a wider negotiating process. The substantial gains I have noted in Central Europe have their foundation in the realistic "Ostpolitik" of Chancellor Brandt. But I wonder if they would have been achieved had the Conference idea not been accepted in principle and had NATO not made of the Berlin element an essential pre-condition for a Conference. It is not unusual in diplomacy that movement toward a certain goal, in this case the Conference, itself results in the resolution of long-standing problems. Similarly, it may well be that the Conference will set in train further movement toward easing of tensions.

On MBFR, the Alliance noted with regret the lack of a Soviet response to the offer to send an explorer, in the person of Mr. Brosio, former Secretary-General of NATO, to Moscow. This was a proposal made by Canada at the June meeting. In the course of the past ten days both Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Kosygin have renewed expressions of Soviet interest in force reductions but confined themselves to generalities. If the Soviets would receive the explorer, progress could be made positively and quickly toward substantive negotiations. That they have not done so, I believe, reflects the fact that the Soviets and their friends have not yet worked out either their procedural or their substantive position on MBFR and are having real difficulty in deciding how to respond.

The Alliance is not making negotiations on MBFR a pre-condition to the holding of a Conference, but Ministers noted that if a Conference was to address itself effectively to the problems of security in Europe, it should deal in a suitable manner with measures to reduce the military confrontation.

Ministers took note of the strains imposed upon the Alliance by continuing monetary and trading problems affecting member nations. At Canada's suggestion, it was agreed that these problems should be kept under continuing review.

My discussions with Mr. Malfatti, President of the European Economic Commission, Mr. Mansholt, Vice-President, and other senior officials came at a particularly apposite time, on the eve of the Council of Minister's consideration of American proposals for resolution of the monetary and trading problems now facing us. I told Mr. Malfatti, as I had told Mr. Rogers in Washington a week earlier, that Canada is willing to make its contribution to a general settlement but does not regard bilateral negotiation of the removal of the surcharge as either feasible or desirable.

I stressed to the Commission Canada's interest in eventual movement towards freer trade and expressed the hope

that once current difficulties are overcome the Commission would show willingness to move further in this direction. I also took up with the Commission specific problems of access to the Market for Canadian agricultural and forest products, in particular rapeseed.

I am glad to be able to report that I found that attitudes to Canada have become more realistic in the past year. The Commission now has a much clearer concept of Canada's identity and its position in the trading world. There is no longer a tendency to lump Canada with the United States. This changed attitude is a direct result of the frequent and frank exchanges we have had with the Commission and with the ministers who make up the Council. These we will continue, and I again stressed to Mr. Malfatti and his colleagues our wish to have consultation with the Community put upon a more systematic basis. This is not an easy matter, since consultation at the Ministerial level such as we have with our other major trading partners, like the United States and Japan, involves the Council of Ministers, consisting today of foreign ministers of six countries, soon to be ten. Until this final goal can be achieved we are working toward regular consultation with the Commission and pursuing our interests in bilateral consultations with ministers of the member nations of the Community. The setting up of a consultative machinery was also the principal issue I discussed with the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Schumann.

My conversation with Mr. Schumann was one of a continuing series in which we discuss many aspects of our shared interests and particularly our responsibilities as major Francophone powers.

While I left Canada intending to meet Mr. Palamas, Acting Foreign Minister of Greece, as it happened the meeting took place at his request. He wished to urge upon me the need for a continuing Canadian contribution to the United Nations force on Cyprus. I explained the Canadian position, that we will maintain our forces in Cyprus only so long as we believe that their presence can contribute to the reaching of a settlement and not just to allow the parties to the dispute to put off a settlement indefinitely.

I expressed to Mr. Palamas the deep concern many Canadians feel about the situation in Greece. Mr. Palamas assured me of his Government's firm intention to implement the constitution progressively and restore democracy in due course. I urged upon him the need for the Greek Government if it sets store by the opinion of others to act in accordance with its words. Elections, I suggested, would go far in this direction. I can tell the House that Mr. Palamas was left in no doubt of the depth and strength of Canada's concern for democracy in Greece.

Mr. Speaker, I should now like to table the Communiqué issued after the meeting of the North Atlantic Alliance, and suggest, if the House agrees, that it be printed as an appendix to Hansard.