

Conventional Arms

So what should we do? Should we carry on with what we have done in the past, merely for the purpose of saying, "Well, we started, and, having started and having proceeded, we will continue"? Should we do this in an area where mistakes are made? I am not dealing with those mistakes at the moment; but should we continue with such programmes, in the light of changing circumstances? These were not mistakes in judgment at the time, but the failure to be able to look ahead and read the mind of Khrushchov and those associated with him in the Presidium. More and more the nuclear deterrent is becoming of such a nature that more nuclear arms will add nothing materially to our defences. Greater and greater emphasis must be placed on conventional arms and conventional forces. We in Canada took a lead in that connection. In the month of September 1961 we increased the numbers of our conventional forces. There was criticism at the time.

I was in Nassau. I formed certain ideas. I read the communique that was issued there and I come to certain conclusions based on that communique. Those conclusions are as follows, and these are the views expressed also by the United States Under-Secretary of state, George W. Ball: that nuclear war is indivisible; that there should be no further development of new nuclear power anywhere in the world; that nuclear weapons as a universal deterrent is a dangerous solution. Today an attempt is being made by the United States to have the NATO nations increase their conventional arms. The Nassau agreement seemed to accept these three principles as basic, and to carry them out both countries agreed to assign to NATO part of their existing nuclear force as the nucleus of a multilateral force.

What was the plan? The "Skybolt", they said, had not been too successful -- although it is ironical that the day after the communique the first one was successfully launched into space. The day is rapidly passing when we will have missile sites that are set, firm, on land. The new concept is the "Polaris" missile, which is delivered from a submarine. When the "Polaris" missiles are delivered to the United Kingdom as part of the multilateral force, Britain will not have her independent nuclear-deterrent power any more to the same extent, excepting to use these in a case of supra-national emergency.

Nassau Communique

...I am going to read the paragraphs in question from the communique. They illustrate in a most striking way the state of flux of the defence of the free world. The communique shows that changes are taking place, and I will read the various paragraphs that set this out:

"The President informed the Prime Minister that for this reason --"
(That was, that it was very complex, and so on)

"...and because of the availability to the United States of alternative weapons systems, he had decided to cancel plans for the production of "Skybolt" for use by the United States. Nevertheless, recognizing the importance of the "Skybolt" programme for the United Kingdom and recalling that the purpose of the offer of "Skybolt" to the United Kingdom in 1960 had been to assist in improving and extending the effective life of the British V-bombers, the President expressed his readiness to continue the development of the missile as a joint enterprise between the United States and the United Kingdom, with each country bearing equal shares of the future cost of completing development".