

from this point of view, the North Atlantic Council is no more than a committee of national representatives whose individual and combined authority is strictly limited. This is not to say that the Council has no power; nor indeed that its authority may not develop by custom, even by law, as the alliance gains confidence and strength. But, for the moment, we can only proceed by unanimity and delegation and through the implementing action of our governments at home.

I must not, however, be led into what might well be an arid "constitutional" examination of my subject. The essence of NATO is not so much law or even political organization but the willingness of free governments supported by free peoples to work together. In so doing we can achieve the unanimity which is necessary to our decisions only by the adjustment of purely national interests to the interests of the whole alliance and by the national determination of national policies in the light of what is best in the judgment of our friends.

Another side of our Atlantic association where there is some confusion, it seems to me, is in the relation between what we call the Atlantic community and NATO. For, as I see it, the community and the Organization are neither the same nor co-extensive. Established originally by twelve nations for the primary purpose of providing for a united system of defence for the West, NATO has already expanded by a process of strategic and political logic to include fourteen. Who will say that there is some special magic in the present number? In terms of military strategy, there is of course a certain unity in the geographical area covered by the Treaty. But, even here, it is difficult to contend that our alliance is complete.

Think for a moment in terms other than defence. We have, from the beginnings of NATO, insisted, and rightly, that ours was no mere military alliance. Ours has to be an alliance of the mind and spirit — no mere huddling together in the face of a common danger. Ours was to be, as well, a developing community of like-minded peoples committed to the co-operative strengthening of our free institutions, to the promotion of conditions of stability and well-being and to the encouragement of economic collaboration.

Now it is true, of course, that our fourteen nations have much in common beyond our determination to remain free and to build up our strength to deter, and, if need be, to fight together against aggression. But, if it is difficult to delimit in terms of strategy the extent of our community, how much more difficult is it to set geographical boundaries to the spiritual community of free men?

I am not suggesting that there is no essential unity, no political or other logic in the present grouping of nations in NATO. Much less am I suggesting that NATO should put on a drive for new members! Of course the present composition of the alliance makes sense — but it is primarily military sense at the present stage of events. All that I am trying to say is that we should remember that NATO does not comprise the whole community of free men. And we should look forward to the widening, as well as the deepening, of our association, particularly in those fields of endeavour associated with Article 2 of the Treaty which, in NATO parlance, have come to be known as the "non-military aspects".

In the comradeship of arms, NATO has already made solid progress towards the establishment of an Atlantic community. This sense of comradeship will, no doubt, spread gradually, but surely, into other fields. In a hundred different ways, economic and social and cultural co-operation will emerge. Unfortunately, up to now, it is not unfair to say that our preaching about this sort of co-operation has outrun our performance. There has been a lot of oratory, some of it pretty good oratory, about "the Atlantic community". But lip service never built a community. We need to act as well as to talk; and, before we act, we must think. Nowhere, perhaps, have we need of more hard and discriminating thought than in our efforts to give substance to the undertakings we have given in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty.