



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO

Statements issued on April 4, 1954, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, by the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent; the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson; the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Brooke Claxton; and the Canadian Permanent Representative on the North Atlantic Council, Mr. L.D. Wilgress.

Statement by the Prime Minister

April 4 marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. It is an anniversary of special importance to Canada because NATO was, and is, one of the foundation stones of our Canadian foreign policy. We believe now, as we did when the Treaty was signed, that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization offers one of the best means for the effective defence of our freedom and for developing habits of peaceful co-operation that will bind the Atlantic community closer together.

It was in response to a real and immediate threat to world peace that NATO was created just five years ago today. Since then the Organization has made remarkable progress in building up unity and strength. It has established permanent machinery to provide continuous consultation between member governments. It has brought into being in Europe an integrated defence force under a Supreme Commander and this force is now twice as large and more than twice as effective as it was in 1951.

Member countries have committed themselves to specified contributions of forces and their defence plans are submitted to an annual review by the Organization as a whole.

This pooling of defensive resources is unprecedented in peacetime. We can be proud of the real progress demonstrated by this co-operative achievement. We can also be thankful, for, to NATO, is due in large measure the advance the free world has made from the fear and instability of five years ago.

Because of the very real peril which existed when NATO was first formed in 1949, the efforts of member nations have had to be concentrated on the building up of our defensive forces. While we shall continue to maintain and strengthen these defensive forces, I think it is accurate to say that we now have reached a stage in the development of NATO where increasing attention can be applied to the non-military side of the Organization which was designed not

only to protect our free institutions by arms but to strengthen them by more positive means.

We can be confident that, if we remain united and at the same time prepared to explore every possible means of reducing international tension, NATO, as a supplement to the United Nations, will continue to be a decisive factor in preventing aggression and in attaining that goal of world peace which we all so ardently desire.

Statement by Mr. Pearson

It is not very often that I get the opportunity to celebrate a birthday with my colleagues, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence, especially the birthday of a five-year-old. Today NATO - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - is five years old. Compared to the normal span of human life, of course, or to the life of most of our democratic institutions, that is no age at all. Yet NATO already has some sizable and impressive accomplishments to its credit.

It has been a most important factor in preventing aggression in Europe. It has been instrumental in reducing international tension. And it has developed a close working relationship among its members which has added tremendously to the unity and solidarity of the Atlantic community.

NATO was created when it became clear that the United Nations was being deliberately prevented by Soviet intransigence from establishing a system of universal collective security. Our Prime Minister was one of the first to foresee that those like-minded nations of the free world whose very existence was in danger would have to take special collective measures under the U.N. Charter to maintain peace. In 1947 he said before the General Assembly that nations might be forced to seek greater safety "in an association of democratic, peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for a greater measure of national security".

There have been changes in Soviet tactics - since the day when we signed the NATO agreement for collective security. But there is as yet no convincing evidence - I hope that one day there may be - that the objectives of objectives of the Soviet Government do not remain basically hostile to the free world.

Today the threat to the peace that brought NATO into being may not seem so imminent, but the role that our coalition can play is, if anything, more vital than ever before. The Atlantic Pact must create conditions for the kind of co-operation which goes beyond the present emergency. As the Prime Minister said recently "our very survival and our continued development in freedom and in peace depend upon our ability to look beyond national barriers". Therefore we must move towards closer and closer co-operation within the larger framework of the North Atlantic community.

In this age, when science has reduced our world to a neighbourhood and has also given us the power to destroy each other, NATO offers an invaluable instrument for continuing consultation and co-ordination of policies on questions that might mean life or death.

Statement by Mr. Claxton

When NATO was begun five years ago it was faced with a tremendous task.

Just consider what has to be done in planning and building up the defence forces of a single country and then imagine how much more is involved when this has to be done through the voluntary co-operation of fourteen sovereign states.

Let me tell you, very briefly, what has been done. We set up staffs on an international basis. We then had to work out standard systems of communications and battle procedures and train our forces in their use, so that they could work and fight together. We had to establish a great system of military training areas. We had to set up in Europe alone more than a hundred airfields. Then we had to get to know and like each other so that we could work together in an effective group of military teams.

All that has been done, and it really is a miracle of achievement in international co-operation.

Don't think for a moment though that any one of us concerned with this thinks that we have got enough, but we are all agreed that what has been done changes the whole picture.

Today the NATO forces are strong enough to be a deterrent of aggression. In all this Canada has taken an active part in organization, in planning and in standardization. In the contribution of forces we have met every one of our commitments and done this generally in advance of the planned dates. There are now twelve squadrons of Sabre jet fighters fully operational in Europe and England and they are a formidable fighting force. The First Canadian Infantry Brigade is equipped, trained and ready in Germany. Some thirty-six ships have already been committed to NATO for the defence of our coasts and the protection of convoys in the North Atlantic.

There is nothing second rate about our NATO forces and every Canadian can be proud of our contribution on sea, land and in the air.

This has all been a great effort by the Canadian people for the defence of Canada as well as to preserve peace.

We must, we will keep up and succeed in the objectives set out in the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty five years ago today. The Treaty said that the member nations -

"seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area;"

"are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security."

That is what we are doing in NATO.

