

These two issues of the meetings -- the site of the NATO Council and the negotiating procedures for French forces in Germany -- involved for us a common concern. At stake in each case was the continued unity of the alliance. We avoided open breaches. Orderly procedures for examining our differences were agreed upon. Time was gained. I do not deny that we have difficult problems ahead of us. The 14 proved to themselves that they could hold to a common position, and France found that its allies were ready to compromise in order to preserve the unity of the alliance.

...Reporting on these very vital meetings, I do not want to give an exaggerated impression of the achievements of the meeting. In concrete terms, we succeeded in working out a procedure for conducting negotiations on the several problems involving all members of the alliance which are posed by the French decision to withdraw from the integrated military structure. Moreover, the intensive and delicate discussions which led up to this agreement, and which lasted for two days, were marked by efforts on both sides to resist any formula which they considered might prejudice their position in the negotiations which would ensue. This confirmed what we already knew -- that it will prove extremely difficult to find a way to reconcile at the same time the requirement of the 14 that French forces remaining in Germany should undertake a militarily significant role with French insistence on the principle that their forces should not be integrated.

The question at issue here is the extent of the military co-operation which the French Government will be prepared to provide as a substitute for participation in the integrated military structure; for it is necessary to have a concerted planning in peace-time if there is to be effective response in emergencies and concerted action in war. The outcome of these complex and crucial negotiations cannot be forecast, but they are at least fairly launched.

The other issue faced at Brussels concerned the future site of the North Atlantic Council. This was the main issue which divided the 14. There were some who felt keenly that a decision had to be taken immediately to move the Council from Paris. With SHAPE, the military headquarters, obliged to leave French territory, they argued the case for the collocation of the military and civil headquarters.

A decision to move the Council from Paris would be an important political action. I argued: would it have been right to have taken such a step before testing French intentions; before discovering whether co-operative military arrangements could be worked out between the French and the 14 who have decided to maintain the integrated military structure; even before President de Gaulle had visited Moscow, even before the French foreign minister had reached Brussels and had a chance to show, in consultation with his colleagues, whether satisfactory arrangements could be worked out with France? How could we hope to work out such arrangements with France, the Canadian delegation argued, if our first action as the 14 was to anticipate that our negotiations with the French would fail?

These are the questions I put to my colleagues. No matter how valid some of the arguments for moving the Council might be, we maintained it was too early to take a decision. Eventually, after the fullest discussion, the 14 ministers agreed to defer consideration of the question until October.