

Consolidating the Free World

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CANADA and the United Kingdom are both members of the Commonwealth and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Both therefore have a common aim in carrying out their obligation to the Commonwealth and to their North Atlantic Treaty partners. They have a particular interest in uniting to preserve their common way of life. They share in common not only the same King but the same Parliamentary tradition. Thus they have a common purpose in building up their defences to protect the Commonwealth and the Atlantic community. I am therefore glad of this opportunity to try to indicate how we in this country view the great re-armament effort on which we have embarked.

II

UNDER the leadership of Ernest Bevin, a Foreign Secretary whom history may judge as one of the greatest Britain has ever had, the United Kingdom pursued a policy of building up collective security on a regional basis, first in Europe and then with North America, with a view to defending the free world against aggression, from whatever source it might come. This was the policy we were reluctantly forced to adopt after attempts at cooperation with the Soviet Union on all matters of importance had failed. From the first it was clear that no basic agreement with the Russians was possible in Germany and Austria, and their behaviour in the United Nations completed the picture. Once it was seen that Russia was unwilling to continue her war-time cooperation with

the other great Powers, there had to be unity amongst those whose common aim was the preservation of the democratic way of life, which Russia had failed to create within her own boundaries and had destroyed in those countries which, willingly or through coercion, came under her domination. It was realised that mere words could not stop Russia from pursuing her declared aim of spreading Communism beyond her own frontiers, using all means within her power, including the threat and the use of force, to do so. It was to put a stop to this aggression, that Ernest Bevin took the lead in building up the Atlantic community, starting with the renewal of the pre-war alliance with France and extending it to include Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg and then to the rest of free Europe and Canada and the United States. The Atlantic Treaty defines its defensive aims and the common bond of democracy which unites its members.

III

WITH the failure of Russia to disarm after the war, her growing strength and her refusal to be diverted from her policy of domination, the West had to embark upon its present defence programme, which has put a severe strain on the economies of the Western European countries. The defensive nature of the Atlantic Treaty should never be lost sight of; nor must the purposes of the re-armament programme. There are four main objectives. The first is to unite the countries of free Europe and North America

and to maintain unity in face of the subversive activities and propaganda offensive of the Cominform. The second is to deter Russia from taking provocative action which will lead to general war; to show her that there is a limit to the tolerance of the Western countries and that to step beyond this frontier will involve the world in catastrophe. The third is to defend the free world against such action should it take place; to stand up to the aggressor and preserve democracy. The fourth is to convince Russia of the unity of the West and of its determination to defend itself should the need arise and consequently to persuade her to come to the Conference table and to negotiate for the relief of tension and, if no more can be achieved, at least a *modus vivendi*.

IV

ALREADY the results of this unity of the West are being felt. A United front has been preserved in the face of the hypocritical peace offensive launched by the Cominform which has failed to deceive the peoples of Western Europe and North America. The unity of France, the United Kingdom and the United States was preserved at the Paris meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers in the face of great efforts on the part of the Russian Delegation to undermine it. From the day when the occupying Powers, standing up to Russia in Berlin, inaugurated the magnificent air-lift, Russia has been deterred from taking steps in Europe which would immediately lead to a third world war. The Paris Conference, I am satisfied, convinced the U.S.S.R. not only of the unity of the West, but of its determination to defend its way of life should it be threatened, and demonstrated to Russia that further aggressive action on her part in Europe could not be isolated but would inevitably lead to war. In Korea, too, the immediate response of the United Nations to aggression demonstrated to the U.S.S.R. that the use of force to achieve her communist aims would meet resistance from the Free World.

V

THE fourth objective has not yet been achieved. On the part of Russia there has been no sign of a change of policy. This was watched for carefully at the Paris Conference, but no sign was given. Once Russia was convinced of her inability to obtain a meeting of the four Foreign Ministers on her terms, she waited for a breakdown. Her terms were the pre-committal of the West to a revision of its defence programme which would lead to a weakening of the West in relation to the Soviet Union. The Russian Delegation strove to obtain an Agenda which would commit the Foreign Ministers to a reduction of arms without relation to their existing level, and to limit such reduction to the Four Powers and thereby exclude the Satellites, and to obtain the admission of the competence of the Foreign Ministers to discuss and take decisions concerning the Atlantic Pact, despite the fact that Russia was not a signatory to it and that only three of its twelve signatories would be represented at the meeting. They sought an Agenda which they would interpret as admitting that the Foreign Ministers had the right to revise the Atlantic Pact. Since, however, the three Western Powers remained united and refused to be taken in, and since Russia found she was unable to undermine the defence effort of the West, she decided that no meeting of Foreign Ministers should take place. Similarly at San Francisco there was no indication of a change of heart on the part of the U.S.S.R.

VI

THIS, however, does not mean that the time will not come when Russia will decide that it is against her interests actively to pursue her aggressive policies and that some way of co-existing with the West must be reached. In this connexion I was interested to see that in the spring issue of *Public Affairs* Canada's Foreign Minister, The Honourable L. B. Pearson, referred to the possibility of the Soviet Union ultimately coming to the conclusion

that it would not be in her interest to start a third world war and that when that time came it would be necessary for the Western Powers to enter into negotiations in order to establish some *modus vivendi*.

VII

WHILE the West thus finds it necessary to build up its defences, with a view to deterring Russia's aggressive actions and defending itself against them if need be, it is important, however, that in doing so we do not rely entirely upon arms to prevent the spread of Communism and to preserve our way of life. That Communism has an ideological, material and emotional appeal in certain conditions to large sections of the Community cannot be denied. For the malcontents, for those living in bad economic circumstances and even for idealists, Communism has its false attractions. It holds out hopes of fulfilment of national aspirations and scatters the seeds of hypocritical offers wherever the ground is fertile. In Italy and France, from 20% to 25% of the electorate have voted Communist. In South-East Asia for well known reasons the appeal of Communism is great. The building up of the military strength alone of the West is insufficient answer to this appeal. Genuine grievances have to be removed and national aspirations satisfied. In other words, an alternative to Communism must be offered to those who look to it to satisfy their needs. The alternative is democracy, but it must be a successful and economically strong democracy which is able to provide security and good living or at the very least able to offer an improving standard of life. A successful democracy can offer all that Communism falsely promises in the material way of life, and provides also what Communism withholds, the liberties that free people treasure. In true democracy there is political freedom, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of information, freedom of religion and freedom from arbitrary arrest. Without these freedoms there cannot be Parliamentary or social democracy. It is this alternative that has to be projected to win over

from Communism those who have embraced it willingly or had it thrust upon them. This is the positive answer which it is as important to give as the negative one of attacking Communism as such. To be anti-Communist is not enough; something must be offered in its place, and that is what the Western countries can do by precept and example. The dissemination of knowledge and understanding of the democratic way of life is the best antidote to Communism. The more successful the West is in achieving this, the more obstacles will Russia meet with in seeking domination of the free democracies through her subversive propaganda. It is to be hoped that Russia can be prevented from reaching her objectives and deterred from seeking to achieve them through war. To that end, a united West, growing in military and economic strength, is essential.

VIII

LET us not forget, therefore, that effort is called for in spheres other than the purely military, and that the members of the Atlantic community have pledged themselves, in the words of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to "contribute towards the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them." At its meeting in Ottawa, the North Atlantic Council decided that the time had come when Article 2 should be fully implemented, and has set up a small Committee to make recommendations. I am sure this decision will be welcomed throughout the North Atlantic Treaty countries. There is still much work to be done before, in the Council's words, the "inner strength of the North Atlantic Community" is fully developed.