

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE NORTH ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

A statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John G. Diefenbaker, broadcast by the C.B.C. National Network on April 3, 1959, in observance of the tenth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Ten years ago, the representatives of twelve European and North American countries met in Washington to put their signatures to a Treaty which involved an untried experiment in international affairs. They signed the North Atlantic Treaty, a regional alliance within the framework of the United Nations, designed for the mutual defence and economic betterment of countries having a common interest across and about the North Atlantic area.

Now expanded to include fifteen nations, the members of NATO have been meeting this week in Washington to continue the work to which the organization is dedicated. They have been discussing common problems and charting the course to be followed in the coming months. This has been one of the most important meetings ever held by the Ministers of NATO Governments, for during the coming months discussions will be held with the U.S.S.R., designed to remove tensions which have divided East and West in Europe.

When NATO was formed the threat of aggression against the West was most apparent, if not imminent. The unity of the nations forming NATO has acted as a deterrent to the U.S.S.R. in its aggressive designs, and has continued to do so ever since. That peace has been maintained in Europe is in large part the result of the unity of these nations.

NATO is entirely defensive in its aim and purposes, as are its member countries which stretch from the Bosphorus, through the heart of Western Europe, and across the Atlantic Ocean to the western shores of North America.

For the first time in history Europe and North America are bound together in time of peace. How different it is to the days before the First World War and after, when nations large and small tried to live unto themselves alone -- with tragic consequences.

Europe and North America are, of course, different in many ways. Our outlook is not always theirs. Our problems are often different from those of our European cousins. But we are intimately connected by the bonds of common tradition and cultural heritage. Canada's languages and customs are for the most part European in origin. The Canadian social and philosophical background is deeply rooted in European civilization. Canada has always been closely bound to the United Kingdom and France -- to the United Kingdom by the ties of the Crown, the heritage of freedom, by membership in the Commonwealth -- to France, as the origin of so many of her people, by the contribution she made to the building of Canada, and by cultural ties.

NATO is basic to the survival of freedom. It is more than a military alliance. It must develop and expand the economic principles inherent in the Treaty whereby each of the member nations "will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them".

The Atlantic Community has been dynamic and in constant growth. Canada as one of the member nations has opened its door to more than a million immigrants from Europe. It has assisted needy nations to repair the ravages of war. Indeed, since the communist blood purge in Hungary it has opened its doors to refugees from communist oppression in that country to a greater relative extent than has any other nation. This movement of peoples with their talents and skills has enriched Canada.

Our partners in Europe are stronger because of the assistance given them to rebuild and restore their societies. Canada has through immigration come to understand the points of view of the nations represented by the immigrants. Tens of thousands of Canadian servicemen and their families have spent two or more years on guard in Europe and have brought to their hosts an understanding of the life and point of view of Canada.

When I visited our partners in NATO and in the Commonwealth last fall, I had the pleasure of visiting our Canadian Brigade in Germany and our Air Division in France. I was proud to be a Canadian as I watched these men and women who are standing in the front line of the defence of liberty in Europe. I was both proud and pleased to learn of the happy relationships that have been developed with

their French and German neighbours. Canada's service men and women are not only making a substantial contribution to the defence of Europe, they are making Canada known and understood by the people of these two great nations. They are contributing to the growth and development of the Atlantic Community.

In my talks with the leaders of all the NATO countries which I visited, I found a recognition of the need to preserve what we have developed, and to improve and develop the Atlantic Community. Over the past ten years much has been done to weld us together despite every effort of the Soviet Union to break us apart. More remains to be done.

As we enter the second decade in the life of the Atlantic Community its member nations are facing difficult problems, but I am convinced that armed with the determination to stand together and to defend those principles on which our Community is founded, we shall emerge stronger and more united than ever. We shall not reject any reasonable proposal which shows promise of leading to the removal of differences with the Soviet Union, but we will not be persuaded that the cause of peace or of Western civilization will be served by the breaking up of the Atlantic Community.

The builders of NATO builded better than they knew. Its strength, dedication and unity has preserved the peace in the past. The hope of the Free World is that it will do so in the future.

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