

I need not elaborate for you the reasons for setting up this fifteen-nation collective security organization, participation in which forms such an important part of Canada's foreign policy. The main one was that no state, however powerful, can guarantee its security in the nuclear age by national action alone. Since its inception, over ten years ago, NATO has brought to all its members--large, medium and small--a high degree of security in the face of a serious Soviet military challenge--and that continues to be the function of the Alliance.

I think the fact which emerged most clearly at the recent meeting of NATO was that the nature of the Soviet challenge was in the process of change, that we are entering upon a new phase of international relations in which, while the threat of war may well recede, competitive co-existence in the economic and ideological spheres will continue unabated. These new circumstances pose problems for NATO no less demanding than the threat of open aggression which first led to the creation of the Alliance--and they will require certain adjustments in NATO activities.

I came away from Paris convinced that all member nations realize this fact--and convinced also that there is a deep feeling of mutual confidence which will enable the Alliance to meet this new challenge. That spirit of inter-dependence is vital and to maintain and strengthen it calls for the fullest consultation at NATO meetings on all matters which significantly affect the Alliance.

It was for this reason that, when I addressed the Permanent Council in Paris last October, I urged that the December Ministerial Meeting, which was to coincide with the meeting of the Heads of Government of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and West Germany, should be so arranged as to allow for consultation with the other NATO members both before and after the Western summit meeting.

As you know, this suggestion was adopted with the result that the three powers who will represent the West at the summit talks with the Soviet Union not only had the benefit of the views of the Alliance as a whole prior to the Western summit meeting in Paris but were able to review their tentative conclusions with the other NATO partners in the meeting which followed on December 22. I can assure you that this was no perfunctory reporting on conclusions already reached. Indeed it produced one of the best spontaneous discussions of East-West problems that NATO has ever known.

Out of it emerged decisions which I am confident will ensure a cohesive approach by the West to summit talks with the Soviet Union. In the first place, the great powers are now pledged not to adopt final positions on items to be discussed at the summit without first submitting their tentative conclusions