

wider than the interests and welfare of the College. All of you have been cadets yourselves, and nearly every one of you has served in the armed forces in one or both of the two great wars. I feel, therefore, I have every right to assume that you are more than just casually concerned, particularly in these difficult times, about the defence of our own country and the defence of that wider community of free nations, whose preservation is essential alike to our welfare and our security. I should like, therefore, to say something about the way we in the government are organizing our common efforts to provide for that defence.

I feel sure I can speak to you frankly without fear of misinterpretation, even if all of you do not agree with everything I may have to say. The success of our defence policies does not depend on the government alone. It depends just as much on public understanding and support, and we are naturally particularly anxious to have our policies understood by those in the community to whom the public naturally looks for leadership and guidance on questions of defence. And there is probably no group of citizens from whom that leadership and understanding is more likely to be expected than from the ex-cadets of R.M.C.

In recent weeks and months the government has given far more consideration to these problems of defence, in the broad sense of the term, than to any other question. That is only right and proper, because the security of our country and of our kind of society is the foundation of everything else, and we can only afford to take the foundation for granted when we know it is secure. I think I can say that the primary object of our defence policy, as of all our external policies, is the prevention of a third world war.

In a sense armed force has always been an instrument of diplomacy. But it is perhaps not unfair to say that in the past defence policy was primarily concerned with what would happen if and when a war broke out, whereas today defence policy is primarily directed to creating a situation where war is unlikely to break out. In other words, the first purpose of our defence expenditures and our defence force is to deter aggression and we have got to get into the habit of looking at them first from the point of view of their effectiveness as a deterrent - though, of course, that obviously means they must also have a real value if the worst comes to the worst and the deterrent function is not successful.

I do not of course need to tell you that defence always has a wider connotation than a purely military one, but that was never truer than in this present world-wide struggle between totalitarian communism and the free world. Some of the most effective weapons are not military weapons at all. Indeed, the communists have always claimed and probably still hope that they can overthrow the so-called capitalist nations without resort to war, except for revolutionary outbreaks within countries. By fostering discontent, by gaining power over trade unions, by infiltrating into key positions, and by many other subversive means, revolutionary communist parties seek to put themselves in a position to take over governments and thereby gain control over whole nations.