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CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Atlantic Treaty Association, Ottawa, September 15, 1964.

* Indicates paragraphs delivered in French.

I have great pleasure this evening, on behalf of the Canadian Government, in welcoming you to our capital city. In the space of little more than a year we have been privileged to act as host to a ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council and to the present Tenth Annual Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association. This has been not only a privilege but also an opportunity, an opportunity of bringing our friends and partners from within the Atlantic community into closer contact with Canada.

* Let me say that Canada possesses, in a high degree, the characteristics of what we may call a typical country of the Atlantic community. We have inherited two great streams of Western culture; we are constantly reminded of our European origins by the ties of blood, of language and of thought. These streams have important tributaries, which are immigration, travel and study, as well as the many contacts between individuals and institutions of our respective countries. But, though we stem indeed from European stock, we are first of all North Americans, and this geographical fact determines our manner of living and our way of thinking. We are aware, too, that the thermonuclear age, which has diminished the effect of distance, has placed us between two nuclear giants.

* This diversity of origins we regard both as an asset and a challenge. We try to meet the challenge in a spirit of mutual understanding, tolerance and conciliation. This formula - mutual understanding, tolerance and conciliation - which has nothing magic about it, is just as necessary for the Atlantic community, I think, as it is to us. I use the term "Atlantic community" without hesitation since, for us, NATO transcends the idea of a mere military alliance. The first objective of NATO, chronologically speaking and according to the logical order of priorities, has undoubtedly been to ensure our collective security. But we conceive

this organization as an institution evolving naturally into a permanent association of peoples with common traditions and ideals. Such a conception, I believe, gives the small and middle powers on both sides of the Atlantic the best opportunity to play their part fully in the Atlantic alliance.

A decade and a half has elapsed since the North Atlantic alliance was first forged. In that decade and a half the world has not stood still. Inevitably the question has arisen - and it is right and proper that it should have arisen - where we should go from here to assure the continued capacity of the alliance to respond effectively to the changing requirements of the world of the 1970's and 80's.

I should like to put before you some specifically Canadian reflections on this complex of questions.

Defence Policy

In the field of defence, Canada has begun the process of reshaping its armed services to meet the tasks they are likely to be called on to perform in the next ten to 20 years. The Canadian White Paper on Defence that was issued in March of this year is the basic document for the Canadian defence review. There are two aspects of the White Paper to which I should like to draw particular attention. First, it recognizes the vital need for co-ordination between our foreign and defence policies. Second, while the White Paper involves no change in our basic commitments to NATO, to North American defence or to international peace keeping, it reflects our intention, by means of reorganization and integration in the armed forces and by improvements in air transportability and mobility, to have in addition a small, highly-trained force for effective deployment at short notice in circumstances ranging from service within the NATO area of Western Europe to UN peace-keeping operations. Flexibility and mobility appear to us to be essential elements in containing potential hostilities and guarding against the risks of escalation.

As far as the alliance itself is concerned, there is still a long way to go towards completion of the review of NATO defence policy that ministers required at the Ottawa meeting in May 1963. While I should not wish to overstress the problems of the alliance in that regard, I cannot escape the feeling that the long-term effects of not achieving some agreement in the fields of strategy, military integration, nuclear control, command structure and cost-sharing are bound to detract from our effectiveness as an alliance in using the forces we have at our disposal. I believe that the time has come to face these problems and honestly to deal with them with the requisite boldness and imagination. In particular, I believe that they point to the need for some re-thinking, first with regard to a greater sharing in the military direction of the alliance and secondly in regard to the relation between the civilian and military arms of the alliance.

A moment ago I referred to the changes that have taken place in the world in the 15-odd years since the NATO alliance came into being. One of the major changes to have occurred during that period has been the economic recovery and political resurgence of Western Europe. This is a development that Canada welcomes. It is also, of course, a development of central importance to the alliance, not only because of the great strength, in terms of power and resources, that Western Europe has brought to the alliance but also because, inevitably, it was bound to have some implications for the structure of the alliance as such.

