



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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### THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING

Statement by Mr. L.B. Pearson,  
Secretary of State for External  
Affairs, made in the House of  
Commons on June 5, 1950.

.... With regard to my journey to London, by an unexpected and possibly symbolic coincidence I found myself concerned during that visit with the two most important international political agencies of our day, the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In London I attended the second formal session of the North Atlantic Council. I also had the privilege of an interesting discussion with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who had just completed a series of consultations with the governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and the U.S.S.R.

It is my firm belief, and indeed it is the principle upon which the foreign policy of this government is based, that the North Atlantic Treaty and the United Nations complement each other, that the aims and purposes of the larger body are sustained and strengthened by the smaller, and that the greater security which the members of the North Atlantic community enjoy by reason of their association together contributes materially to the political stability which is essential if problems of international order are to be solved.

The central purpose of the United Nations, security for all states through general collective action and vigorous international policies to remove the causes of war, remains the objective which this government, and I am sure this country, is prepared to support by every possible means. We continue to believe that in the long run lasting peace can be established only on the basis of universal action. We continue to believe also in the urgent necessity of pressing on toward that ideal; of taking advantage of every genuine move which brings it nearer to realization. So in London we began the final communiqué of the North Atlantic Council meeting with this paragraph:

They -

the members of the council

-reaffirmed the adherence of their governments to the principles which inspire the United Nations Charter and their conviction that common action under the treaty is an integral part of the effort which all free nations are making to secure conditions of world peace and human welfare.

Whether we like it or not, the technical developments of our time are leading us towards "one world". If we do not get there as a result of peaceful co-operation we will almost certainly have that end imposed on us by force at the conclusion of a devastating war. Naturally we want to move towards world unity the peaceful way, and we are more likely to do so if political and economic stability are maintained over as wide an area as possible. That is the reason why the North Atlantic Treaty is a constructive contribution to the objectives of our larger policy. To the extent that it increased the security of the members of the North Atlantic community it also increased their ability to co-operate in the work of the United Nations, to fulfil their commitments under the charter, and also to base their policies on the assurance that "one world" may be attained by peaceful means since no one will risk the attempt to impose it by force.

Therefore I suggest that we must never cease to emphasize that the North Atlantic Pact is for peace alone. I am more convinced of this than ever before since our discussions in London. I can assure the house, if any assurance is needed, that if any member of the North Atlantic group had aggressive intentions or tried to engage in provocative diplomacy - and this of course is not the case - the other members of the group would neither follow nor support that member. There need be no doubt on that score no matter what the so-called communist "partisans of peace" and their misguided followers may say. The nations of the North Atlantic community who are co-operating for peace can, I think, face the days ahead with renewed and indeed increased confidence because of the decisions that we took at the recent London meeting. In a general way the significance of this council session rests in the evidence it gave of the ability of free nations to meet extraordinary circumstances by vigorous and imaginative measures. The North Atlantic alliance was formed in the first instance in response to a physical threat, the threat of an aggression against the members of our community. Against a common danger we agreed to stand together and use our resources collectively for defence and peaceful development. I have always believed, however, that the North Atlantic Treaty was a response to a deeper and more significant compulsion than that of fear. All the circumstances of our times, political, economic, technical and cultural, point to the necessity for greater unity amongst the free nations of the world. And by unity we mean far more than paper agreements for common action in certain contingencies. We mean a genuine coming together of peoples on as wide a front as possible.

We have learned, and indeed all history teaches us, that this is a process which cannot be forced, and which cannot develop except in a favourable climate. We know that it is most likely to prosper amongst people with a common background and similar ideals, and that it must take full account of the realities of national identity, national loyalty and national traditions. In other words, we are faced in our time, in the sphere of international organization, with the old familiar social and political problem of freedom and organization. It seems to me that the North Atlantic Treaty, arising out of the emergencies of the post-war situation, is an attempt of far-reaching importance to solve this problem within an area where success is least difficult.

