

The Canadian Government, therefore, looks upon the report as a significant landmark in the development of the Atlantic community. We are giving the report our whole-hearted support, and since the approval of its recommendations by the Ministerial Council last December, we have extended every possible cooperation to the Secretary-General in his efforts to have it implemented.

Although it is probably still too early to try to assess what the impact of the Committee of Three recommendations will be on the Organization, recent developments may tend to confirm the appropriateness of the warning sounded by the "Three Wise Men", that while it was not too difficult to make the recommendations, it might well be far more difficult for the member governments to put them into effect.

We believe that the Alliance will be a living and genuine community only when political consultation takes place as a matter of habit, and when member governments abide by the general principle of not adopting firm policies or making major political pronouncements on matters which significantly affect the Alliance, without adequate advance consultation. This kind of political consultation seems essential to maintain solidarity between members, more particularly at this time when the Soviet Government is clearly intent on playing one ally off against another. There are of course some cases where, understandably, because of a lack of sufficient time or for political reasons, the powers concerned and especially the big powers, have to deal with certain issues in a forum other than NATO; nevertheless, we believe that in general there remains a wide scope for effective consultation.

In conclusion, I will say that the Canadian Government is not losing sight of the severe strain to which NATO has been subjected in the last year, or so, nor are we so unrealistic as to expect that honest differences among member countries will not occur again. But, having said this, I add that there is not the slightest doubt in our minds that NATO remains no less necessary now than it was in 1949. The form of the Soviet threat to the free world may have changed, but its basic objectives remain the same. It may be presented in a different wrapping, but the challenge is still there. We have been pleased to observe that Canadian public opinion appears to have successfully avoided the pitfalls of the mirage which the pronouncements from the Kremlin about co-existence were designed to set up. We estimate that, now in Canada, there is probably a better understanding of NATO, and thus a more informed support of the aims and purpose of the Organization, than was the case a few years ago. The Canadian Government's interest in the non-military activities of NATO has led the Canadian public to appreciate more fully both the civil and military aspects involved in the development of the Atlantic community, and has strengthened the view that these two aspects can no longer safely be considered in water-tight compartments, either between or within nations.