



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 67/35

CANADA AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State
for External Affairs, to the Canadian Club, Toronto, on
November 13, 1967.

For the first time since the Canadian Government decided to join in advocating the establishment of a peacetime alliance of North Atlantic states almost 20 years ago, Canada's participation in and contribution to collective-security arrangements have come under some questioning by some responsible and serious-minded Canadians. This development has not been unique to Canada; it has been manifested in most NATO countries. This questioning is healthy. We must and do regularly re-examine our foreign policy and defence commitments to determine whether they continue to serve Canada's evolving national objectives. We have recently reassessed with special care the grounds for participating in collective-security arrangements.

We seek for Canada an independent foreign policy attuned to developing world conditions and carefully calculated to promote our many and varied national interests. To this end, we still hope for the eventual fulfilment of our post-war hopes that we might entrust our security to the United Nations. As a step in this direction, we support the growth of the United Nations peace-keeping role and are ourselves prepared to contribute to it. But we also consider that Canada must continue to participate in collective defence arrangements - which represent the pursuit of peace and security through interdependence.

Western relations with the Soviet Union have been gradually improving ever since the death of Stalin. But the process has been uneven. Think back only five years. Khrushchov was still making threatening speeches. The Soviet Union had been trying for four years to cut West Berlin off from West Germany. Soviet missiles had been secretly set up in Cuba and provoked the most dramatic East-West confrontation of the post-war era. Few questioned then - only five years ago - the importance of collective-security arrangements for the preservation of our common security. Indeed, Western governments responded at that time by increasing their forces in Germany - and this included Canada.

How much the atmosphere has changed in five years - and I am pleased to say, for the better. We now look forward with justified confidence to the possibility of achieving an eventual European settlement by agreement with the Russians. NATO has made and is making an essential and constructive contribution

to this process by facilitating and furthering the relaxation of tension which is now generally recognized as the necessary prelude to a settlement in Europe. A nuclear test ban treaty has been signed, and we are well advanced in negotiations with the Russians over a non-proliferation treaty which will restrict the "Nuclear Club". It is reassuring that our satisfaction at these developments is shared by our NATO allies. We are all agreed on the importance of working for improved relations with the Communist countries.

But in some quarters, in all NATO countries, the implications of these welcome developments have, I believe, been incorrectly assessed. It is being argued that the Western alliance can afford to reduce its defences because the Soviet Union has shown that it will not attack the West. One variant of this argument has it that NATO's forces in Europe are irrelevant because the sole deterrent is the United States' strategic forces.

We have, in the Government of Canada, carefully considered this argument in its various manifestations. We have concluded that dismemberment of NATO's forces in Europe at this time would be risky and even dangerous. In spite of improved relations with the West, the Russians have continued, and are still continuing, to develop their already formidable military power. NATO's defence arrangements in Europe have obliged the Soviet leaders increasingly to accept that there can be no alternative to a settlement in Europe. We cannot be sure that their earlier appetite for expansion would not revive if NATO were to lower its defences.

And what would be the political effect in Germany, if the German Government could no longer point to the military support of its allies represented by the forces of the seven NATO nations which are stationed in Germany? In such circumstances, could we expect a German Government to agree to the non-proliferation treaty?

Nor can we overlook the danger of conflict arising out of accident or miscalculation. The continent of Europe remains divided; and Berlin is isolated 100 miles within Communist territory. In spite of this potentially explosive situation, peace and stability have prevailed in Europe during a period in which wars, large and small, have broken out with distressing frequency in most other areas of the world. This remarkable - and to us essential - peace in Europe is due, in very large measure, to the stabilizing influence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And NATO's strength continues to deter the Soviet Union and its ally, East Germany, from exercising their local military superiority to choke off Berlin.

