

In short, to rail at General de Gaulle, because he is demanding, for France, a position in the Atlantic alliance equal to that of Britain and somewhat closer to that of the U.S.A. is to show a dangerous misunderstanding of the situation.

May I refer on this point to some observations in Max Frankel's penetrating article, "Our Friends, the French", in the April number of Freedom and Union?

Mr. Frankel is somewhat critical of his own country's share in the responsibility for NATO, as he puts it, "becoming an anachronism whose defensive or military purposes were long ago overtaken by technological change and whose diplomatic purposes we have never managed to define or construct". He believes that not de Gaulle's stubbornness but a long chain of events and conflicting governmental policies - including those of the United States - has caused the disarray.

I do not see the Atlantic nations going forward together to a secure and hopeful future without France. Therefore, we must find a way out of our present NATO difficulties so that France can fully participate in the march to greater, not less, Atlantic unity.

We must not give up the ultimate vision of closer Atlantic unity just because some clouds are obscuring the immediate future of NATO.

Indeed, a new move forward to realize the greater vision may help remove some of the nearer clouds.

We must now look at the picture ahead of us with the courage and imagination we showed 17 years ago when the NATO pact was signed. Taking this same cradle area of the Atlantic nations, we must ask ourselves what sort of Atlantica would we like our children to inherit from us in five years, ten years, 20 years? What sort of vision of the future can we hold up as a rallying point, as an objective of policy, without pretending that it must turn out the way we wish but convinced in our own minds that, given goodwill, dedicated hard work, and a certain amount of good luck, it could be that way.

This forward march must be Atlantic, and not merely European or North American. But it must provide for more control by Europe of its direction and its character -- a Europe, moreover, which would include Britain.

I realize that a united Europe, would, in its political, economic and military decisions, be more independent of Washington than is the case now. But what is wrong about this?

There are those who worry about the "separateness" of such a European development and who would therefore prefer to concentrate now on the federal union of all the Atlantic peoples, even at the expense of earlier European union. If we are realistic, however, we may have to accept at this time the more practical immediate objective of a united Europe -- not as an obstacle to, but as a stage on the way to, Atlantic union.