

On the other hand, in the dark spaces behind the iron curtain conditions get worse and the Soviet government is attempting to seal off every possible contact between the unfortunate peoples of those satellite countries and the outer free world. Not the smallest glimmer of western light is now allowed to penetrate. Countries like Czechoslovakia, with its old parliamentary traditions, its great cultural heritage, its long-standing connections with the west, are to be put into permanent quarantine against the infection of freedom. So great is the nervousness of the Kremlin and those who take the Kremlin's orders in Prague, that even the normal social friendliness of two junior members of our legation staff towards their acquaintances in that city is regarded as dangerous and subversive. Charges have to be trumped up against them so that they can be expelled from the country. Against action of that kind we have, of course, means of retaliation which we shall certainly not hesitate to use against any country which invites and deserves it.

This communist policy of isolation and expulsion is revealing. It throws a sombre light on the fear which haunts the rulers of the Soviet Union that the countries which they have drawn or forced into their orbit, realizing that their national interests are being sacrificed to Moscow, may react as Yugoslavia has already reacted. Hence the repeated purges of the personnel of these governments. Hence the series of monstrous trials and forced confessions and savage sentences in Budapest, Sofia, Bucharest, Warsaw and Prague. Hence the accusations of espionage and plotting against western diplomatic missions and individual western nationals in these countries. One must feel the deepest sympathy for the peoples of Soviet satellite countries whose governments are being compelled by Moscow to carry out policies so plainly contrary to their national interests. But I suggest the lesson of these events is not going unnoticed on this side of the iron curtain, where many waverers in many countries will hesitate before committing themselves to communism when they have such abundant evidence that it is being used as a facade for the new Russian imperialism.

In combating these dangers one of our greatest sources of strength remains the United Nations, where they can be publicly exposed, and the North Atlantic Treaty, under which we can defend ourselves collectively against the aggression which might result from them. This treaty, I am glad to say--and the Minister of National Defence may and probably will have more to say about this matter when his estimates are introduced--is now a going concern, though very much remains to be done.

Since the last session of parliament the defence and military committees have met in Paris to approve programme of the Military Production and Supply Board and the Defence Financial and Economic Committee, as well as the broad principles on which defence planning by the various regional groups can be carried on. Since the meetings in Paris, problems of military production and supply and financial questions concerned with the implementation of the North Atlantic Treaty have been under investigation by the appropriate committees, and planning has now begun in the various regional groups. We are getting down to the detailed problems of working out an effective system of collective defence for the north Atlantic region.

As planning for military production and supply under the North Atlantic organization gets under way--and it is now under way--account should of course be taken of the needs of specialization in production and of the availability of productive capacity in all the north Atlantic nations. Means must also be found for overcoming