

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,