There are those who think that the alliance may have been slow to adapt itself to these new circumstances, and that may well be so. If it has been so, the reasons for it are perhaps not too difficult to detect. As individual nations, we have, I think, all of us adapted to the changing patterns of world relations over the past decade or so of which the revival in Western Europe has been one of the most striking. But, as members of an alliance, we were bound to take certain other factors into account. First, we must be sure, in whatever steps we take, that the net effect is to strengthen and not to weaken the alliance. Secondly, there is the inescapable fact of the overwhelming power of the United States and its custodianship of the nuclear deterrent. This is, of course, crucial to the effectiveness and credibility of the alliance and we, as Canadians, attach the utmost importance to it. Thirdly, we must not forget that, throughout the period when the pattern of power and resources within the alliance was changing, the alliance as a whole continued to be confronted by the overriding external challenge of the Soviet Union. And it is significant, I think, that whatever may have been the preoccupation of the members of the alliance with the need for internal adjustments, the alliance collectively and its members individually have never flagged in their determination to stand up to that challenge. Our common planning to meet the Soviet threat to Berlin and the confrontation over Cuba some two years back provide, I think, forceful demonstrations of that point.

The fact of the matter, then, is that some Western European countries feel that they should have a greater share in the military direction of the alliance. Some of these countries have tried to meet this problem by creating a national nuclear force. This is not, however, a feasible course for most members nor do we regard it, on balance, as a desirable course -- certainly for us -- to follow. There have also been suggestions for a partly multilateral approach to this problem, but this solution does not really meet the preoccupations of those who are looking for a greater share of responsibility within the alliance. We think there may well be a middle course that has not been sufficiently explored. Could we not make use of our existing machinery to bring about a greater sharing in the military direction of the alliance, particularly in the areas of the command structures, strategic planning and targeting as well as the sharing of costs. To insist that some countries can now make a greater contribution to the common burden without coming seriously to grips with the actual sharing of military direction seems to me to be as unpromising as the reverse line of approach.

A greater sharing in the military direction and a greater sharing in the common burden are two sides of the same coin. Both would be designed to give a greater number of member states a more responsible stake in the alliance.

The other fundamental change of attitude which we believe is necessary is in the relation between the civilian and military arms of the alliance. Within our own countries, we have all found in recent years that there must be a close interrelation between our foreign and defence policies. In the complex world of 1964, it is simply not feasible to try to compartmentalize the diverse ways in which threats to our security can and do materialize, and this point is prominently made in our White Paper on Defence, to which I referred a moment ago. That is why civilian and military policy-makers must each know what the other is doing at all times. Yet in NATO we are still very short of this kind of co-ordination between the two arms of the alliance. The military planners put forward requirements without due regard to the political and economic factors that are bound to weigh heavily with governments. The civilian side of governments, as a result, are inclined to pay less attention to their military advisers and this in turn tends to generate frustration on the military side. I am sure we must somehow break out of this vicious circle.

East-West Relations

May I now turn to some of the major political problems that we must face in the coming years? Relations between the Soviet world and the West are at one of those stages where prediction is a particularly precarious exercise. While there are no immediate crises with the Soviet Union, there is also no apparent movement toward settlement of any of our major differences. I do not believe that we need be discouraged by this state of affairs, particularly when we reflect on the factors that have brought it about. Among these I include our firmness in meeting the Soviet threat wherever it has been directed and, of course, in particular over Berlin; the realization by the Soviet Union of the appalling risks of thermonuclear war; the internal changes and problems within the Soviet world; and the increasingly centrifugal forces within the Communist camp which are being given impetus by the growing split between the Soviet Union and China. If we maintain our military strength and political cohesion and do not lose our nerve, there is a good chance that, in the long run, events on the other side may create the necessary conditions to permit the start of serious negotiations on the central problems dividing us, including, notably those of Germany and Berlin.

