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REPORT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

A CBC broadcast by Mr. Diefenbaker, December 21, 1958, on his visit to Europe, Asia and Australasia.

My fellow Canadians,

As you know, I have recently returned from an extended series of meetings with the heads-of-state and others in Western Europe and Asia. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss and assess the responsibilities which Canada has assumed within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty alliance and the Commonwealth of Nations for the maintenance of world peace and the advancement of the universal brotherhood of mankind.

Tonight I report to you on these discussions, without trespassing on the rights of Parliament to hear my report in detail. In these last few weeks, I have had the honour to speak and listen, on your behalf, to many eminent world leaders, as well as to Canada's Ambassadors and High Commissioners and other Canadians abroad.

In all these talks, I feel sure that substantial progress was made towards our individual and mutual objectives.

Je vous fais part ce soir de ces discussions, sans restreindre pour autant le droit qu'a le Parlement d'entendre, de ma bouche, un compte rendu détaillé de mon voyage. Au cours des quelques dernières semaines j'ai eu l'honneur de m'entretenir, en votre nom, avec les dirigeants de divers Etats, ainsi qu'avec des ambassadeurs et haut commissaires du Canada et d'autres Canadiens se trouvant à l'étranger.

Je suis sûr que, dans tous ces entretiens, nous avons progressé vers nos objectifs tant mutuels que particuliers.

There is no substitute for personal experience - for the "feel" of places and peoples that comes with even a moment's participation in their way of life. My visit to the lands of Asia and of the Commonwealth was made with fresh eyes eager to see, to learn, to absorb and to determine for myself the spirit emerging in those societies.

I have come back more convinced than ever of the importance of these personal meetings with national leaders. The more we know each other, the more likely we are to find amicable solutions of our differences; to understand the viewpoints and problems of others; and to appreciate the basic goodness and goodwill in the hearts of human beings. This is something that can never be communicated through third parties, or by correspondence or diplomatic exchanges.

In essence, I am able to say to you, my fellow Canadians, that there is real hope for the maintenance of the peace in spite of the great problems that still confront us, because there is among most of the leaders of the nations, a determination to confine and confound the schemes and ambitions of those who would destroy that peace. There is a high resolve among the free nations to work together constructively and positively, as never before in history, to maintain a strong and united front as an effective deterrent to aggression.

There is another vital reason for the importance of these talks with world leaders. The normal diplomatic channels are still of the utmost importance, but there are times when direct communication between those in high authority, often by long distance telephone, becomes desirable and indeed essential. I need only mention the fact that there is a world of difference between speaking to someone, under such circumstances, whom you have never met, and the kind of frankness and understanding that is possible with one whom you know personally.

I can think of no one whose personal friendship and understanding has meant more to me in the regard than the Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. In London we resumed those very important discussions which have been going on for some time, on many levels of government, about the trade and other relationships of our two countries. I need remind no Canadian of the importance of those traditional markets for our goods and services, because they have, from the earliest days, been the backbone of our development and prosperity. It is here, and in the related Commonwealth countries of the British trading orbit, that we must expand our mutual trade, if our Canadian economy is to have that level of earning from overseas trade which is necessary to offset our excess of imports over exports in our trade with the United States.

I am glad to report that there are excellent prospects for further expansion in Canada's trade with Britain in the immediate future. One of the major contributing factors has been the success of the Trade and Economic Conference held in Montreal. The spirit of mutual self-help engendered there is still very much alive in Britain and in many other Commonwealth countries.

We crossed from the Old Land to France, where, for the first time, I met General De Gaulle. France has passed through a time of crisis in the evolution of her Parliamentary institutions. I shall not comment on the prospects of the new Fifth

Republic other than to say that I found the new head of that ancient state to be a man dedicated to his fellow citizens and prepared to devote his talents to the cause of France and her allies among the free nations. Our own direct interest as Canadians in the future of that great country was once again brought home to me in my visit to the headquarters of NATO, the Atlantic bastion of freedom against the floodtide of communism.

I must pass over quickly my visit to the other NATO countries, West Germany and Italy. I had previously met Chancellor Adenauer. Our talks added more to my admiration for him and for what he is doing to maintain, for the rest of the free world, the vital salient of the front line of freedom. Here we met our Canadian troops and their families. It is with the greatest pride that I report to all Canadians that the men and women of our Armed Forces stationed in Europe are adding lustre to the name and fame of Canada by their exemplary conduct and professional efficiency.

I stopped briefly in Italy for talks with Prime Minister Fanfani. The people of Italy have long been engaged in an internal battle against communist infiltration. Its success is vital to world peace. It is my impression that the battle is being won and that this great nation, to which the Western world owes so much of its heritage, will stand firm on the side of freedom.

