

air-atomic age; but linked also to North America in a unique way, because that continent - I hope that I will not be misunderstood in putting it this way - is now occupied by two former English-speaking colonies; one of which is proud to retain its political and monarchical association with the 'Old Master'.

We have now laid the foundations of this Atlantic community in NATO. Indeed that may be the most important thing that we did when we signed in Washington seven years ago the treaty bringing this international organization into being. On the other hand, what we did then may prove to have been as insubstantial and ephemeral as the signatures attached to many an international agreement which at the time seemed a veritable Magna Charta, but whose very name can now be found only in some doctrinal thesis. The near future will tell. There is no assurance yet that NATO will survive the emergency that gave it birth. That emergency was itself born of the fear - for which there was sufficient evidence - that unless the Atlantic countries united their resources and their resolve to defend themselves, they might succumb to aggression one by one. It seemed clear when the NATO Pact was signed, even to the mightiest power, that national security could not be guaranteed by national action alone. So we built up our collective defences and by our unity and strength have made NATO into a most effective deterrent against aggression. In doing so we have removed the greatest temptations to aggression: disunity and weakness.

If however, international tension now seems to ease, and the threat of direct military attack to recede, the fear which brought NATO into being in the first place will also recede; and the temptation to relax our defence efforts and indulge in the luxury of dissension and division will increase.

We may, in fact, be approaching a period - if, indeed, we are not in it - when NATO will lose much of the cohesive force which has hitherto held it together. There are those who are counting on this loss being fatal to the whole concept of NATO and the Atlantic community.

These dangers must be faced. Defence strength and unity must be maintained, yet we may not now have for this purpose the same incentive which we have had before. We must, therefore, develop a stronger bond of unity than a common fear. As the challenge of the Communists nations to our free institutions takes new forms, avoiding tactics and policies which risk nuclear devastation, NATO should in its turn, while maintaining whatever collective military defensive strength is necessary, develop new impulses for unity and community.