Statement by Mr. Wilgress

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed five years ago today. I have been associated with NATO for much of the five years of its existence. Looking back I can see a solid record of achievement. What has been accomplished is seen much more clearly in retrospect than through participation in the day-to-day work. Those of us who are in NATO often feel frustrated and impatient at the long delays in getting things done, but when we look back we can see the remarkable progress that has been achieved since the treaty was signed.

My first association with NATO was the meeting of the Council held in London in May 1950. At that time I was High Commissioner for Canada in London and attended the meeting in that capacity. I was, therefore, more or less in the fortunate position of an observer. I could detect the high resolve which animated the twelve foreign ministers who then composed the Council. At this meeting the decision was taken to set up the Council Deputies which was to have all the powers of the Council when the Council was not in session. Since the Council Deputies were to meet in London, I was asked to serve as the Canadian Deputy and to combine this with my work as High Commissioner.

The Council Deputies first met in July 1950. This was a month after communist aggression in Korea had revealed that international Communism was not above using force to accomplish its aims. The Council Deputies, therefore, entered upon their tasks with a sense of urgency. The most pressing need seemed to be a stepping up in the production of military equipment. Experience of the first two or three weeks of the activities of the Council Deputies induced me to fly over to Ottawa to report to the Canadian Government what I had learned. The result was a decision to embark on a mutual aid programme whereby Canada would provide military end-items to our partners in the alliance. I flew back to London at the end of August but three weeks later I had to cross the Atlantic again to attend a meeting of the North Atlantic Council which was being held in New York in September 1950.

At this meeting the United States announced their intention of adding to the divisions already in Germany for purposes of the occupation. This led to the proposal for an integrated force under one supreme commander. Canada decided to contribute one infantry brigade and an air division of twelve squadrons to this integrated force. At the September meeting there was first broached the question of a German contribution to the defence of Europe. From that time on the association of Germany with western defence became the chief subject of discussion in the Council Deputies. We had many meetings on this subject during the last months of 1950. Before the year was out a meeting of the Council was held in Brussels. At this meeting arrangements were concluded for the integrated force and General Eisenhower was appointed the Supreme Commander for Europe.

The year 1951 was characterized by the negotiations for the European Defence Community, by plans for the reorganization of NATO and by discussions pertaining to the accession to the alliance of Greece and Turkey. Commencing with the Ottawa meeting in September 1951, the Council became a body attended not only by foreign ministers but also by

defence and finance ministers, so that adequate weight could be given to the political, military and economic factors involved. At Ottawa it was decided that a comprehensive review of the capabilities of all NATO countries should be undertaken as a means of providing the military with the forces required. This process was carried further at the meetings of the Council held at Rome in November 1951, and at Lisbon in February 1952. The latter meeting saw the completion of the first comprehensive review with the consequent adoption of firm force goals.

This meeting had revealed the necessity for similar appraisals of NATO requirements and capabilities on an annual basis. This in turn required the further re-organization of NATO. It was, therefore, decided to replace the Council Deputies with a Permanent Council and to appoint a Secretary-General with a competent staff. Connected with this was the decision to establish the NATO Headquarters in Paris.

With the appointment of Lord Ismay as Vice-Chairman of the Council and Secretary-General, the Permanent Council commenced to function in April 1952. This led to a break in my association with NATO, so that I did not witness the growing pains involved in recruiting the staff necessary to service the Permanent Council. I returned to NATO, however, last August when I found that the Permanent Council had settled down very well to their task of guiding the manifold activities of the alliance.

The Permanent Council is a sort of cabinet or board of directors. Under the Council is a fairly complex committee structure. Each Permanent Representative has a delegation of qualified experts who represent his country on the various committees, sub-committees and working parties of the Council. This means that the Canadian Delegation is a composite body with representatives of the Departments of External Affairs, National Defence, Finance and Defence Production. Meetings take place in the Palais de Chaillot, which is the NATO Headquarters. On any day great activity can be seen in the Palais where the representatives of the various countries go to attend the different meetings. Eventually, the reports of the committees and sub-committees come up to the Council for decision. Parallel with this committee work is the activity of the Secretariat. Under Lord Ismay there is the Deputy Secretary-General and three Assistant Secretaries General, in charge of political affairs, economic and financial affairs, and production and logistics. These divisions of the Secretariat are busy undertaking investigations and preparing reports for the use of the Council and its various committees. The Council regularly discusses current political problems. These discussions contribute in a significant way to the cohesion of the alliance.

NATO has become much more than a mere military alliance. While the provision of adequate security is the main concern of the Council and of the Secretariat, discussions take place on other aspects of NATO co-operation. For instance, I am Chairman of the NATO Committee on Information and Cultural Relations. We meet once a fortnight

and discuss means whereby not only can NATO be made better known to the peoples of our respective countries but also in what direction co-operation can be furthered in the non-military fields. As in other fields, we are inclined to feel that progress is too slow, but when we look back we see how the fourteen nations who are now members of the alliance have been getting into the habit of working closely together, discussing their common problems and developing co-operation in many different fields.

It is all very stimulating. The members of the Canadian Delegation are imbued with the keenness that comes from constructive work in a worthy cause. You will not be surprised, therefore, when I tell you that my work with NATO has been the most interesting I have ever undertaken.

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