Meanwhile, we cannot afford to remain inactive. First, we should make it clear at all times to the other side that we are willing to negotiate seriously, with the aim of achieving solutions that do not give undue advantage to one side or the other. Secondly, we should continue, within the alliance, to try to define the nature of the solutions to be sought in negotiations with the Soviet world when the time comes. In this connection I am, of course, thinking

in particular of Germany and Berlin. Thirdly, we should take advantage of the present atmosphere to seek settlement of secondary issues and, to the extent possible, improve our bilateral relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. There is much we can do in this way by means of increased trade, by visits and by cultural and scientific exchanges. In Eastern Europe, the opportunities in that regard seem to me to be particularly promising. If, by increasing our contacts with these countries, we can break down the barriers of misunderstanding and contribute to conditions in which those countries are enabled to give stronger expression to their national interests, then surely we are working towards a useful objective. I believe we are all in agreement on this approach and each of us in his own way is trying to make progress in the bilateral field.

In all this, there is one important condition to be observed. While world conditions today probably leave us all with somewhat greater flexibility than previously in the conduct of our bilateral relations with the Communist world, the need to tell one another in NATO what we are doing and why is in no sense lessened. Indeed, unless we maintain our habit of working and consulting together, mistrust will tend to set in and we shall lose sight of the fundamental reasons that keep NATO together and become obsessed with our differences.

Economic Co-operation

There is one other sphere of co-operation among members of the Atlantic community to which I shall like to refer this evening. This is in the economic realm. It will be recalled that Canada has from the beginning attached great importance to that kind of co-operation which is envisaged in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Since the early days of the Treaty, much progress has been made in that direction. We have set targets for economic growth that are intended to result in a fuller mobilization of our great resources. We have co-operated in arrangements designed to channel a growing volume of assistance to the less-developed countries for their economic development and to improve the terms on which such assistance is made available. We are embarking on negotiations that we hope and expect will substantially reduce the barriers to world trade. We are also engaged in ensuring that the expansion of world trade is not held up by any inadequacy of the means of arrangements for financing it. And we continue, of course, to look at all these problems in the context of the confrontation between the Soviet and Atlantic worlds.

It is only fair to say that much of the economic co-operation I have described has been conducted within a somewhat wider framework than the NATO forum. In view of the magnitude and scope of the problems requiring a co-operative approach this should come as no surprise. I should add, however, that there has been in all this no attempt, either deliberate or unconscious, to perpetuate the division of the world into rich and poor. On the contrary, we have tried in all we have been doing to bear firmly in mind our responsibilities

to the world at large, and in particular to the less-developed countries, which depend so greatly for their rapid economic advancement on a favourable world climate and on enlightened policies being followed by the richer countries. It was recognized, I think, at the recent UN Conference on Trade and Development that, unless the richer countries can co-ordinate their policies in the economic realm, the chances of their making the fullest possible contribution to an improvement in living standards in the less-developed countries will be appreciably lessened.

I have been speaking about some of the things to which we, collectively, as members of the alliance, might direct our attention. But, of course, it is of the essence of the conception of an Atlantic community that we should not only mend our collective fences but that we should actively cultivate our relations with one another.

The Atlantic community spans a wide and varied geographical area; it also encompasses a wide and varied range of national interests and preoccupations. If the bonds holding such a community together are to hold firm and - as is our common desire - to grow stronger, it is indispensable that we should know more about each other. I can assure you that we in Canada attach the highest importance to the cultivation of closer contacts and relations between the individual members of the Atlantic community and that, for our part, we shall do what we can to that end.

International Peace Keeping

I should like now to turn to an aspect of Canadian foreign and defence policy that is of particular interest and concern to Canadians, that of international peace keeping. I make no excuse for doing so before an audience primarily interested in the Atlantic alliance, for in the problem of Cyprus we have an example of a UN peace-keeping operation that directly affects two members of NATO and, indeed, could, if not settled, have serious implications for the future of the alliance itself. To some of you, Canada may appear to put too much emphasis on this particular way of keeping the peace. We do so for two main reasons:

first, because, though our defence policy is based on contributions to NATO, the defence of North America and international peace keeping, it is in the latter field that we believe, as a middle power, we are able to make a distinctive contribution;

secondly, because we believe that in a thermonuclear world, where the Communist threat is now primarily subversive, and in the world of newly-independent and economically under-developed countries in which conditions of instability and disorder are apt to arise, an international force to keep the peace or hold the ring while negotiations take place is vital if we are to avoid the dangers of escalation to nuclear war. Whether we like it or not, we live in a shrinking world. Local hostilities, whether in Southeast Asia

Africa or the Mediterranean, if not contained quickly, can have as great an impact on our lives as an outbreak of hostilities in the more familiar trouble spots of direct concern to NATO.

