GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

49/15

"CANADA AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY"

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson, delivered at the Spring Meeting (Third Session, Dinner Meeting) of the Academy of Political Science, Hotel Astor, New York City, Thursday, April 7, 1949.

In this company of scholars, and at this moment in history, I am led inevitably to speculate upon the more permanent implications of the North Atlantic Treaty which has just been signed in Washington. My own experience as a teacher of history is not so remote that I can resist this temptation. I know, of course, from that experience, that almost any attempt I make to relate the North Atlantic Treaty to events in the past, or to project it upon the screen of the future, will involve me unwittingly in some kind of historical heresy. Fortunately, however, this is a dinner, and not a discussion meeting, and my heresies, whatever they may be, cannot therefore be denounced; at least, not until I have departed.

I am sure that the members of this organization have, during these days been doing their own speculating — casting their minds back over the past and forward into the future of the peoples who find themselves in this new and significant alliance. From the point of view of a citizen of Canada, one of the members of this new international community, I should like to make the same kind of experiment.

The important question, of course, is whether the North Atlantic Treaty is only a temporary and limited expedient, or whether it marks a new and far-reaching development in the course of international relations. This is a question of substance, because the way it is answered by the member governments will affect the way they act as parts of the new community. I know that in your capital city as in mine, there are many buildings hastily constructed to meet some temporary emergency. In this context, the meaning of the word temporary has a way of being stretched out, until it is hard to distinguish between what is temporary and what is permanent. People who live or work in these temporary structures often wish that a better effort had been made to forecast the duration for which the need would exist, and that the building had been better done. We shall, within a few days, begin to build the structure for which the North Atlantic Treaty is a ground plan. For this reason, I think we should take a long look into the future, and consider how permanent a contribution the North Atlantic Treaty may make to the progress of international relations.

There can be no question that the alliance has been formed to meet an emergency, arising out of a threat to the security of its members. We had hoped that this security had already been assured by developments in its international organization since the war. Canada sent its delegation to San Francisco optimistically, encouraged by the example of international co-operation which had won the war. Canadians made their contribution to the physical rebuilding of the post-war world, through UNRRA, through military aid to liberated countries, and through a generous policy of commercial credits to foreign governments. Canada stood fully committed to take its part in the building

of a new world, political and economic, and one based on friendly co-operation between all the nations which composed it. We in Canada hoped that our own economic well-being and the national security of our country would be assured through the extension into peacetime of the international co-operation of the war. We have had to admit quite frankly, however, that in present circumstances the organization which we created for this purpose in the United Nations, is not equal to this task.

Unhappily the basic requirements for the full success of the United Nations did not carry over from war to peace. The unity of the Great Powers, upon which so much depended, was soon eaten away by the acids of post-war controversy. At the war's end, a dozen or more great and contentious political issues rose from the political confusion of Western Europe and Eastern Asia. Basically, these problems could all be reduced to one great question. How far would the Soviet Union go in exploiting the post-war situation so as to extend its territory and increase its might? This question was no idle speculation. We had seen the boundaries of Russia extended first in 1939 and 1940 at the expense of Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia and Finland. As the war went on, it became clear that the promise of freedom to Poland would not include these eastern Polish provinces, which were, in fact, eventually surrendered by Poland to the U.S.S.R. After the war's end, parts of Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were also added. By 1945 the boundaries of the Soviet Union had been pushed further to the west than ever before in Russian history.

Not content with this expansion, the U.S.S.R. then proceeded to surround itself with a group of satellite governments, imposing its will upon neighbouring peoples through the local communist parties supported by Russian troops. The list alone of these captive regimes is evidence of the coercion which created them. Who could believe that the Poles, a people that for centuries, with courage and resolve, had fought against all comers for their freedom, would submit of their own free will to Soviet control? For a hundred years, the insistent demand for freedom of the Hungarians, the Roumanians, the Bulgars, the Czechs, and the Slovaks, has been one of the strongest forces in European politics. Only when it has been suppressed by ruthless physical superiority has this force lain dormant. Indeed, we already see in Yugoslavia a sign that the peoples in Eastern Europe find the yoke that has been laid upon them heavy and degrading. The one border territory which has managed to maintain its independence is Finland, but even there the long and menacing hand of Moscow threatens dire punishment if the slightest Soviet interest seems to be in danger, real or imaginary.