Many of the conclusions of our meeting in London are of course necessarily secret, because they affect the details of defence planning. Nevertheless, if you will examine the published conclusions of the council, you will find evidence which I think supports my judgment about the importance of the meeting. In the first place we have taken a decision in the military defence field which I think

is without precedent in peacetime. We have adopted the principle of "balanced collective forces" as the basis for our defence. Here is the text of paragraph 5 of the summary of conclusions:

The Council unanimously agreed that if adequate military defence of the member countries is to be achieved it must be along the lines of the most economical and effective utilization of the forces and material at the disposal of the North Atlantic countries. They accordingly urged their governments to concentrate on the creation of balanced collective forces in the progressive build-up of the North Atlantic area, taking at the same time fully into consideration the requirements for national forces which arise out of commitments external to the North Atlantic area.

It seems to me this is no less than the principle of the international division of labour to be applied amongst the members of the North Atlantic community for collective defence. We are now pledged to do within the framework of the North Atlantic alliance what each of us has already been doing within our national defence system. We shall try to agree amongst ourselves which of us is the best able to concentrate on certain types of defence preparation.

This principle may come to mean the further application to defence of new techniques and tactics of scientific warfare; and eventually, possibly, to the abandonment of the old concept of defence by great masses of conscripted infantry, the bulk of which would be reservists called up on the outbreak of war.

In this planning allowance has to be made for the fact that certain states have commitments which are external to the North Atlantic area. Allowance has also to be made for the specially exposed position of some states to meet an initial attack. The acceptance of "collective balanced forces" does not of course imply a strategy by which less exposed countries, or at least countries less exposed to ground attack, can collect their resources of men and material behind the ramparts of sacrifices made by others so that eventual victory can be achieved. North Atlantic strategy cannot mean, and our agreement does not imply, a strategy of liberation after destruction and occupation. There could be no hope for Europe in that strategy because the next time there may well be nothing to liberate.

On the other hand our strategy cannot be based on plans for national action alone, through national forces developed for national territory alone. The new principle recognizes, if I may pick out a purely hypothetical example, the waste and futility of one country trying to build battleships, let us say, if there are enough of these already in the navies of other members of the group. This principle in its turn must rest on the firm assurance that the other battleships, if I may continue that example, will be at your service if you need them. Therefore I think that this decision in favour of balanced collective forces is of vital importance. Of course it is a decision of principle only. Many bridges will have to be crossed before its application can be worked out in practice. We do not yet know how it will affect the detailed responsibilities of any particular member of the alliance. As far as this government is concerned, in our defence policy we have already accepted this principle and have been trying to relate our policy to the defence of an area rather than merely to the defence of a country. We have been going on that principle and we will gladly do what we can to continue its application.

In this field of defence preparation the council also took a number of other important decisions. A beginning has been made by the two defence committees of the council, one military and the other financial and economic, in working out the details of a unified defence programme for the North Atlantic community. The reports of these committees were reviewed and carefully examined, and directives were issued to guide these committees in their future work. To quote from the communiqué, "these directives emphasize that the problem of adequate military forces and the necessary financial costs should be examined as one, not as separate problems". It was recognized that while in present political circumstances defence requirements must come first, nevertheless, it might be dangerous and indeed disastrous if the defence effort in any country were carried to a point where it strained and weakened the economic and social fabric of that country. That is one reason, I think, why the North Atlantic nations must plan their defences as a team. That is why there must be the closest co-operation in planning and in production, and the greatest possible standardization of weapons and equipment, a matter which we also discussed in London. Only thus may it be possible for some, and perhaps most, of the members of the Atlantic community to avoid the economic and social dangers of unnecessarily swollen defence expenditures, which would open the doors to the exploiters of domestic discontent.

In short the Atlantic nations must supply their peoples with guns and butter until guns are no longer needed. How much of each will have to be determined by each country in the light of its own special position and of the general situation. Personally, however, I think it is idle and indeed it could be mischievous to try to lay down formulae and mathematical criteria for the purpose of determining exactly how much each country should do. It may be that the development of a new iron ore field by one country would be a far greater contribution to general security than an additional division of infantry; yet no one wishes to make the comparison, with all its implications, between blood and iron. So we in this North Atlantic group must have, as we do, faith that every member will do its full and fair part in ensuring our collective security. As a result of the decisions we have taken we may now be advised by the agencies we have set up as to the most effective kind of individual contribution we can make to the collective effort. It then remains for the individual governments to decide how this advice and these directives can be made effective by national action.

