

but it is possible to anticipate that French bilateral relations with some of the NATO allies, particularly those who carry the larger burdens, will be put under strain. The balance of forces within the alliance will of necessity be altered. Finally, France's example could stimulate nationalist tendencies which have been encouragingly absent in Western Europe since the last war.

The Canadian Government is not unsympathetic to many of the considerations which underlie the French wish for change. We know that circumstances in the world have changed since NATO was established. We have long believed that members of the alliance, particularly those such as France which have spoken of the need for change, should present concrete proposals to encourage consultation within the alliance.

It is reasonable to look towards a greater acceptance of responsibility by Europeans for the defence of Western Europe. However, any North American move to disengage militarily from Europe will be dangerously premature until the European countries have made the necessary political and institutional arrangements to take over the responsibilities involved. It follows, at this time of uncertainty about NATO's future, that Canada should avoid action which would create unnecessary strain or otherwise impair the solidarity of the alliance. This need not and should not preclude us from making adjustments, in the interest of economy and efficiency, in the manner in which we contribute to European defence. And we should seek to ensure that there is a constructive evolution in the organization of the alliance; and we should take advantage of the actions taken by the Government of France to do exactly what we ourselves proposed in the fall of 1964, which is to engage in serious examination of the state of the alliance.

In so far as the Canadian bases in France are concerned, the Government of France has taken unilateral action. It appears to be a final decision. At any rate, it has stated that it would like to see the Canadian bases withdrawn by April 1, 1967, although I express the hope, and have no doubt, that the French Government will be prepared to negotiate mutually acceptable arrangements, including compensation and dates for the withdrawal of the bases. Since the objective of sending Canadian troops to Europe was to contribute to the integrated defence arrangements from which France is withdrawing, this Government has accepted the logic that Canadian forces in France cannot outstay their welcome. They will have to be moved elsewhere.

I referred earlier to the determination of other members of NATO to preserve the effective arrangements which have been worked out for joint planning and unified command. This is only prudent, and Canada fully shares this determination. This will provide a continuing defence against the Soviet military capacity still directed at Western Europe. It will help preserve the precarious stability in Central Europe. Moreover, under the present integrated defence arrangements, there being no German general staff, Germany has placed all its troops directly under NATO commanders. The dismantling of the existing structure would lead to the reversion of all European forces to national command.