



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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No. 54/39 THE POSITION OF GERMANY IN INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made at the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, September 7, 1954.

When I had the privilege of speaking at the International and Health Day luncheon at the Exhibition two years ago, I tried to answer the question, "How is NATO doing?"

On that occasion, I made no mention of any other international problem than that of NATO. It is no reflection on the continuing significance of this particular question, but merely underlines the world-wide character of our share of responsibility for a peace, which is now indeed indivisible, to recall that during these two years much of our interest and effort and anxiety has been centred on areas in Asia, which are farther removed geographically than in other respects from Western Europe and the North Atlantic community. Today, Canadian troops remain armed and on guard in a Korea which is not yet at peace, while other Canadians are facing the hard and ungrateful, if honourable and important task, of supervising the implementation of the armistice settlement in Indochina. We are, I think, accepting - and it is right that we should - our fair share of international responsibility for maintaining peace and preventing aggression, not only by our defence effort at home, but by our participation in collective action, both in the Atlantic and the Pacific.

While Asia is today a centre of anxious concern for Canadians, the question I posed at this luncheon two years ago, "How is NATO doing?" remains just as important today as then. Indeed, it has a new and special significance at this particular moment, when it has been made clear by the action of the French Parliament that the proposals that had been worked out and the protocols that had been signed for associating the German Republic with NATO, through EDC, cannot be put into effect. While the other members of NATO deeply regret that decision in Paris, we should try to understand that reasons behind it, and draw the appropriate conclusions based on something more solid than disappointment or frustration. We must accept it, not as putting an end either to the healing and hopeful process of European integration, or to the association of Germany with the Atlantic collective defence system, but as necessitating an urgent search for an alternative method by which these essential objectives can be achieved with a minimum of delay.

There is no doubt that the rejection of EDC has been a setback in this task, but that does not justify defeatism, despair or recrimination; the very things that the Communist forces, who are so bitterly opposed to European unity and North Atlantic integration, gleefully hope will happen as a result of the Paris decision.

The Premier of France, the Government of which has rejected EDC, has, himself, already reaffirmed the goal which is the one we must reach.

We should remember his words, uttered after the failure of the Brussels Conference:

"The French Government", he said then, "intends that Germany should be fully associated in another part of the same statement he used the word 'integrated' with the Western Community. It excludes any neutralization of Germany and is opposed to any settlement which would leave it isolated in the heart of Europe."

Those are wise words, and represent, I think, the policy of all the governments, and the opinion of the great majority of the people of the North Atlantic countries, excluding, of course, the Communists. It is also recognized in Germany itself as the policy which best corresponds with their interests, though its rejection or delay might release and strengthen forces in Germany which would work towards other more dubious ends with unhappy results.

I realize, of course, that there are difficulties, and even dangers, in working out this policy. These require that we should proceed carefully. They may well preclude an automatic and simple solution, such as immediate and full membership, say, in NATO without previous arrangements agreed between Germany and the NATO members, particularly with the three countries, the United Kingdom, United States and France, who have special responsibilities in Germany under the Occupation Statute.

It is also necessary, and this is especially true of those members of NATO across the water from Europe, always to keep in mind the fears, the feelings and, indeed, the memories of Frenchmen, and other continental neighbours of Germany who twice in this century have been the victims of military aggression and have borne the burden and the humiliation of military occupation. With our eyes to a better future, we must not allow the tragedies and miseries of historical experience to determine policy. But it is hard to prevent such experience from influencing attitudes.

We should, furthermore, not ignore the possible effects of German integration into the Western system on the policy of the Soviet Empire, which now includes, we should not forget, not only a substantial part of Germany this side of the Oder-Neisse line, but also Russian and Polish territories east of that line which were German before 1939.

While German integral association with the West must not, of course, be considered as freezing the present division of Germany (the Germans cannot be expected to accept that), on the other hand, it does not commit the

rest of us in any way to a unification of Germany by force or a restoration by force of lost German territories. We should make that perfectly clear, both to the Germans and to the Communist powers, as we face these problems in the days ahead.

It will be argued, as it has already been argued, that German association with the West will be considered by the Soviet Empire as an irrevocably aggressive move, will remove any hope of ending the cold war, and will increase the danger of it becoming a hot one. The short answer to this argument is that the aggressive policy of Soviet imperialism has itself made necessary the participation of Germany in our plans for collective defence. Until there is a genuine change in that policy, we would be foolish to allow either Soviet threats or Soviet blandishments to affect the arrangements we consider necessary, and these do include a German contribution to the common defence.

While, then, there are difficulties and even some dangers in the policy of full and integral German association with the Western collective system, is there any alternative which would not be not only more difficult, but also more dangerous to peace?

One such alternative is to keep Germany neutralized and disarmed.

This solution may have its appeal, especially to those who have suffered from the might of German arms. It is one which, under certain conditions, might have been practicable as well as acceptable. Unfortunately, those conditions do not exist. If it was impossible to keep Germany neutral and disarmed in the twenties, how can that be done now, with the victors of the last war divided and bitterly hostile, and in the face of the control of a rearmed Communist East Germany by an aggressive mighty Russian imperialist power. Is Russia likely to give up that control for a genuine international system of supervision of a united Germany which, in its turn, assumes a situation where the East and West would work amicably and altruistically together for a common peaceful purpose? The question answers itself from the history of the last 10 years. And even if it were possible, how long would a dynamic, powerful and proud people like the Germans be willing to accept a position of this kind?

