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NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY - III

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson, at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 1949.

Last week the Parliament of Canada, with only two dissenting voices, endorsed the treaty which we sign here today. This virtual unanimity reflected the views of the Canadian people who feel deeply and instinctively that this treaty is not a pact for war, but a pledge for peace and progress.

The North Atlantic Treaty was born out of fear and frustration; fear of the aggressive and subversive policies of communism and the effect of those policies on our own peace and security and well-being; frustration over the obstinate obstruction by communist states of our efforts to make the United Nations function effectively as a universal security system. This treaty, though born of fear and frustration, must, however, lead to positive social, economic and political achievements if it is to live; achievements which will extend beyond the time of emergency which gave it birth, or the geographical area which it now includes.

This treaty does not, of itself ensure peace. It does, however, give us the promise of far greater security and stability than we possess today. By our combined efforts, we must convert this promise into performance or the treaty will remain no more than yet another expression of high but unattained ideals. That will not happen to our North Atlantic Pact if each of us accepts the challenge it proclaims; if each of us, with trust in the goodwill and peaceful policies of the others, will strive to make it something more than words. We know that we can do this. If it were not so, we would not today be giving this pledge to stand together in danger and to work together in peace.

We, in this North Atlantic Community, the structure of which we now consolidate, must jealously guard the defensive and progressive nature of our league. There can be no place in this group for power politics or imperialist ambitions on the part of any of its members. This is more than a treaty for defence. We must, of course, defend ourselves, and that is the first purpose of our pact; but, in doing so, we must never forget that we are now organizing force for peace so that peace can one day be preserved without force.

We are a North Atlantic Community of twelve nations; and three hundred and fifty million people. We are strong in our lands and resources, in our industry and manpower. We are strong above all in our common tradition of liberty, in our common belief in the dignity of the individual, in our common heritage of social and political thought and in our resolve to defend our freedoms together. Security and progress, however, like peace and war, are indivisible. So there must be nothing narrow or exclusive about our league; no slackening of our interest in the welfare and security of all friendly people.

The North Atlantic Community is part of the world community and as we grow stronger to preserve the peace, all free men grow stronger with us.

The world today is too small, too interdependent, for even regional isolation.

This treaty is a forward move in man's progress from the wasteland of his postwar world, to better, safer ground. But as we reach the distant pastures, we see greener ones far on. As we reach the summit of this lofty peak, higher ones loom up beyond. We are forever climbing the ever mounting slope and must not rest until we reach the last objective of a sane and moral world.

Our treaty is no mere maginot line against annihilation; no mere fox-hole from fear, but the point from which we start for yet one more attack on all those evil forces that would block our way to justice and to peace.

In that spirit, and with great pride, I sign this treaty as the delegate, and the servant of my country.

s/c