Last summer, Alastair Buchan, speaking at the Banff Conference on World Affairs, expressed his concern over the danger of Western troop reductions in the following terms:

". . . It means not only the end of any flexibility in dealing with European crises; it also means the end of any pretension on the part of NATO that it can protect the security of German citizens in the event of any

form of aggression against Germany, with a consequent lowering of German confidence in the alliance. It also means a distinct loss of bargaining power with Eastern Europe, since there are no signs of reductions of military forces in the Warsaw Pact . . . "

After a careful re-examination of the whole problem since last August, can there be any doubt that, for the present, strong allied forces continue to be required in Europe: first, to preserve stability in that divided continent; and secondly, to promote continuing movement toward improved relations with the Soviet bloc countries? NATO's prudent defensive stance in Europe has contributed to the increasing normalization of East-West relations, and we look forward ultimately to Soviet agreement to a settlement in Central Europe which could be sustained without the presence of Soviet forces. We believe that to achieve these several ends a balance of forces must be maintained in Europe.

Such an approach does not exclude working for balanced force reductions, either by agreement with the Russians or by mutual example. Such reduction could be undertaken without disturbing the present balance and Canada would welcome any progress which could be made in this direction. Indeed, we shall be discussing this matter in Brussels at the NATO meetings in December. If the war in Vietnam were to end, we could make progress toward mutual reductions. Until then and the end of such problems as the Middle East, we shall have to pursue our present policies.

We have also examined the suggestion that Canada consider restricting its contribution to NATO to forces based in Canada. The argument in favour of such a course of action has its attractions. The European nations have grown in military and economic power and are no longer totally dependent, as they were when NATO was founded, on outside aid. Canada's contribution is now, in consequence, relatively far less important to the defence of Europe than it was. But this approach ignores the fact that most of the smaller NATO countries are in roughly the same position as we are: making small contributions which alone are not essential, and under pressure, as we are, to find new sources of revenue for other government activities.

The basis of an alliance is that all members contribute in an appropriate manner. And, since we believe in the continuing importance and promise of the alliance, we see no alternative to continuing to make an appropriate contribution, at the present time, to NATO's forces in Europe.

We are, of course, aware of the attractions of contributing forces to NATO from Canadian territory. In fact, our anti-submarine forces in the Atlantic already represent such contribution, in that at the same time they are committed to NATO and also are an important element in North American defence. With the development of new means of transport, it becomes increasingly possible technically to contribute land forces based in Canada. Moreover, air-transportable forces would fit in well with strategic defence plans which are being developed for

the defence of Europe. However, I do want to add a word of caution. Our existing capacity to transport forces to Europe within a meaningful time-period is limited and sufficient air-lift capacity to transport a brigade group such as we now have in Europe -- even with light weapons only -- would be expensive to acquire. Moreover, any decision to contribute forces solely from Canada rather than to maintain some in Europe must be worked out in a responsible manner with our allies so that the cohesiveness of the alliance and the confidence of its members will not be jeopardized by our action.

Although Europe remains in an important sense our first line of defence, we have had to be concerned about the direct defence of our continent ever since the development of a significant Soviet bomber threat to North America. The main point here -- the inescapable fact -- is that geography has linked us inextricably with the United States. It is almost inconceivable that a Soviet attack would be mounted on the U.S.A. without Canada being involved. In any event, as we cannot know Soviet plans, we cannot in making our preparations ignore Soviet capabilities. No responsible government could do otherwise. I do not care which party holds office -- the conclusion would be the same.

Questioning in Canada about the continuing validity of our air-defence arrangements for North America has recently focused on missile development. Some have argued that with missiles, against which there is as yet no effective defence, having replaced the bomber as the main threat to North America a bomber defence is now meaningless. Others claim that it is impossible to separate bomber and missile defence, and that, to avoid becoming involved in the latter, we should withdraw entirely from the air defence of the continent.

It is interesting, I think, to note that, with respect to North American defence, in contrast with NATO arrangements in Europe, our participation is debated primarily on technical issues rather than on calculations of Soviet intentions. Being technical arguments, however, they are more susceptible of refutation. The bomber threat -- to take the first argument -- is no longer serious because our defences are extremely effective. But the Soviet Union retains over 150 bombers capable of attacking North America. And bombers carry larger loads of nuclear weapons. For example, one bomber could destroy Toronto and go on to destroy Montreal. Therefore, as long as the Soviet heavy-bomber force remains in being, it could become, in the absence of continuing air-defence arrangements for North America, a greater threat than Soviet missiles now are. For this reason, as Secretary McNamara tells us and the other NATO countries, the United States Government will continue to maintain a bomber-defence system. Unless one is prepared for a complete transformation in our relations with the United States, Canada has two options: to make some contribution to the bomber-defence system -- and thereby exercise some control over it -- or to give the United States freedom to defend North America, including use of Canadian territory. I, for one, am not prepared to accept the second.

