

to this process by facilitating and furthering the relaxation of tension which is now generally recognized as the necessary prelude to a settlement in Europe. A nuclear test ban treaty has been signed, and we are well advanced in negotiations with the Russians over a non-proliferation treaty which will restrict the "Nuclear Club". It is reassuring that our satisfaction at these developments is shared by our NATO allies. We are all agreed on the importance of working for improved relations with the Communist countries.

But in some quarters, in all NATO countries, the implications of these welcome developments have, I believe, been incorrectly assessed. It is being argued that the Western alliance can afford to reduce its defences because the Soviet Union has shown that it will not attack the West. One variant of this argument has it that NATO's forces in Europe are irrelevant because the sole deterrent is the United States' strategic forces.

We have, in the Government of Canada, carefully considered this argument in its various manifestations. We have concluded that dismemberment of NATO's forces in Europe at this time would be risky and even dangerous. In spite of improved relations with the West, the Russians have continued, and are still continuing, to develop their already formidable military power. NATO's defence arrangements in Europe have obliged the Soviet leaders increasingly to accept that there can be no alternative to a settlement in Europe. We cannot be sure that their earlier appetite for expansion would not revive if NATO were to lower its defences.

And what would be the political effect in Germany, if the German Government could no longer point to the military support of its allies represented by the forces of the seven NATO nations which are stationed in Germany? In such circumstances, could we expect a German Government to agree to the non-proliferation treaty?

Nor can we overlook the danger of conflict arising out of accident or miscalculation. The continent of Europe remains divided; and Berlin is isolated 100 miles within Communist territory. In spite of this potentially explosive situation, peace and stability have prevailed in Europe during a period in which wars, large and small, have broken out with distressing frequency in most other areas of the world. This remarkable - and to us essential - peace in Europe is due, in very large measure, to the stabilizing influence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And NATO's strength continues to deter the Soviet Union and its ally, East Germany, from exercising their local military superiority to choke off Berlin.

Last summer, Alastair Buchan, speaking at the Banff Conference on World Affairs, expressed his concern over the danger of Western troop reductions in the following terms:

". . . It means not only the end of any flexibility in dealing with European crises; it also means the end of any pretension on the part of NATO that it can protect the security of German citizens in the event of any