Other decisions which were important in the field of defence concerned mutual aid and shipping. In London we reaffirmed the principle that self-help and mutual aid are important parts of our defense measures. Again the detailed effect of this decision will have to be worked out. Within the vast area of our alliance, however, there are more than ample resources to meet our defence needs, and tremendous actual or potential productive capacity, much greater than exists or can be developed in the communist despotisms. There are many ways in which we can assure distribution of these resources in a way to meet the demands of the defence programme. Mutual aid is only one of them.

The decision to establish a North Atlantic planning board for ocean shipping is another step of great potential importance in the preparation of a unified system of defence. By this means we hope to be able to foresee and meet in advance any emergency that may arise in wartime in connection with the organization of our merchant shipping in the North Atlantic.

These decisions have carried us a long way, I think, in the preparation of a unified defence system for the North Atlantic community. They are not, however, military decisions alone. A large part of their effectiveness, a large element in the strength of the North Atlantic alliance, rests in the fact that we are not taking decisions about defence unrelated to other problems, and that we are not concentrating merely on military preparations. In this connection I should like to read another part of the council's final conclusions:

In formulating their directives the council proceeded on the basis that the combined resources of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty were sufficient, if properly co-ordinated and applied, to ensure the progressive and speedy development of adequate military defence without impairing the social and economic progress of these countries.

That is a proposition with major implications, and we are able to state it with conviction not merely because we have adopted the principle of division of effort but also because we have written into our treaty, in article 2, a commitment to economic and social co-operation on a wide front. In the light of our determination to proceed with adequate defence measures and at the same time fortify the economic welfare of our North Atlantic community, which is such an important part of our defence, the consideration we gave to article 2 in London takes on a new and added significance. We all agreed that this article is a fundamental part of our pact and that the greatest possible value must be attached to the concept of social and economic collaboration in the North Atlantic community, which it embodies.

The question is continually being asked in regard to article 2 to whether or not we intend to set up some special machinery for this kind of collaboration among the members of the group. Well, it is too soon to answer that question; and of course we can dwell too much on machinery. We have a good deal of machinery at the present time. Sometimes we hear it said that we are going in for harness rather than horse. I think in our North Atlantic and European arrangements we have both horse and harness, and possibly we should concentrate on the production of hay. So at this time I am not able to state that any special machinery will be set up, as a result of our meeting in London, to carry out the principles of article 2.

I should like to explain the line we took in London on this point. There now exists in Europe a very effective economic organization of European states, the Organization for European Economic Co-operation or O.E.E.C. We do not wish either to duplicate the work of this body or to impede it, because it is doing good work. At the same time it seems quite clear that the economic problems of the western world cannot be solved by a purely European body. Yet we cannot suggest to O.E.E.C. that it should transform itself into a North Atlantic council body to make article 2 effective, because it includes a number of states of economic importance which do not belong to the North Atlantic alliance: Sweden, Ireland, Switzerland, Greece, Austria, Turkey, and above all, Germany. In these circumstances, it seems to me that it is extremely important that we should avoid putting ourselves, and the countries of western Europe, in the position of having to make a choice between O.E.E.C. and the North Atlantic Treaty machinery as an instrument of economic co-operation.

To avoid that dilemma, and as a constructive step forward, the governments of France, Great Britain, the United States

and Canada have suggested the possibility that, for the time being, the United States and Canada should enter into informal, but I hope effective, relationship with O.E.E.C. This suggestion was made after consultation with Mr. Stikker, the Netherlands foreign minister, who is chairman of O.E.E.C. I expect that it will be considered by O.E.E.C. itself sometime in the near future. The circumstances connected with this decision were made known to the house in a statement by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), I believe on May 18. We are hopeful that, whatever form of organization eventually emerges, it will develop into an important agency for social and economic co-operation between free Europe and free North America; co-operation which may one day lead to an Atlantic commonwealth of free states.

Independent of this O.E.E.C. development the council, at its meeting in London, and to emphasize its recognition of the importance of article 2, decided to direct its committee of deputies to study and report as to what further action can be taken under article 2 of the treaty, this report is to be made available for the next meeting of the council in September. These studies will refer to both economic and social questions, and consideration will also be given to the possibility of greater co-operation in preparing and making available information about the aims and objects of the North Atlantic alliance. May I quote again, Mr. Speaker, the relative paragraphs of our communiqué, where the council, through its different deputies, was charged with the duty to

... promote and co-ordinate public information in furtherance of the objectives of the treaty while leaving responsibility for national programmes to each country;

consider what further action should be taken under article 2 of the treaty, taking into account the work of existing agencies in this field.

