

COMMENTS TO BE DELIVERED FOR  
SENATOR ROBERT BYRD AT THE  
NATO CONFERENCE, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM  
SEPTEMBER 3, 1979

I would like to thank the organizers of the NATO conference and especially the conference co-chairmen, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Dr. Henri Simonet, for their invitation to speak. I was most impressed by the nature and purpose of the conference and informed Dr. Kissinger and Dr. David Abshire, Chairman of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, that I would be glad to attend and be pleased to participate in this most worthwhile and important international event.

Unfortunately, however, last-minute and most pressing responsibilities in the United States Senate have prevented me from coming to Brussels to be with you. With the Senate about to reconvene, I was unable to leave Washington.

I am pleased that my colleague Senator Robert Morgan has agreed to convey my regrets and to read my remarks. I also want to mention the North Atlantic Assembly in light of the fact that its president, Paul Thyness, was to introduce me. As we think about the future of NATO, it is essential to strengthen the Assembly

as the parliamentary group that serves as the voice of our legislators in this alliance of democracies.

In recent years, I have visited most of our NATO allies. Earlier this year, I visited the Soviet Union on an official mission on behalf of President Carter. Having met with the leaders of our NATO allies and those in the Soviet Union, I am more convinced than ever that NATO must remain a strong and viable force. The large number of American Congressmen and Senators attending this conference confirms my belief that the American Congress appreciates the importance of NATO. In addition, their

participation is another example of increased congressional participation in foreign policy. I feel strongly that this helps to fulfill a constitutional role of Congress in American foreign policy.

I am particularly disappointed that I was unable to attend because of the nature and scope of the conference. This meeting is an attempt to go beyond traditional diplomacy. It transcends the usual discussions regarding NATO. The Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Atlantic Institute for International Affairs and the Atlantic Treaty Association are to be congratulated for

bringing together representatives from a wide range of interests. Thus, the critical issues facing NATO can be discussed openly by participants from the American Congress and their European parliamentary counterparts; by business and labor leaders; by youth and religious leaders; by scholars and soldiers; by people who have multi-national concerns and those with national interests. This broad participation emphasises a major theme of the conference - the need for wide public understanding of the problems confronting NATO. The threats to NATO are global in nature and at this critical juncture in our

history, the organization needs and deserves greater public support.

The 30th anniversary of NATO points out the importance of reviewing the history of NATO - to see how it has helped preserve peace in Europe. However, it is even more important, and again this is a vital theme of the conference, to analyze how NATO can meet the world-wide challenges of the next 30 years. The members of NATO must be prepared to deal with political, economic, military and social problems on a global scale.

I am sure that the debates and discussions held during this conference have presented many answers to the questions confronting the NATO nations. I hope that the proceedings will be published and made available - both to create greater public awareness of these problems and also to assist policy formulators on both sides of the Atlantic.

I would like to commend the participants in this conference for facing these issues head-on: for accepting the challenges of the future and seeking peaceful solutions.

I would also like to commend the Chairmen, Dr. Kissinger and Dr. Simonet, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies for organizing and arranging these most important discussions.