

in our own foreign service and in those of other countries, an instrument which is always available to governments when they have problems to iron out in their relationships. I often think that we would be better off if we relied more on private soundings and discreet probing, in preference to conducting our diplomatic business by press conference or by exchanges of letters in a blaze of publicity.

Against the background of these general observations, I now intend to refer to certain grave problems of the moment in foreign affairs. Six weeks ago I had the privilege of attending the meeting of NATO heads of government in Paris. It was -- and this is generally admitted -- a testing moment for NATO, coming as it did so soon after the world had witnessed striking demonstrations of the advances of Soviet science and technology. It was a time when, on the military side, it seemed clearly necessary to consolidate and improve our defence against possible aggression, and when on the other hand, in terms of political psychology, the moment seemed to have arrived -- at least in the opinion of many -- for a somewhat more flexible approach to the problem of how to negotiate with the Soviet world.

These parallel aims were not easy to reconcile. The concept of the defensive deterrent is not readily harmonized with the idea of probing for peaceful settlements. Some voices of gloom were raised before the conference met. How could NATO overcome the inferiority complex it was supposed to have inherited from Sputnik I and II? Could the posture of holding up one's guard in defence be combined simultaneously with holding out one's hand in a gesture of negotiation?

I believe it is a measure of the success of that conference that unanimous agreement was reached on a communiqué and a declaration which reflect both our determination to preserve our security and our readiness at the same time to talk the Russians on disarmament. In other words the NATO Governments mixed firmness with flexibility, which I submit is the only combination that makes sense at this time.

There has been much discussion in the Western world in recent weeks about the attitude that we should adopt towards negotiations with the Soviet Union. I desire to say a few words about this. In the first place, let me make it clear beyond a doubt that we, as a democratic and loyal member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, are as staunchly determined as anyone in the world to resist the Soviet challenge to our free institutions and way of life. Our stand on this is clear. We are conscious of the threat which faces us and, as our defence programme shows, we are prepared to make, and to keep making, a very substantial national sacrifice as defence insurance. It is only in a free country like Canada that we can make that kind of sacrifice. When I say this I am thinking of men and women in the Baltic States and in Eastern Europe, countries such as Eastern Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, which live under a