The tight control which the U.S.S.R. has established by these oppressive means in Eastern Europe has been given a false facade of international respectability by treaty arrangements. The Soviet government has been charging that the Atlantic Pact is an offensive threat aimed at them. But they themselves had no hesitation in initiating and negotiating -- if the word negotiation can be used to describe their methods -- treaty arrangements in Eastern Europe for their own security, long before the Atlantic Treaty was even considered; and before the United Nations had demonstrated its weakness as an instrument for the maintenance of peace. We are not sure how many treaties and agreements there are amongst the communist states of Eastern Europe, because, in spite of the terms of the Charter, only a few of them have been registered with the United Nations. So far as we can tell, however, there are over fifty treaties and agreements amongst the group of communist states comprising the U.S.S.R., Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Bulgaria. These are variously termed treaties for friendship and mutual assistance; co-operation and mutual assistance; collaboration and mutual aid; economic collaboration and reciprocal delivery of goods, trade and payments. Their total effect, however, is to spread a thick net of political and economic commitment over the areas under the domination of the Soviet Union.

In the presence of the problems created by Soviet expansion, what could we expect of an international organization like the United Nations, which was based on the assumed unanimity of the great powers? How could there be any

unity about the way in which the United Nations was to fulfil its basic function and protect the security of its members, when this Soviet communist expansion was the greatest threat to such security?

That, Mr. Chairman, is the emergency, and the North Atlantic Pact is one answer to it. I have no doubt that it is a good answer. So far as the people of Canada are concerned, I am confident that it represents a firm resolve to stand with like-minded and peace-loving people for the preservation of our freedom. I am equally confident that this is the case with the people of the other nations who, within the next few weeks, will be called upon to ratify this treaty. The question remains, however, whether the alliance does any more than meet the problem of the moment. Will the historians of the future record it as a mere incident in history, like the Kellogg-Briand Pact? Will they set it down as a successful expedient, like the Quadruple Alliance of the period after Napoleon, that tided its members over a period of danger and then disappeared; or will they find in this alliance a great turning point in history? Will they be able to conclude that the events of this week have put in train a series of consequences as fateful to human history as, for example, those which resulted from the association of American Colonies during the War of Independence?

There is, of course, no categorical answer to these questions. The consequences of the alliance will depend partly on the extent to which it fulfils tendencies already present in the history of the Western World. It will depend also on the way in which the members of the alliance translate into action the words which are written in the document. It is possible that the North Atlantic Treaty will prove worthy of no more than a foot-note in the history of this century. We have it in our hands, however, to make of it the title for a new and thrilling chapter.

I am confident that we can do this because I believe that we are building this alliance on solid foundations. It is a principle of political science that political organizations should not be constructed out of materials with poor cohesive qualities. Where they are so built, they are held together only by buttressing, which sometimes requires greater resources than the structure itself. Amongst the members of the North Atlantic Alliance, however, the cohesive forces are strong and compelling, and they may be discerned in every aspect of the national life of the members of this group. I do not need to discuss in this company the cultural and political background which gives unity to the Western World. I am convinced, however, of the validity of this concept.

From the roof of the small hotel in which the Canadian Delegation to the last United Nations Assembly stayed in Paris, it was possible to look out over the city. I sometimes watched this lovely and impressive sight, and thought of the debt which all of us in North America owe to that great centre of light and liberty. In Canada and the United States alike the roots of our culture reach back into the life of Paris, and the political and social growth of both countries would suffer if the enriching influence of that city were blocked off. Then I thought of how, a half century ago, Paris was one of a great circle of cities, in many lands, which together made up a great cultural commonwealth. Vienna, Belgrade, Prague, Breslau, Bucharest, Warsaw, Dresden, St. Petersburg and Moscow, together with many other cities of many states, were the common home of artists, scientists, and scholars, who gave unity and dignity and depth to western culture. How narrowly is that circle now drawn! One by one the great cities of Eastern Europe have been forced for political reasons by the dark invader to cut themselves off from the intellectual life of the west. If the statesmen of the world could bring about a lasting peace, perhaps the most fruitful consequence of their success would come from the stream of ideas that might once again play freely.

If there is a single ounce of aggressive content in the treaty it is to be found, I think, in the intellectual sphere. We have, in a sense, set bounds to a physical area which we mean to defend. We have also, however, defined a cultural area, which we hope to expand and develop. We do not wish to impose our ideas on others. But we can challenge the communist international with an alternative and far more powerful intellectual force -- the inter-

national of the free scholars.

