

A moment ago I referred to the changes that have taken place in the world in the 15-odd years since the NATO alliance came into being. One of the major changes to have occurred during that period has been the economic recovery and political resurgence of Western Europe. This is a development that Canada welcomes. It is also, of course, a development of central importance to the alliance, not only because of the great strength, in terms of power and resources, that Western Europe has brought to the alliance but also because, inevitably, it was bound to have some implications for the structure of the alliance as such.

There are those who think that the alliance may have been slow to adapt itself to these new circumstances, and that may well be so. If it has been so, the reasons for it are perhaps not too difficult to detect. As individual nations, we have, I think, all of us adapted to the changing patterns of world relations over the past decade or so of which the revival in Western Europe has been one of the most striking. But, as members of an alliance, we were bound to take certain other factors into account. First, we must be sure, in whatever steps we take, that the net effect is to strengthen and not to weaken the alliance. Secondly, there is the inescapable fact of the overwhelming power of the United States and its custodianship of the nuclear deterrent. This is, of course, crucial to the effectiveness and credibility of the alliance and we, as Canadians, attach the utmost importance to it. Thirdly, we must not forget that, throughout the period when the pattern of power and resources within the alliance was changing, the alliance as a whole continued to be confronted by the overriding external challenge of the Soviet Union. And it is significant, I think, that whatever may have been the preoccupation of the members of the alliance with the need for internal adjustments, the alliance collectively and its members individually have never flagged in their determination to stand up to that challenge. Our common planning to meet the Soviet threat to Berlin and the confrontation over Cuba some two years back provide, I think, forceful demonstrations of that point.

The fact of the matter, then, is that some Western European countries feel that they should have a greater share in the military direction of the alliance. Some of these countries have tried to meet this problem by creating a national nuclear force. This is not, however, a feasible course for most members nor do we regard it, on balance, as a desirable course -- certainly for us -- to follow. There have also been suggestions for a partly multilateral approach to this problem, but this solution does not really meet the preoccupations of those who are looking for a greater share of responsibility within the alliance. We think there may well be a middle course that has not been sufficiently explored. Could we not make use of our existing machinery to bring about a greater sharing in the military direction of the alliance, particularly in the areas of the command structures, strategic planning and targeting as well as the sharing of costs. To insist that some countries can now make a greater contribution to the common burden without coming seriously to grips with the actual sharing of military direction seems to me to be as unpromising as the reverse line of approach.