

Once we reach the plateau we should be able to relax to the extent of requiring only the maintenance of our renewed military strength.

However, all those in NATO - the politicians and soldiers alike - are well aware that the provision of effective defensive strength is a costly matter. For this reason we cannot proceed unmindful of the economic effects of concentrating efforts on the building up of armies, air forces and navies. The last ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council, held last February in Lisbon under the chairmanship of Mr. Pearson, approved a definite arms programme. At the same time it was recognized that the impact of an undertaking of this magnitude was bound to have results on the economies of the member countries that could not then be foreseen. For this reason it was decided that there should be an annual review, such as the one which was carried out before the Lisbon meeting, in order to reconcile military requirements with the political and economic capabilities. This annual review is now under way in Paris. Some newspapers are already speculating that the results will reveal a failure on the part of NATO to reach its objectives. This may be so in absolute terms, but I am confident that any deficiency will be relatively small and should be assessed against the magnitude of our collective efforts.

Because we agreed to a programme last year and may modify it this year, this does not mean that we are failing to do our best to provide the maximum military strength we can achieve. On the contrary, while we must have plans, they should be flexible. We must constantly examine our progress to see whether the plans are fulfilling the aims of providing the best forces we can produce without crippling the economies of the NATO countries. This is the central problem of NATO - how to achieve at once both security and solvency. To solve this problem we must have an up-to-date appraisal of both the military and the economic positions.

Thus, in the complex business of gearing fourteen nations to the maximum effort of producing as quickly as possible the most powerful military forces they can afford, we should not be surprised if some modifications are necessary and, if so, we should not too readily attribute them to a lessening of determination or to a change of heart. The great problem is to maintain that spirit of strong determination which has driven the fourteen members of NATO to build up in peacetime a unified force under unified command as a safeguard against war. In the last resort it is the peoples of the North Atlantic countries who will decide whether the danger which faces them warrants the expenditure of a large proportion of their resources for the provision of military forces. Those responsible for formulating the policies of NATO are not unmindful of the dangers inherent in overburdening the economies of the member countries. The annual review that is in progress now must reconcile the claims of defence and the changing political and economic factors which weigh heavily on each country. Political and economic stability must co-exist or else the strongest army in the world is but an illusion of security consuming the very substance of the society it was created to protect.

While concentrating on the goal of achieving security we have not been able to devote as much attention as we should wish to the non-military objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty which are enshrined in Article 2 of that instrument. We have, however, never lost sight of these objectives. They were inserted into the treaty on Canadian initiative. The experience we are acquiring by co-operating together in building up military strength and in consulting with one another upon important political questions will stand us in good stead when we are able to devote more attention to co-operation in the social, economic and other fields. When we