For this purpose we shall need the work of political scientists who will write about our institutions with both knowledge and faith. For a generation now the scholars of the Western World have been dissecting and analysing our society, until we know it with all the tearful intimacy that we know an onion when it is separated layer by layer before our eyes. But we shall need more than analysis to defend our ideas and institutions in a world where they are under constant attack by the fanatical advocates of an alternative system. We shall require the kind of insight which in a doctor makes it possible for him to discern the living tissue from the dead, to discard the latter, and to sustain and nourish what is living. Of this kind of constructive scholarship I can think of no more distinguished example than the studies in the field of international law made by Dr. Jessup, in his days as a working member of this Academy before he strayed off into the jungles of diplomacy (from which I hope he will be brought back alive!). I hope we shall have a great deal more writing of this kind from the whole company of scholars within the nations of the Atlantic Alliance, giving positive formulation to the ideas and beliefs which underlie our way of life.

The North Atlantic Treaty equally gives us the opportunity of taking the initiative in regard to social and economic questions. Throughout the discussions in Washington, the Canadian Government consistently held to the view that the treaty should encourage co-operation amongst the member states as a normal peacetime activity, particularly in economic and social fields. The permanent importance of the treaty will depend in large measure on the extent to which we are successful in using it to deepen and broaden economic and social co-operation amongst free democratic states, and to press forward toward economic and social justice amongst them. By showing that democracy can contribute more to the dignity and well-being of the citizen than communism can ever hope to do, we are making our best ultimate contribution to the defence, the "home defence", against communism. This, however, will not be effective if we rely exclusively on the building up of armed forces or if we allow ourselves to be frightened into reaction and repression. In every country the communists have two great allies, social and economic injustice on the one hand, and political reaction on the other. If we can destroy these allies and build up a strong, healthy, and progressive society on a democratic foundation, we can destroy communism. By achieving this we can take away from the communists the opportunity of representing themselves as the instruments of revolutionary progress. The hope for man's future lies with the free nations, and we must set about demonstrating this in real and practical terms.

The urgent necessity we are under to get on with the constructive work which lies to our hands has, I think, been well put in a recent editorial in The London Economist of March 12, which I should like to quote:

> "The western powers are engaged at the moment on an arduous and in many ways perilous task. They are building for the first time in their joint histories a regional structure of security, political unity and economic co-operation. Its pillars are the Atlantic Pact, the Council for Europe and the various agencies of the "Marshall Plan". Almost every move in this effort of construction is new. Every fresh development demands a concentration of energy and purpose which it is difficult for democracies with their lax methods and easy-going traditions to sustain. Meanwhile, the Russians, who choose to see in the Atlantic world's regional effort a menace to the regionalisation of Eastern Europe they carried through at break-neck speed after the war, are now bent on using every device of propaganda and pressure to prevent the completion of the structure. As the western powers toil painfully up and down the scaffolding, the Russians and their satellites stand on the other side of the fence, jumping up and down, whistling, chanting slogans, flinging a few stones and every now and then, advancing to the foot of the ladder to ask whether the weary builders will not come down for a nice cup of tea and a chat. It is all rather disturbing and at times tempting. But the western builders have only one duty -- which is to get

the roof on to their building. Until they have accomplished so much, attention to what the Russians are doing is not only useless, it is a dangerous waste of time".

A third element of permanence in the treaty is to be found in the relationship which it makes possible between the larger and the smaller members of the alliance. For this reason, the Canadian Government attaches great importance to Article 9 of this treaty, under which the North Atlantic Council will be set up. In this Council, all the members of the group will be equally represented. Through it, the democratic process of reaching agreement through negotiation, discussion and compromise will be carried out. In the event of emergency, the Council will also be the instrument for deciding what policies should be recommended to the members of the group. It is one thing for a group of states to accept as we do under this treaty, common responsibilities, each taking its fair share in discharging them, and indeed, in adding or subtracting from them. It is, however, quite a different thing for one, two, or three states to assume that they can make decisions which may have far-reaching consequences for other countries and all peoples, and then, to expect these other countries to take part in solving the problems which those decisions have raised. There are times, no doubt, when the requirements for consultation and for co-operative decisions must be subordinated to the necessities of a grave emergency. But if there is to be genuine collective action, those occasions must be reduced to a minimum. This can be done by making full and effective use of the North Atlantic Council as agency for collective consultation and collective decisions. Here is an instrument through which we can demonstrate that free nations can work together for their common good, without any one of them sacrificing unilaterally its control of its own affairs, or even being subjected to any undue pressure from stronger or more strong minded members of the group.

