

The value of this role may be perceived, for instance, in the fact that these two communities now include dozens of newly-independent countries, which are in the process of developing their political and economic institutions and their relations with the outside world. Our economic assistance programmes in both French-speaking and Commonwealth African nations provide one good example of this role.

The relation with France is particularly important at present. France has become very active internationally at a time when some of the familiar aspects of the world political landscape are changing significantly. France has become the proponent of certain views about the possibilities of détente, about the necessities for changes in relations between blocs, about the relations between the United States and Europe and about arrangements within NATO.

The Canadian Government has regretted the French Government's withdrawal from the integrated military structure within NATO. We should have preferred that there be consideration of proposals for reorganization and reassessment of objectives in the NATO Council rather than the unilateral decision France has taken. We believe there is a continuing need for the integrated military structure of NATO, while Soviet positions remain unchanged and their forces in Eastern Europe become stronger than ever. At the same time, notwithstanding France's withdrawal from NATO's military organization, we believe every encouragement should be given to their stated intention to remain in the alliance.

At the meeting of the NATO Ministerial Council early in June, Canada made a particular effort to help preserve the unity of the alliance, and I believe that its continuing value and resilience were demonstrated. We hope that co-operative military arrangements can be worked out between France and the 14 nations that have decided to maintain the integrated military structure. We hope that the unity of the alliance with respect to its ultimate political task of facilitating a European settlement can be fully assured.

With the attention of the world focussed on the visit of President de Gaulle to the Soviet Union, I think that one of our greatest hopes would be that the additional understanding of Soviet viewpoints and of the prospects for improved relations derived by the French President from this visit will help to illuminate the path towards a reconciliation of the two halves of Europe.

The balance between individual initiatives and co-ordinated effort in international affairs at present is not always easy to maintain. It is the purpose of the alliance to furnish an opportunity for consultation so that policies may be co-ordinated with the hope of achieving agreed goals. This is not to suggest that the contributions individual nations could best make to world peace should be limited or tied to the judgment of others. It is rather to say that members of an alliance owe it to the collective purpose of the alliance and to their partners to consult together regarding the object of their national endeavours. We hope that France will regard this consultation as part and parcel of its continuing participation in the alliance....