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CANADA AND THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

An address by Mr. A.D.P. Heeney, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, delivered to the Canadian Club of Montreal, on March 19, 1951.

The establishment of the North Atlantic Alliance, just two years ago, was, I believe, the most important diplomatic event since the end of the war. The rapid building up of the strength of that Alliance offers the most solid ground for hope that a third world war can be prevented. And, if Soviet aggression cannot be deterred, this combination of Atlantic nations affords the only firm basis for the successful defence of the free world.

It is, perhaps, particularly appropriate that one should speak of the Atlantic community to a Montreal audience. Montreal is Canada's most cosmopolitan city. Its roots of race and culture lie deep in the soil of the countries who make up the Alliance. The main Atlantic gateway to Canada, Montreal conducts by far the greater part of its multifarious external affairs in the vast ocean area covered by this North Atlantic Treaty. Atlantic trade, in one way or another, probably contributes more to the Montrealer's dollar than to that of the citizens of any other centre of Canadian commerce. In a cultural and in a business way, Montrealers should need no reminding that, in a special sense, they belong to the "community" of the North Atlantic.

Because of Communist imperialism this Atlantic community and the things for which this community stands are now in grave jeopardy. To meet this threat to their survival the Atlantic nations have forged the North Atlantic Alliance. In the consequences of that pact Canada is inextricably involved.

For all its importance to all Canadians, there is as yet I think no general appreciation in this country of the extent to which our future - as a nation and as individuals - is bound up with the success or failure of this new association of the West - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - "NATO" as we call it. More than upon any other single factor the peace of the world, for many years, is likely to depend upon our capacity and willingness in these twelve North Atlantic countries to make our Alliance work. If it is to work, it will require not only the efforts of our political and military leaders; it will need, as well, the steady, intelligent and spirited support of public opinion in all the Atlantic countries.

If war, as Clemenceau said, is too serious a business to be left to soldiers, peace and security, by the same token, is far too serious to be left to politicians and diplomats.

Let me recall to you the genesis of the North Atlantic Treaty. Within less than two years of the signature in San Francisco of the Charter of the United Nations, the high hopes of people everywhere for universal peace had given place to growing anxiety and fear. The Security Council upon which we had laid the primary responsibility for the maintenance of security was already ham-strung by the deliberate tactics of the Russian representatives. To all who were neither blind nor unwilling to see, it had become plain before the end of 1947 that, to further their imperialist ends, the Soviet government were determined to block, bully and undermine their former allies and to propagate their communist gospel by any and every means of internal subversion and external pressure. One by one the countries bordering on the Soviet Union were brought under the ruthless domination of the Kremlin. The Iron Curtain moved steadily westward and, in February 1948, free Czechoslovakia disappeared into the darkness of the Russian night. The heroic and untiring efforts of men of good will to carry into the building of world peace the dynamics of the Grand Alliance had failed of their central purpose - to establish a firm foundation for universal security. The United Nations had a fair record of accomplishment - a splendid record in many fields. But the United Nations had never been designed to compel the acquiescence of a Great Power. And in the face of Soviet determination and unrelenting Soviet pressure, the United Nations was not able to guarantee the keeping of peace.

It was against this sombre background of disillusion and in an atmosphere of widespread anxiety that the leaders of the Western world began to cast about for a means by which the further designs of the Soviet Union might be frustrated or, if war was to come again, a means by which the free nations might stand in confidence against aggression.

The flow of Marshall funds and other aid from North America (including Canadian grants and loans) was gradually having its effect in restoring the stability of Western Europe. The European nations through their mutual efforts in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (the OEEC) had set their hands firmly to the task of reconstruction. In the field of economics and finance much progress had been made toward the restoration of Europe.

But it was plain that more than economic assistance was necessary if Western Europe was to survive. The growing threat of Communist imperialism could be met only by the creation, by those nations who had a will to it, of a political and military barrier of adequate deterrent strength. In the General Assembly of the United Nations in the autumn of 1947, the present Prime Minister of Canada, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, put the position quite plainly.