Finally, I think the North Atlantic Treaty gives promise of making a permanent contribution to human welfare because in taking this step we are setting out squarely on the main road towards world organization. At the end of the war the people of the world demanded, in terms that could not be mistaken by any government, that in future trial by such hard ordeal should not again be necessary. As they looked back on the causes of the conflict they saw many occasions when the free nations, if they had acted in harmony and in strength, could have dissipated the dangers which beset them. War had taught at least this one lesson, that the nations must act together not only to keep the peace, but build a peaceful world. As an instrument for such collective action, they were determined that an international organization must be set up. This was the road on which we started when the United Nations was established. Unfortunately, it is now evident that we made this start in a gear that was too high. Perhaps that accounts for our bumpy and jerky progress during these early years of the United Nations; perhaps that is why the motor has shown a tendency to stall. The North Atlantic Alliance is a similar machine. We are starting it in a lower gear, but we are on the same road. I think there is a good chance that in our smaller, lower geared machine we may be able to give the United Nations a starting push, and help it to "get rolling" in the way we originally intended. In any event, we are not abandoning it, nor will we in any way impede its progress. I know that Canada will not take part in any activity under the North Atlantic Treaty which contravenes the principles or purposes of the United Nations, or which is provocative or aggressive in character. I feel sure that the other governments which have signed this treaty can give the same pledge. The aims and purposes of the North Atlantic Treaty are precisely the same as those stated in the Charter, and the effect of the proposed alliance can strengthen the United Nations by creating conditions in which it can do its best work.

There is, moreover, nothing in this treaty that should produce an exclusive or isolationist attitude. The world is too small and its parts too interdependent even for regional isolation. Because we shall have increased the measure of our own security, we shall not cease to be concerned about the welfare of states in other areas. The British Commonwealth of Nations, for

instance, will be no less durable if two of its members sign this treaty. We shall continue to be aware that the various regions of the world are interdependent in security matters. We hope that elsewhere in the world peace may be strengthened by agreements similar to the North Atlantic Treaty, the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, or by associations such as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Canadian people still hope that the problems of post-war settlement which have prevented the United Nations becoming what it was originally intended, may be solved. We hope, moreover, that the United Nations itself will contribute to solving those problems. So far, negotiations either inside or outside the United Nations on the major issues which divide the U.S.S.R. from the rest of the world, have produced little but failure and frustration. No doors are closed, however, and no one has permanently left the conference table. As far as Canada is concerned, no process or negotiation is too onerous and no conference too tedious, that will lead towards settlement. We for our part, are prepared to support every effort in every council, conference, committee, working group, or whatever other agency of negotiation may be suggested, to solve the problems which exist between the Western World and the Soviet Union. More than that, we believe that by these methods the long-term problem of security can best be solved. In the meantime, the North Atlantic Treaty will serve as an instrument which, by strengthening the position of the free democracies, will make it possible for them to use the United Nations with greater confidence and more hope of success.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried to suggest some of the reasons that convince me that the North Atlantic Pact has the breath of life in it. I can sum them up by saying that the treaty is both a consummation and a new departure. It is a consummation in the sense that it results logically and naturally from the closely related background and the common experience of its members. The Western World has already put together a complicated network of interlocking political and economic institutions. We have now the material for a closely knit North Atlantic Community. The North Atlantic Treaty not only protects this accomplishment, but also gives us a framework within which we can fit the pieces together into an ordered whole. It is a new beginning because of its enormous possibilities for good. It will help, I think, to eliminate some of the stupid and dangerous talk of the inevitability of war which is becoming too current in certain quarters at the present time. There is nothing inevitable about war; there is nothing unchangeable about evil. If we of the free world can pursue the firm and constructive policies of resistance to communism that are now in train, refusing to be dazzled by delusions of appeasement or stampeded by the provocative counsels of panicky men, we may emerge from the wastelands of our post-war world into greener fields of human achievement. It is because the North Atlantic Treaty can make an important contribution to this forward move that the people of Canada give it strong and sincere support.

S/C

- - - - - - - - - - - - -