Some form of international peace keeping will be necessary for many years to come and, while we hope and have, indeed, urged, that a permanent international force will be established, we realize that we are still far from achieving this goal. Meanwhile, we hope countries eligible for peace keeping will consider earmarking units of their regular armed forces for UN service; we favour the establishment of the necessary defence planning within national military establishments and the UN Secretariat; and we have proposed an exchange of experience amongst interested governments on the special military problems that arise in peace-keeping operations. To this end, we expect to hold a working-level meeting in Canada later this year where the countries with past experience in peace keeping can pool their experience so that we shall have available for future operations sources of co-ordinated information on the practical military problems which have been encountered by the UN forces in the Middle East, the Congo and Cyprus.

I believe each member of our alliance has a direct interest in encouraging peace keeping to become a recognized part of the international scene. In this we all have our individual role to play. Some of us may be able to earmark forces as we and our Scandinavian and Dutch friends have done. Others may be able to provide the logistic support to enable international forces to reach their destination quickly, as the U.S.A. has done over the years. All of us have the duty of supporting those operations fully in the UN and of contributing our due share to their cost.

Cyprus

As you know, Canada took a leading part in support of the establishment of the UN Force in Cyprus, and has been contributing what is now the largest contingent in the Force. Canada has also been paying all the expenses of its contingent. We knew before accepting participation in the Force that this would be a demanding assignment and that there might be no early solution to the tense and dangerous situation in Cyprus. But so far it has been possible to contain an explosive situation, which might have led to a major outbreak of hostilities involving two NATO allies. It may be debated whether differences over basic political issues have or have not been narrowed. At least an atmosphere has been created in which negotiations can take place and the situation on the island has been held in check. In all this the UN Force has played a magnificent role.

There is, perhaps, one further word I should say about Cyprus. As it happens, both the UN and NATO find themselves involved in this situation. NATO's concern is not with the situation in Cyprus proper or with the future arrangements on that island. Its concern is with the dispute which the Cyprus problem has caused between two

of its members and with the consequences of that dispute for the alliance. The involvement of NATO and the UN is not, therefore, competitive but complementary, and each has an interest in seeing the other's efforts yielding success. Indeed, this is very much the way in which we in Canada look upon the responsibilities of NATO and the UN in the wider world perspective. We regard NATO as essential to Canada's security and to that of our allies. We think that, whatever the changes that may be in prospect on the international scene over the next decade or so, there will be a continuing and essential need for the NATO alliance. In this firm support for the North Atlantic Treaty and community, we can see no possible conflict with our role as a loyal and responsible member of the United Nations. For the United Nations, too, is pre-eminently involved in the preservation of international peace and security, and the part it plays in that regard clearly could not be played by any other organization.

Conclusion

If we are to continue to meet the challenges that face us we must remain militarily strong, politically flexible, and economically dynamic. It may well be that the major dangers to world peace will occur outside the strict Soviet-Atlantic context. With that in mind, we must close the gap between developed and under-developed countries; we must encourage domestic reforms to remove inequities in wealth and standards of living; we must overcome racial inequality and conflict; and we must create conditions that will limit armed conflict in a world made up of many independent nations. The West cannot live in a vacuum, concerned only with Atlantic affairs and relations with the Communist powers, for the battleground on which our future as a community will be decided is world-wide. Each of us has a responsible part to play in this wider spectrum and, provided we play it, I have every expectation that we shall be able to maintain a peaceful world and ensure the continuation of a dynamic Atlantic alliance.

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