"Nations, in their search for peace and co-operation (Mr. St. Laurent said) will not, and cannot, accept indefinitely and unaltered a Council which was set up to ensure their security, and which so many feel has become frozen in futility and divided by dissension. If forced, they (these nations) may seek greater safety in an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for a greater measure of national security."

By the spring of 1948 the process forecast by Mr. St. Laurent had reached the stage of "Western Union". On March 17 of that year Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg signed at Brussels a treaty providing for their collective self-defence. It was significant that on the very day the Brussels Treaty was announced, both President Truman in an address to Congress, and the Prime Minister of Canada, in a statement to the House of Commons, welcomed this first concrete step toward an effective system for the defence of the West.

In the months that followed there were many signs that determined European combination would find a ready response in North America. You may remember that, in the summer of 1948, both the major political parties in this country held national conventions. It was interesting and I think significant of the progress of Canadian thinking that both the Liberal and Progressive-Conservative platforms that emerged from those conventions should support quite categorically the association of Canada with special security arrangements in the Atlantic area. Since then, Canada's adherence to and support of the North Atlantic Alliance has never been a matter of party controversy.

That summer of 1948 and during the autumn, in Washington, the ambassadors of the Brussels Treaty powers and Canada engaged with representatives of the United States in what we diplomats call "informal and exploratory" talks. It will be remembered that in June the celebrated Vandenberg resolution had been adopted by the United States Senate. The course of American foreign policy was by that action set firmly away from the shoals of isolationism. The United States administration were in a position to give a firm bi-partisan lead to their Atlantic allies.

These talks ended in agreement and, on April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed. By its terms the seven original signatory nations - the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Canada (and, subsequently, Italy, Iceland and Portugal) bound themselves together by specific obligations to provide for their collective defence and to the adoption of the means necessary to preserve and to maintain the peace and security of the North Atlantic area. Within less than fourteen months after the fall of Czechoslovakia, the Atlantic countries had achieved a firm alliance. Considering the revolutionary character and scope of the Treaty's provisions, that comes pretty near to being a diplomatic speed record.

*Henry
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The first sentence in the preamble to the Treaty is a reaffirmation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This is important, for the twelve Atlantic nations have maintained throughout that their alliance, far from contravening the objectives of the United Nations was sanctioned as a measure of regional self-defence by the terms of the Charter itself.

The Treaty goes on to declare the determination of the signatories to safeguard their free institutions and their common purpose to promote the stability and well-being of the Atlantic area. Finally, it states their joint resolution to unite for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security.

The North Atlantic Treaty is a short instrument as international agreements go, with a minimum of verbiage and a maximum of frankness and clarity. It contains three basic articles. Article 3, under which the parties, "by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid", undertake to "maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack". Then the central Article 5, under which an armed attack against any member is regarded as an attack against all. In this event each party agrees to assist the party or parties so attacked by such action as it deems necessary "including the use of armed force".

The third basic article is Article 2. In this the parties recognize their common political, cultural and economic interests and agree to co-operate in the strengthening of free institutions and to eliminate conflict in their national economic policies. I have put Article 2 last of the three basic articles. The baleful course of events since the Treaty was signed has compelled us all to give priority to defence and security. Nevertheless this Article 2 is important. It may well provide in the future a basis for constructive developments.

The provisions of the Treaty are clear enough. The conception on which the Treaty is founded is the building up of the community of the Atlantic nations to provide what General Eisenhower has called "a wall of security for the free world behind which free institutions can live".

So much for the Treaty itself and the events which brought it into being. But is there any real prospect that this solemn international agreement can accomplish its stated objectives? Or will this Treaty go the way of the many "security pacts" which came before adorned equally with noble phrases and inspired by high purposes? Is this North Atlantic Pact, too, fated to die in the letter and wither in disillusion?

