

should be prepared to maintain a high level of military preparedness. We felt, however, that it would be unrealistic to expect to build up and maintain further substantial increases in our collective forces for the long haul. Therefore, the plan is to see that the NATO forces which now exist and which will be strengthened are furnished with the most modern equipment possible, including new types of weapons; that they are given adequate support and are ready to go into action rapidly. Effective local defence of this kind, plus the certainty of swift and crushing retaliation, including atomic retaliation from the air, is the defence combination upon which we now rely to deter the aggressor.

The Council had before it at this meeting a report of the Annual Review Committee for 1953. On the basis of the recommendations of this report we agreed in Paris on our NATO force goals for the next three years. The figures for 1954 were firm commitments while those of 1955 and 1956 are provisional and for planning purposes only. Following the practice established at previous ministerial meetings, the Council has released no precise figures, but I can say that the aggregate forces planned for the end of this year are to be a little larger in numbers--that is, collectively--and substantially better in quality than those now in existence.

There were other activities of the ministerial council and the permanent council in Paris, apart from those concerning defence, which I will not be able to go into at this time. They included how to bring about closer parliamentary association with NATO's work; how to correlate production programmes in Europe; co-ordination of civil defence plans; the preparation of emergency plans; the study of information and cultural relations questions. These matters received little or no publicity but they are an increasingly important part of the process of keeping the North Atlantic Alliance together, and they are in tune with the needs of our time.

I should now like to move across the world to the Far East and to say a few words about developments in Korea. Since I last spoke in the house on this subject an armistice agreement has been signed there which ended on acceptable terms more than three years of fighting by the United Nations in resisting the unprovoked aggression launched against the Republic of Korea. With that aggression repelled, the military purpose of this great collective resort to armed force has been accomplished but, of course, only at a cost to our own forces, and great cost to those of the United States and those of Korea which bore the brunt of the struggle. We remember that cost as we talk about Korea today.

This armistice marked the end of the first step toward a peaceful settlement in Korea. The next step has been to try to convert that armistice into a peace settlement through the convening of a conference. The United Nations Assembly, last summer and last autumn, long and carefully, considered how that conference could be brought about. As a result, as most hon. members know, when the general Assembly last summer closed at the end of August it had, by formal resolution, made provision for the United Nations side of the Korean political conference. These decisions did not meet in full our own wishes but they were those of the United Nations and we accepted them and respected them as much. Moreover, we thought that those decisions, even though they were not perfect from our point of view, were good enough to provide a basis for a Korean political conference if the other side wanted such a conference.