



Statements and Speeches

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FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY -- THE STRENGTH AND PROBLEM OF NATO

Remarks by the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, at the NATO Summit Meeting in Brussels, May 30, 1975.

One of the principal paragraphs of the Ottawa Declaration proclaimed the continued dedication of each member of this alliance to the several principles of democracy, respect for human rights, justice and social progress.

That paragraph, more than any other in the Ottawa Declaration, serves to distinguish the NATO countries from those of the Warsaw Pact. More even than that, the dedication contained in that paragraph represents the fundamental strength of this alliance.

Yet, distinctive as they make us, strong as is our alliance because of them, democracy and freedom create for us problems of a kind unknown to the Soviet bloc:

Unlike the Warsaw Pact [leaders], it is not sufficient for us as government leaders merely to proclaim our support for NATO. We must be able as well to persuade our electorates of the benefits of the alliance if we are not to be swept out of office or forced to change our policies.

Unlike the Warsaw Pact [leaders], we are disinclined by instinct to accept without challenge charts and tabulations prepared by military advisers, no matter how articulate and competent those advisers may be. We, and our constituents, insist on the right to cross-examine, and on the right to question.

This freedom and this democracy, which unite us in their defence, are the source both of our resolve and our interrogation.

Without common resolve -- yet, equally, without full understanding of the goals of this alliance --, we cannot force from our peoples automatic acceptance of the NATO credo; we cannot, especially in times of economic uncertainty, count on the willingness of our citizens to bear without question the increasing cost of the defence burden; we cannot maintain indefinitely the necessary dedication of each succeeding generation.

I am satisfied that there is in Canada at this time overwhelming

support for the principle of collective defence -- sufficient to permit my Government to increase the Canadian defence budget by 12.5 per cent last year and another 11.5 per cent this year. I am equally satisfied that this support is the product of the wide-ranging public debate undertaken by my Government several years ago. That support continues today notwithstanding the desire for *détente* and the impact of inflation. It continues because Canadians understand the need for NATO and believe in its constructive aims as well as its defensive concepts. Equally, however, if my colleagues and I find ourselves at any time unable to explain convincingly to Canadians the basic rationale and defence strategy of this organization, that support would diminish as surely as we sit here today.

I have come here, Mr. Chairman, for three reasons:

The first is to state clearly and unequivocally Canada's belief in the concept of collective security, Canada's support for NATO, and Canada's pledge to maintain a NATO force level which is accepted by our allies as being adequate in size and effective in character. As long as the Warsaw Pact continues to increase the size and preparedness of its forces, we cannot afford to leave them unopposed.

The second reason is to urge that we at this table accept as an essential ingredient of consultation the continuous challenging of alliance tactics and strategies, because, unless we, as governments, are convinced of their worth, we shall be in no position to convince our followers or our Parliaments. I plead for more frequent opportunities for NATO heads of government to gather together for consultation, to discuss among ourselves the essential political questions and to suggest the appropriate political responses. I say this because the strength and the credibility of this alliance depend upon its political, every bit as much as its military, character. We as political leaders must consider and be satisfied with the wisdom of the basic strategies and military plans of our advisers. We can best do that by more frequent consultations.

The third reason is to urge that we so organize ourselves as to mount and sustain -- perhaps through CCMS [the Committee on the Challenges to Modern Society], as suggested by President Ford -- a challenge of peace and of human dignity to the Warsaw Pact. Prime Minister Wilson referred to this theme when he drew upon the experience of the Commonwealth Conference and later when he stressed the need to lend emphasis to the MBFR exercise.

President Ford yesterday concluded his address with an appeal that, together, we "build to face the challenges of the future". Some of

those challenges are novel, some are exceedingly familiar. I am optimistic that Western genius, which is at its best when it is creative rather than responsive, will overcome all these challenges.

S/C