After an all too short meeting with Prime Minister Manushar Eghbal of Iran, I went on to Pakistan, in which delightful country we met many Canadians engaged in the great hydro-electric project at Warsak. This is a tremendous undertaking and the fine spirit of co-operation between Canadians and Pakistanis here is doing much to develop a new and important relationship between Canada and this populous new nation. It is a relationship which must, in the long run, prove mutually advantageous to both our peoples.

In Pakistan, as in India which we visited next, I experienced at first hand the warm desire of all the Asian members of the Commonwealth for the quickest possible bridging of the gulf between the East and the West of the freedom nations. That it can and will be achieved, I have not the slightest doubt, if we do our part. As a member of the Commonwealth, Canada has a significant role to play both in Asia and in Africa, where the vast majority of the members of the Commonwealth now live. The ties that bind are potentially strong. These new nations have joined us of their own free will and choice. They are extending to us the right hand of fellowship and it is my impression that, on both political and economic grounds, Canada is in a better position than any other Western nation to clasp these hands of friendship and so bring about an understanding between East and West.

The highlight of the Indian visit was, of course, our meetings with Prime Minister Nehru. I think he would allow me to say that our few days together developed an earlier acquaintanceship into a genuine friendship.

In Ceylon I met the national leaders in Colombo, the capital, well-known to all Canadians because of its connection with the Commonwealth plan of aid to less-developed Asian countries. This new nation has many problems still to be solved, but I am able to report that Canadian assistance to this, as to other Colombo Plan countries, is already paying dividends in the kind of practical goodwill that will make Canadians and their products acceptable and welcome.

In Malaya, we saw at first hand the struggle of the little nations of Asia against Communism being waged on a still active fighting front. This is one of the vital battlegrounds of the drive of international communism for the heart and minds of the Asians. Malaya seems a long way off to most of us, but I can assure you that the results of the struggle now going on in Malaya will affect the lives of Canadians for many years to come. It is a good thing for us of the West that, whatever our differences in other matters, we still have men like Prime Minister Tunku Rahman in many strategic places in the Asian world, who understand the terrible implications in a victory for communism.

The last of our talks took place in Australia and New Zealand, two Commonwealth countries with which Canada has many traditional political and economic ties. I found both Mr. Menzies, and Mr. Nash of New Zealand, hopeful about the prospects for expanding the two-way trade between our countries. I wish I had time to tell you of the fine relations Australia and New Zealand are developing with the new Asian nations. Quite recently Australia concluded trade agreements with Ceylon, Malaya and Japan, practical examples of that kind of mutual co-operation between East and West which must come quickly if the free world is to survive.

And now, finally, it is proper to ask: "What has been gained for Canada?" My predecessor in office, Mr. St-Laurent, when he returned from a similar visit around the world, outlined the many advantages of his experience and I feel sure that they are as valid today as then. The average Canadian derives a third of his income from our export trade. He has, therefore, a more direct and personal interest in our relations abroad than the citizens of other countries.

The leaders of many states whose activities are of vital concern to Canada have been met, and have themselves now met the new leader of the Government of Canada, which has a deep-rooted tradition of international responsibility. The Canadian viewpoint on many matters has been put before them - and they, in turn, have had an opportunity to express their own views and opinions.

But I would like to think that there are more lasting consequences than even these personal contacts, important though they are. I would like to believe that these visits re-emphasize our Canadian commitments to the highest moral and political standards of international goodwill, and to a continuation of that

participation in the affairs of the world which has given Canada an international status far beyond our numbers and even beyond the level of our physical and monetary contributions of recent years.

During my absence I have, of course, been in continual communication with the Cabinet here at home. I know that we still have problems of our own on the domestic front. It is here that my first responsibility lies. Every possible resource of the Government is being used to combat the national problems and individual hardships resulting from the world-wide economic slow-down.

It is a matter of great personal regret to me that some of these effects are still with us at this time. To inject a personal note, may I say my thoughts are very much with each of you, my fellow Canadians. I pray that the joys of Christmas may be yours in full measure; that the spirit of the blessed season be with you to comfort those in sorrow; to ease the cares of those who are sick; to lighten the burden of those in distress.

Mes chers concitoyens, j'ai en ce moment une pensée pour chacun d'entre vous. Puissiez-vous participer pleinement aux joies que nous procure Noël; puisse l'esprit de cette époque sainte de l'année reconforter ceux qui sont affligés; soulager ceux qui sont malades, et alléger le fardeau de ceux qui sont dans la misère. J'ai grand espoir -- et c'est aussi ma ferme détermination dans la mesure où il en dépendra de moi -- que la Nouvelle Année apportera à tous et à chacun d'entre vous des jours de paix, de prospérité et de bonheur. Bonsoir.

And for the New Year, my hopes are high and my determination firm that, in so far as it may be in my power, the days ahead will bring to each of you peace, prosperity and great happiness.

Goodnight.

S/C