

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 or 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 are the strongest deterrents 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 overnight 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.

Admittedly, political and social co-operation among NATO'S members must be pursued and progress must be made here if the coalition is to be strong and enduring. This applies also to trade and economic relationships. Defence co-operation and economic conflict are difficult to reconcile. It should, in fact, be a first objective of the NATO members to reduce and remove the obstacles to the freest possible trade between themselves and, equally important, between themselves and the rest of the free world. A restrictive and controlled trading-area within NATO would put a great strain on the cohesion and unity of the group for other purposes. Equally unfortunate would be the adoption of such ring-fence policies as the basis of the relationship between NATO countries and other free democracies. When we talk about developing and strengthening NATO economic co-operation we do not, I hope, mean that kind of co-operation.

The most urgent and immediate problem, however, remains defence against aggression. This should — I am myself convinced — still be given first priority over other NATO plans; all the more because it embodies a short-term objective. We have the right to hope that when this objective is reached — but only then — we can devote more of our NATO time, energy and resources to constructive non-military policies which can be pursued while we maintain the level of defensive strength necessary until international political developments make its reduction possible. And "maintaining" should not require as great an effort as "building".

What progress, then, are we making in the building up of defence and deterrent forces — adequate for this purpose — and no more than adequate?

Well, NATO'S strength has been steadily increasing. Canada, by sending a Brigade Group and fighter squadrons overseas, has contributed to that increase and thereby to the strengthening of our hope for peace. Not only have NATO forces under arms been increased, essential airfields are being constructed and put into use; training programmes have been got under way. Communications services and other facilities are being developed and modern equipment is now coming from the assembly lines. Finally, a supreme command for all NATO forces in Europe has been organized. If the worst should happen, and war be forced on us — because that is the only way it could come about — NATO forces in Europe could now give a much better account