While most of the decisions taken at the North Atlantic Council meeting were, as I have pointed out, decisions in principle, decisions in principle are of little consequence unless the details are worked out and given effect. We discussed for some time the question of setting up some kind of more permanent machinery to follow up our work, and to see that the work is made effective as possible. There were two ways by which this could have been done. One was by making the central figure the secretary-general, and by building a machine around him, an international secretariat under the North Atlantic Council. The other procedure would have been the establishment of a committee, who would meet in more or less continuous session as deputies of the members of the council, and who would be assisted by the necessary secretariat. The latter course was adopted, and the adoption of that course, I hope, will in a sense put the North Atlantic Council into permanent session. It is expected that the governments concerned will appoint their deputies shortly, and that the deputies will then elect a chairman who will become, I suppose, the key figure in this permanent machinery which we set up.

The paragraph in the communiqué dealing with this point reads:

To enable the council effectively to carry out its responsibilities and to exercise them continuously, each government will appoint a deputy to its council representative. Each deputy will be in a position to

give whatever time may be necessary to ensure that the responsibilities of the council are carried out effectively.

In the intervals between meetings of ministers, the deputies, duly authorized by their respective governments, will be responsible, on behalf of and in the name of the council, for carrying out its policies and for formulating issues requiring decisions by the member governments.

This committee will have its headquarters in London, and it will not be surprising if the United States member of the committee is chosen as its chairman.

In conclusion I should like to make a few general observations arising from the meeting in London, and from private discussions which I had there from time to time. I was profoundly impressed by the new spirit of hope in Europe and the United Kingdom. There is certainly no reason of any kind for us to be unrealistically optimistic about what is happening or what may happen, and this is certainly no time for us to lower our guard in any respect. Nevertheless, there is a new feeling of confidence in western Europe itself. Both the United Kingdom and western European countries have made great strides in economic recovery, particularly during the last eighteen months. In this recovery aid from North America has been very important, but the countries themselves, by their own efforts, are primarily responsible for the advances they have made. The recovery of morale in western Europe is perhaps of even greater importance. I think it is not an exaggeration to say that that is due in large part to our North Atlantic Treaty, and the action which has been taken under it. By this treaty western Europe has been given assurance that it will not be left alone to face the dark threat from the east. In this connection the military aid being provided by the United States under the mutual defence assistance programme is of great importance in strengthening immediately the defences of western Europe.

But here again the European countries of the North Atlantic Treaty are not leaning on their oars. They are making great progress, and expending every possible effort to strengthen their own position. The recent French proposal for consolidating with western European coal and steel production under a single control is indicative of the imaginative approach to their problems that western European nations are making. That is a very important development, as I see it, the importance of which may be as political as economic. It may mean a long step forward in ending the ancient feud between Gaul and Teuton, which has caused so many dark things to be written on the pages of European history. I believe that this is an example of the new approach by Europeans to their problems, and we can only hope it will be successful, both politically and economically.

It has become increasingly apparent that the nations of western Europe and North America must stick together if they are to assure their economic or military security. The recent North Atlantic Council meetings in London have, I think, done something to further cement this essential association.

May I conclude, though it may sound a little egotistical for me to do so, by reading, from my own statement at the final session of the council. It expressed my own views better than I could possibly express them in any other language at this time. I said then:

We have done a good week's work. We came here to take further steps to prevent war by strengthening our determination to resist aggression collectively, and our ability to resist it successfully. We have taken those steps.

We have also strengthened the structure of the Atlantic community, now arising out of the destruction of World War II. Our Atlantic community which is a part of the larger community of the United Nations, is now strong in the power which freedom gives, and in the freedom which power makes possible. We are coming together for peace and human welfare, in a deeper and more permanent way than could ever be brought about by a military alliance alone.

Nevertheless, the resolutions on which we have agreed, and the words we have uttered, will be of little avail unless our governments and our peoples translate them into action. I am satisfied that this will be done, and that its doing will make a good contribution to peace and human progress.

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s/c