

When General Gruenther, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces in Europe, was in Ottawa last month he spoke in the highest terms of the Canadian forces in Europe and of Canada's overall contribution to NATO as well, with particular emphasis on the great morale building effect of our effort on our European allies. We are playing our part in the NATO picture and I believe with General Gruenther that we are playing it effectively and well.

In North America we are engaged with our neighbour to the south in establishing a comprehensive air warning and defence system. Now that the Soviet Union has discovered the secret of the hydrogen bomb and has developed the means of delivering it to North America, this project becomes increasingly urgent.

Time was when attacks on North America, if at all, would only be diversionary attacks to tie down this continent's forces which, in the event of war, would probably be urgently required in Europe. All that has now been changed, and we are faced with the real possibility of an attempt to strike a crippling blow by air on our two countries for the dual purpose of destroying our industrial potential and destroying the retaliatory capacity of the United States Strategic Air Command on which so much depends, not only from our own point of view but for the safety of the whole NATO alliance.

We must not ignore the threat thus poised. Indeed, we must seek to meet it effectively, and this we are actively endeavouring to do. Along with the United States we are building an integrated system of air defence for the North American continent in which Canada and the United States each plays its respective role.

Effective air defence requires adequate detecting apparatus, adequate communications and adequate attacking power to seek out and destroy invading planes.

For some time, as you know, we have been building an integrated warning and communications system to serve a three-fold purpose, should the need arise -- to alert fighter aircraft to the approach of hostile bombers, to warn the civil population of that fact, and to enable the powerful United States' strategic bombing force to get off the ground and on its way to carry out its crippling, devastating, retaliatory blow at the enemy.

The joint Canada-United States radar warning and control system consists of four main parts: the Pinetree system, covering the industrial heartlands of Canada and the United States; the Mid-Canada early warning line, roughly located along the 55th parallel of latitude; the distant early