I read somewhere the other day that, since the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty, two years have been wasted in coming to grips with reality. That is not true. Nor is it fair to those who have laboured to develop the organization which we must have if we are to act in unison and with good effect. It was inevitable that there should have been a period of organization and planning before the concrete results of the Treaty began to emerge. No partnership can commence business until the partners have agreed how its affairs are to be conducted. And, after all, to combine for common and massive actions twelve independent national governments, twelve foreign offices and eleven defence ministries and military and production staffs - to arrive at agreed plans involving the raising and employment of great sea, land and air forces - to agree upon arrangements for command of combined forces - these are not simple problems capable of easy and rapid solutions. Then too, there is the difficult process of keeping in step the defence programmes of twelve national economies of widely different characteristics and capacities so that the best use may be made of the vast economic and financial resources of the Alliance for the accomplishment of the common task - here are problems of great administrative complexity and of even greater political delicacy.

Finally, by what means was the organization to reconcile the obvious requirements of efficient and prompt direction and management on the one hand with the necessity, on the other,

of retaining in each member government the final right of decision over its own human and material resources? A parliament or even a committee of twelve nations could not exercise the kind of central direction that was needed. At the same time no national government was willing to shift to other shoulders, even if it could, the responsibility for its own security.

The resolution of these and similar questions of organization and planning were bound to take time. Indeed many of them are continuing problems which arise from the character of an alliance of free and sovereign states. It must always be a delicate and difficult business to reconcile the pressing task of organizing the joint employment of the resources of an alliance in men, money and materials, with the need to respect the vital interests of the member states. The effectiveness of the organization must not be jeopardized by over-insistence on national sovereignty; at the same time, there can be no question of dragooning member states into decisions. It is all very much simpler in the Soviet bloc. There orders are handed down by Moscow and obeyed to the letter by satellites who have lost all real freedom of decision. That is one kind of an alliance. But it is not ours. We are free nations; each with our own tradition, each with our own way of approaching and solving the problems of peace and war, our own methods of organizing our defence, of deploying our manpower and of gearing up our national economy. Each of the partner nations has in its make-up sensitive spots; each too has its special, individual contribution to make to the Alliance.

The welding together of these diverse national interests and aptitudes is a formidable diplomatic undertaking, requiring intelligence, tact and patience. Yet the urgency of the danger and the magnitude of the stakes involved require, on the part of all member countries, a supreme effort to put the broader aims of the North Atlantic Community before narrower national interests.

By the end of 1950, the Atlantic nations had achieved a working mechanism - the North Atlantic Organization - NATO. Still imperfect, still in course of test and development the NATO machine is nevertheless now in gear and moving forward.

A word or two about the NATO machine. At the top there is the Council - the North Atlantic Council - the supreme governing body of the Organization - a kind of board of directors, consisting of the twelve Foreign Ministers. Immediately below the Council and responsible to it are the Council Deputies who may be likened to a management committee in permanent session with headquarters in London. The Council Deputies have become the centre and source of political authority and direction of NATO. For the twelve Foreign Ministers cannot meet more than twice or three times a year and, between times, this "management committee", each member in constant touch with his own government, conduct the whole vast business of the Alliance.

On the military side of NATO, there is a top group consisting of the twelve Defence Ministers. This is the Defence Committee; under it there is a professional hierarchy of admirals, generals and air marshals organized into committees, sub-committees and staffs. The chief of these military bodies are the Standing Group and the Military Representatives Committee in Washington. The Standing Group,

a kind of military executive, consists of high military officers of the three big powers - the United States, the United Kingdom and France. They constitute for most purposes what we knew in the last war as the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The other nine of us are represented in matters military by the direct agents of our national Chiefs of Staff. These military representatives of ours have continuing access to the Standing Group in the development of NATO plans.

Those of us in Canada who have had to do with the organization of NATO, have long felt that a simpler structure, on the civil side particularly, would much better meet the need for prompt and effective direction of the Alliance. Canadian proposals for simplifying the present complicated machinery have been favourably received by our partners. And we have good reason to hope that, before many months, the whole mechanism will be greatly simplified by concentration of authority under a single top body - a Council of Governments.

