

External Affairs in Parliament

Internal Problems of NATO

Addressing the House of Commons on November 19 during the debate on supply, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, said:

. . . I have been extremely concerned in the past few weeks that some of our major allies appear to be embarked on a collision course which could have incalculable consequences for the Western alliance. Two or three weeks ago it looked as though in this context the storm clouds were gathering over Western Europe. In Paris, on November 2, the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Couve de Murville, with his usual incisiveness, described the storm warnings as he saw them: the danger of deteriorating Franco-German relations, the danger to the European Common Market because of the failure of The Six to agree on cereal prices, and the danger for NATO if Germany and the United States were to push ahead with their plan for a multilateral force of mixed manned ships carrying "Polaris" missiles jointly owned, controlled and financed by the participating nations.

I may say now, reflecting on the events of these past few weeks, that, thanks to the efforts which have been made on both sides of the Atlantic by a number of countries, there are indications that, given a little more time (and I think this will be forthcoming), accommodations can be reached with regard to some, if not all, of these major issues. Nevertheless, it would be misleading for me to pretend that everything in the Atlantic world is satisfactory, just as it would be improper to reveal in detail what we know of the elements of other peoples' problems based upon the consultations and discussions we have had in Canada and which our heads of missions in other capitals have had with representatives of friendly governments. We wish not only to keep ourselves informed but to bring whatever influence we can to bear on these problems, in the hope that conciliation may be encouraged and co-operation strengthened among all our allies on both sides of the Atlantic so as to maintain and develop the essential transatlantic nature of the NATO community, which is, of course, of such vital importance to Canada.

In the course of the past week, consultations took place in Ottawa with the Foreign Ministers of Belgium and Norway, and we have had discussions, as I indicated a moment ago, with the representatives of other countries here in our capital, as well as through our missions abroad. We are, by the very nature of our situation, obliged to recognize how much we in Canada depend, as do other NATO countries, on collective security. We live in a world in which the members of the NATO group must proceed with balanced forces to provide for their de-