

It can, I think, be said that this new examination procedure, though its results on this occasion were important and valuable, caused some concern among the governments of those countries not directly represented on the Executive Committee. As a result, it has been agreed that future enquiries of this nature in NATO - and they will take place periodically - should be conducted as a part of the normal operations of the NATO Council without the fuss and fanfare which inevitably attaches to a special committee of big names from big countries.

Another NATO development, important from the point of view of international organization and national sovereignty, was the creation of an integrated force under a Supreme Allied Commander in Western Europe, General Eisenhower. We had become accustomed, of course, to integrated forces under unitary commands during the Second World War, but it was a very radical step in terms of international organization to establish one in peacetime as we have now done. General Eisenhower was "seconded" for this high post, which he has filled with such great distinction and general approval, by the President of the United States at the request of the North Atlantic Council. He was - and his successor will be - in a very real sense the Commander-in-Chief of each separate NATO contingent as well as of all the NATO forces combined. He takes his instructions from all the NATO governments through the Standing Group whose decisions are subject to the approval first of the Military Committee and then of the North Atlantic Council. He has, however, access not merely to the Standing Group but to each NATO Chief of Staff or Defence Minister or even the head of each Government if that is necessary to accomplish his mission. He may make recommendations to the Standing Group or to national governments, as would a national Chief of Staff, with respect to national forces placed under his command. He is also responsible for overall planning, and for the organization and training of the national forces assigned to him. In wartime, of course, his authority would be even more extensive.

In all these NATO arrangements for collective defence planning and organization, the forms of sovereignty have been respected. But, in fact, national policies have been modified by them to achieve a common international purpose. The fourteen nations of NATO are by their own decisions becoming a team for purposes of defence and not fourteen individual players.

This is a recognition of the truth that in the free world the independent sovereign state is no longer clothed with sufficiently effective power for external defence. NATO, we hope and believe, can clothe itself as an international organization with such power precisely because its members are not abandoning sovereignty but interpreting it in accordance with the facts of contemporary political life.

The process, however, is not an easy one. This unique attempt by fourteen sovereign states to plan and organize a joint defence programme in time of peace on occasion becomes bogged down in delay and difficulties. There are those, therefore, who say that, to make our NATO operations speedier and more effective, we need a central political authority which can itself make decisions that would be binding on all member countries. Such a body, it has been proposed, should formulate and execute a common foreign and defence policy for all the North Atlantic countries. In practice, however, this might well mean that the three larger countries in the alliance, or even the single largest one, would determine the policy of and dominate the whole organization. The other member-states are, fortunately or unfortunately, not yet prepared to make this extensive surrender