

that everyone expects of it we should remember that, as in national affairs, an international undertaking of this sort has constantly to fit its plans not only to the capabilities but to the policies and wills of its member states.

It has also to deal first with the most urgent tasks. It was in recognition of this that the Ministerial meeting in December directed that more emphasis should be given to increasing the quality of the strength and effectiveness of the NATO forces and the units necessary for their support rather than to the provision of greater numbers of troops at this time.

It has also been recognized that the impact of a collective undertaking of this kind and of this magnitude is bound to have important and sometimes unforeseen results on the economies of member countries, and that political and economic stability must co-exist with defensive strength or else the strongest military force would be but an illusion of security, weakening the very substance which society itself intended to protect.

This does not mean that the governments of NATO countries should forget for a moment that the danger posed by Soviet imperialism to their common heritage of freedom still remains. As I have said, if the threatening cloud of aggression seems now to be less dark in certain parts of the sky over Europe, it is due to the efforts which its members have made to increase their collective strength and unity since the inception of this NATO alliance. The maintenance of the unity and strength of its members and the extension of their joint action into other fields depends, as I see it, in large part on the preservation of our peace and security.

(On motion of Mr. Pearson the debate was adjourned.)

...I think it is clear that there is one important area of the world where collective security arrangements are most conspicuous by their absence. I am referring to the Middle East. That is a gap, and an important one in our efforts to defend ourselves and the free world collectively.

It is, I think, clear that the gap is not likely to be closed by Middle East defence and security arrangements until the political relationships between some of the countries in the Middle East are happier than they are, unfortunately, at the present. That is only one reason why I think the House will have welcomed the announcement today that an arrangement has been concluded between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Egypt covering the future of the Sudan, which should be a step forward in stabilizing that whole area. It will also have been made clear, I hope, that all these separate collective security arrangements really hang together. They are in a sense interdependent.

Yesterday I finished my discussion by dealing with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That Organization as we know is a limited association of fourteen states whose responsibilities under the Treaty extend only to a clearly defined area. Meanwhile it is becoming increasingly clear that it is Communist world strategy to attempt to drain away the strength of the Western democracies by military and quasi-military action in the Far East and other places and by fomenting disturbances in the Middle East and in Africa. The Communist threat then is on a global scale, and no exclusively regional approach to that threat will be sufficient. The policies required to meet it must be world-wide too. Asian problems are linked with European problems, as has been so clearly demonstrated in the case of Indo-China.