The neutralization and disarmament of Germany, in short, would be difficult under any conditions; impossible under present ones. It would, in any event, leave Germany a vacuum in the middle of Europe. For nature a vacuum may be something to be abhorred. For Communist imperialism it is something to be filled and exploited.

A second alternative would be to do nothing, continuing as long as possible the present arrangements and hoping that something would turn up. This would be a futile and negative course. What turned up would probably be a Germany, increasing in power, with growing national feeling, taking advantage of every opportunity to end the occupation. At best such a policy would leave an increasingly resentful Germany. At worst, the results might be reminiscent of the thirties.

Another alternative would be to give West Germany back her sovereignty now, and unconditionally; and again hope for the best. This might be followed by a separate alliance between Germany and one or more of those Western powers which desired it; or it might leave West Germany outside any collective arrangement in the hope that if there were trouble she would line up with us.

Either course would mean, I think, the end of the Atlantic alliance that we have been building up, and which is now our best deterrent against aggression. It would also end the move toward European unification which through these dreary postwar years had been the bright hope for security and peace and prosperity in free Europe, pointing the way to a future when the old struggle of Gaul and Teuton would disappear in a new and better European system.

We return, then, to the only possible solution: bringing a free Germany into close association with a group of other free countries in a manner which will permit Germany to contribute to collective security, but which will ensure that she not become strong enough to dominate or control the alliance or any of its members.

This, it was hoped, could be done by the EDC linked to NATO. That hope has been destroyed. Can a different kind of EDC, with more limited supranational powers, and a wider membership, take its place? Not, I should think, without many months of negotiation and many more months of parliamentary discussions before ratification. But there may be no longer enough time for this, and as each month passes, the difficulties in the face of such a solution will increase.

There is left, then, the association with NATO of a Germany, with her sovereignty restored and the occupation ended, brought about in a way that will remove the anxieties of Germany's neighbours, and which will strengthen the whole Atlantic system of collective defence and, therefore, strengthen the peace.

Furthermore, a Germany linked with NATO should not hinder, indeed it should even help the related move towards closer unity among NATO's European members. While this is a question for European countries to decide, and too much counsel and advice from overseas is of doubtful value, nevertheless, a Canadian possibly has the right to express his view that it would be a grievous tragedy, the effect of which would extend far beyond Europe, if the end of EDC meant the end of that inspiring and imaginative move to European unity to which EDC was dedicated. The free peoples of Western Europe, in an age when atomic warfare makes a mock of old boundaries and old fears and old prides, will surely rise above these present difficulties and will not permit the progress already made to be stopped or reversed.

Surely it is important, for all these reasons, that a new attempt to associate Germany with the Atlantic system should be pressed quickly and vigorously and steadily until the desired result is achieved. This, however, is not the same thing as saying that an international conference at which final decisions would be

taken or even attempted, should be held the day after tomorrow. My own experience confirms the view that conferences without careful preparation often do more harm than good.

In this essential preparatory work of consultation and in the reaching of decisions about this problem of what to do about Germany now that EDC has gone, the NATO Council should, I think, be used to the utmost. This does not mean, of course, that special negotiations by the three occupying powers may not have to be carried on with the Bonn Government, whose agreement is essential for any kind of NATO solution of the problem; or that a preliminary meeting, such as that prepared for London, might not be useful. It does mean, however, that every member of NATO, whose agreement would be required, and all of whom are vitally interested in the problem, should, for a solution. Canada certainly expects to play such a part, as a NATO member with substantial air and land forces in Europe; indeed in Germany itself.

Views, though they are bound at this stage to be preliminary, are already being exchanged between us and certain other NATO Governments, both on question of procedure and substance. This is the kind of normal diplomatic operation which occurs between friendly governments before conferences meet and decisions are reached. When you read that it has already resulted in an "Empire row" between the United Kingdom and Canada, you can dismiss that as the kind of exuberant exaggeration which seems to sell some newspapers.

We hope that our own ideas on both procedure and substance may make a useful contribution to the common pool from which a good solution may emerge. Indeed, it must emerge, and soon, if the Atlantic alliance, and with it our best hope for preventing aggression, is to be kept strong; or, possibly, even, to be maintained at all. The stakes are as high as that. It is, therefore, no cause for surprise that all the governments concerned, including the Canadian, are approaching this problem with earnestness and resolve.

To achieve success in this task, as indeed in the greater effort, of which this is a part, of keeping peace in the world, it is essential, though it is not always easy, to adapt our political and our economic thinking to the realities of an age which is almost as remote from 1939 as it is from 1966. When, for instance, we talk of fear lest one country in an alliance might rearm too quickly and dominate a neighbour, that fear is based on the picture of armies on the march, with guns and tanks. But domination today is expressed, materially, that is in terms of scientists and engineers, with megaton bombs and jet propelled means of delivering them quickly to the ends of the earth.

In political terms, and this also is not easy to grasp or adapt one's thinking to, this may ultimately and up to the ultimate necessity of the union, for security, even for survival, of free European states in an Atlantic coalition which will be strong enough to prevent aggression and wise enough to use that strength for peace.

If from the failure of EDC we can gain renewed impetus to that larger and greater goal, then, indeed, out of this set-back good may finally come.