

Statement on Nassau Meetings

fields. I also had extensive discussions with Mr. Macmillan on the various problems of mutual interest to our two countries, and had the benefit of his views on the United States-British talks which had taken place prior to and for a short time after my arrival there.

The agreement reached by Britain and the United States at Nassau represents the first firm commitment to certain ideas concerning military policy in the western alliance which has been evolving for some time. I refer to problems mainly affecting the control of the nuclear deterrent forces of the west. The British and United States leaders agreed that in order to develop new and closer arrangements for the organization and control of the NATO defence effort, a start could be made by subscribing to NATO some of the nuclear forces already in existence, and in particular allocations from United States strategic forces, British bomber command and from tactical nuclear forces now held in Europe. This latter suggestion has relevance for Canada and in the NATO council is now the subject of intensive discussion in which Canada is fully participating. For the longer term the British prime minister and the president agreed to the furnishing of Polaris missiles to Britain to be made available for inclusion in an eventual NATO multilateral nuclear force, with a similar offer to France.

At Nassau the whole question was raised of how political and military control would be exercised in the future within the western alliance. The discussions among the western allies are bound to continue for many months to come, and I would not expect any firm decisions in the near future. The Nassau agreement aims at preserving an objective long sought by this government, namely a limitation of the further enlargement of the nuclear family in the national sense.

It was also agreed at Nassau by the two leaders in question that in addition to having a nuclear shield it was important to have a non-nuclear sword and to increase the effectiveness of conventional forces available to the alliance. It has been the policy of the Canadian government to support the build-up of conventional forces in Europe. The house will recall that on the occasion of the Berlin crisis in the autumn of 1961, Canada increased the strength of its forces in Europe. The purpose of increasing the conventional strength is to ensure that if the western alliance is ever faced with aggression from its enemies it will have sufficient strength in non-nuclear forces to avoid the disastrous choice between surrender and all-out nuclear war.

These are the important questions of strategy which are now in the process of being exhaustively examined in the NATO council. Indeed, I believe that the whole future direction and shape of the military forces of NATO are now in process of review. The enormous costs of modern weapons systems and the speed with which they become obsolescent dictate the utmost care in reaching final decisions. It would be premature at this stage to say anything further about western defence policy until there is a clear indication as to whether or not some form of NATO multilateral nuclear force can be worked out.

I realize that the communiques in question have received full press coverage, but hon. members in the house might like to have these joint communiques tabled. If the house agrees, I therefore suggest that they be tabled.

Mr. Douglas: Printed in *Hansard*.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam suggests that they be placed on *Hansard*. If that is agreeable, I am within the desire of the house.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, the Prime Minister asks to have these statements printed in *Hansard* as part of the record. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Editor's note: For text of communiques above referred to, see appendix "A".*]

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we on this side have listened with great interest to the Prime Minister's observations on the recent conference at Nassau, and have learned from him what indeed we had previously learned from the press, that the question of a NATO nuclear deterrent was given further consideration by the leaders of the three governments at Nassau; this matter, indeed, has been under consideration now for a good many years going back to the days when those members of NATO, including Canada, first accepted a commitment in NATO which cannot be discharged effectively without nuclear arms.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the remarks of the Prime Minister concerning the Nassau conference, I should only like to say that these and other statements which have been made since then have drawn to our attention and also to the attention of the public at large the need of a general debate on defence matters. I trust that if the work program that has been suggested can be agreed to we can then look forward in the very near future,