

Well, it has been done through the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty and the establishment of a strong organization of co-operating states under that Treaty.

Recently, I think the feeling has developed that the high hopes that have been placed on NATO for our collective defence and the building of an enduring structure for co-operation between the member governments, are not being realized.

On the one hand, there are those who think that we have - by our decisions at Lisbon - imposed impossible military targets on the various governments and that the effort to achieve them is resulting in economic weakness and social and political division - the very result that the forces of Communist imperialism hope for. It is charged by some that in NATO we are subordinating economic and political co-operation to exaggerated and excessive military plans and preparations. Others are genuinely worried because NATO, which now has a permanent home, a permanent organization and a permanent Council in Paris, is not developing as it should in the non-military field; that the big powers are making their own decisions and ignoring NATO in the process.

On the other hand, there are those who, remembering the capacity of Soviet Russia to set in motion at any moment a military machine that could overrun and crush the forces of Western Europe, are anxious and impatient because our defence plans are inadequate and we are taking too long in putting even these inadequate plans into operation.

It is, of course, easy and wishful to comfort ourselves by merely repeating that everything is fine with NATO, in its defence of the peace and its promise for the future. This, however, is not good enough. Continuous and vigilant examination of the operations of representative and executive international bodies is as important as it is in the case of national governmental agencies. NATO, subjected to such an examination - and this is being done continuously by the member governments - gives no reason for complacency or complete satisfaction. On the other hand, it gives no ground for despair or exaggerated pessimism, for revising our view that the establishment and the progress of this coalition is a major achievement in the history of our times and that its growing strength and, equally important, its unity of purpose and action is the strongest deterrent against aggression at the present time. When we hear criticisms that NATO is concentrating too much on military defence and not enough on building the Atlantic community, we should remember that to Moscow and its satellites and slaves, NATO stands as the greatest obstacle - by its unity as much as its strength - to the achievement of their aggressive ambitions. Against it they have levelled their biggest guns of abuse and attack.

Of course, NATO is still far from perfect as an agency for international co-operation between its members. In the short period of its existence, it has not managed to make as much progress as we would like in the field of economic and social and political integration. But this - in contrast to the defence job - is a long-range programme and no one who has examined the matter seriously has ever had any illusions about the time and effort that would be required to realize our oft-repeated statement that NATO must be more than a military alliance. The impatience of well-meaning people because the course of national historical development has not been reversed over-night at times makes me impatient. Nor do I believe that the Kremlin and all it stands for has yet made it possible or wise for NATO to convert some of its shields into ploughshares.