As for the separation of bomber and missile defence arrangements, now that Mr. McNamara has unveiled American plans for a light anti-missile system, I believe the argument of the critics can no longer be sustained. The American system is to be deployed entirely on American territory and Canada can, if it

wishes, remain outside the system, while continuing to co-operate with the U.S.A. in a bomber-defence system.

I have explained why the Government considers, at the present time, that Canada should continue to contribute forces to NATO in Europe and to co-operate in the defence of North America. But I have also indicated that my early hope that we could trust our security to the United Nations remains alive. Indeed, I look forward to the day when it will be possible to dispense with these two alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Unfortunately, I can suggest no timetable for this transition, the more so because we can not properly anticipate the course and consequence of future Chinese policy. In the meantime, we must face up to the existing situation and accept the implications.

It is important, even while we are making a continuing contribution to collective defence arrangements, that we should be making efforts to increase the United Nations capacity to improve conditions of security in the world. For it remains apparent that the United Nations, in spite of its present difficulties, still offers the best hope of peaceful intervention in certain circumstances. No one would be stronger in support of the view that no nation, no matter how powerful, has the right to interfere in the affairs of other countries. Ideally, intervention should only be under the auspices of the United Nations itself. But we have to examine the facts as they are and as they are presented to us, on the basis of which we have to act at any given moment. It seems to me that it is in the interest of the great powers to encourage the United Nations to play this role, which reduces the risk that they themselves might become involved. No nation is the representative of the conscience of mankind; the United Nations remains the only international organization which, in most circumstances, is acceptable as an impartial outside presence.

But we must not lose sight of the limitations recently pointed up by the withdrawal of UNEF from the Middle East. Nor is it likely that the UN, in the foreseeable future, will undertake to mount combat operations along the lines undertaken either in Korea or the Congo. The limited consensus obtainable at present among the great powers, and also the increased wariness which "third world" countries have shown with regard to UN peacekeeping operations, apply likewise outside the UN framework.

Accordingly, while we can expect some demands on the UN to undertake further peacekeeping operations, we anticipate that, in the near future, the scope will be limited. In our judgment, the field is sufficiently restricted that it would not alone offer a basis for a responsible contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in the world. Hence, even if we disregard the case which I have put for Canada continuing to make a contribution to collective defence arrangements on a continuing basis, I could not, in good conscience, suggest that Canada could make an appropriate contribution to world security by concentrating at the present time only on participating in peacekeeping operations.

Finally, a word on the argument that Canada should reduce its defence arrangements and contribute any funds that would be saved to our external aid programme. I do not wish to appear to question the importance of foreign aid. Indeed, the present Government has significantly increased Canada's foreign aid during the last few years. But a responsible government, in seeking to reconcile national interests which may involve competition for limited resources, strives to find that balance which best promotes those interests.

Are we aware of the evolving balance between military expenditure and foreign aid which has in fact taken place over the years? In 1953, 9 per cent of Canada's gross national product was devoted to defence expenditure. By 1966 this figure had fallen to less than 3 per cent -- a threefold reduction. During this same period (1953 to 1966), allocations to Canada's external aid programmes increased from under \$30 million to over \$300 million -- a tenfold increase. Changes of expenditure of these orders of magnitude surely reflect important changes in balance, but we must be careful not to allow the balance to develop in such a way that Canada is not carrying its share of the defence burden.

The world is becoming increasingly interdependent. The accent, for the great as well as for the lesser powers, is on co-operation and interaction. But the object of policy remains the promotion of national objectives. The effectiveness of national policies should be judged not by the apparent "independence" shown but by the extent to which they promote the whole range of national interests. And it is our belief that pursuit of these interests requires of us a contribution to the defence of our country, our continent and the Atlantic Community, and that it is only on this basis that we can have a foreign policy which is both independent and effective.

S/C