When the Foreign Ministers and the Defence Ministers of NATO met in Brussels just before Christmas a new pressure of urgency was evident from the outset. The reason of course was Korea and the conclusion that all had drawn from the events of the previous few months that the Soviet government were prepared to run the risk of a third world war to attain their imperialist objectives. From this sense of urgency and because of this common re-appraisal of increased, more imminent common danger, the products of the Brussels meetings were the most substantial thus far in the history of NATO. Brussels, it seems to me, marked the change-over of NATO from the stage of plans to the stage of action. It had been known before that an "integrated" force for the defence of Western Europe was being planned. The principle had been accepted. But at Brussels the appointment of General Eisenhower breathed life and hope into what, until then, had been but a mere paper project. It is true that, to begin with, the Supreme Commander Allied Powers, Europe, (SCAPE as he is called) had little to command. But at Brussels the Americans, the British and the French announced their immediate assignment to General Eisenhower of such forces as they then had available, and other nations, including Canada, gave indications of their intentions to make substantial contributions of ground and air elements. And all the members of NATO reported in varying positive terms "the build up" which they were undertaking of their own national forces.

Further, it was at Brussels that an important step forward was taken in the vital matter of war supplies. The Defence Production Board was established to develop and rationalize a genuine NATO production programme under which national industrial resources are to be brought more effectively to the essential and urgent business of putting arms into the hands of those who stand with us.

General Eisenhower's tour of all the North Atlantic countries at the beginning of this year has put fresh heart into the Alliance. When the General returned to the United States he was able to report that, given unity in spirit and action, the job of NATO - the defence of the West - could be done. His dynamic presence in the European capitals had a remarkable effect on the morale of the Western Allies. Combined with the turn of the United Nations fortunes in Korea, the establishment of NATO's supreme command near Paris has achieved a substantial upswing toward that solid confidence which is the first prerequisite of success.

I would not wish to leave the impression that with NATO all is well. That is far from being the case. For the gap is still wide between what we have and what we need. And the time may be short. But NATO has at last begun to gather way and the forces are at work throughout the nations of the West which, given time (and that is an important proviso), will ensure the attainment of the first purposes of the North Atlantic Treaty. The framework of organization has been constructed and the flesh has begun to appear on the skeleton. Despite the critical position in the Far East and the pressure from the forces of Soviet imperialism in other areas of the world, the eyes of the NATO countries have remained fixed on the crucial strong point of Western Europe. For the first time in peace - or in an area where there are no hostilities - the troops of one country have been submitted voluntarily to the command of a citizen of another. For the first time since the Crusades, Western Christendom has an army made up of forces contributed by various nations committed to a common purpose. Here are grounds for hope. Here is a foundation for confidence that the forces of Communist imperialism are not irresistible, that Europe is not lost and that neither Britain nor North America will be the last or sole citadel of freedom. Our feet are set firmly upon the right road.

The common defence is the immediate and urgent goal of the North Atlantic Treaty. But there is no reason why we should lose sight of the farther horizon - the ultimate creation in the Atlantic area of a great community of free nations. It seems to me that there is in this association of Atlantic countries something peculiarly attractive to most Canadians. In the face of a common danger, under the stern remorseless threat to our survival, we twelve nations of the Atlantic have come together to pool our resources that we may survive. In the process we are developing new working institutions, not only in purely military things, but inevitably too, common machinery to deal with the economics and the politics of joint effort. Among these twelve nations of the Atlantic are those who hold in common much of the ancient heritage of Christendom. For us in North America the shrines of Western Europe are no mere items of geography. In Britain, in France, in Italy are the vital well-springs of our civilization. In our painful struggle for security from a very present threat we are developing a new consciousness of Atlantic unity, the results of which may far exceed our immediate purposes and expectations. May we not these past two years have taken the first steps toward something much greater and more positive - a genuine Community of the Atlantic?

When the National Capital plan of Washington was being considered more than a century ago, Daniel Burnham wrote this:

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans. Aim high in hope and work remembering that a noble logical diagram once recorded will be a living thing asserting itself with ever growing insistency".