

subjects : (a) the new strategic conception; (b) NATO force plans; (c) the standing Naval Force Atlantic.

"The new strategy of response against aggression makes provision for a flexible and balanced range of appropriate conventional and nuclear responses to all levels of aggression or threats of aggression. The ministers approved this conception.

"For the first time, the minister adopted a five-year rolling force plan. The current plan covers the period from 1968 to 1972. It includes a firm commitment of forces for 1968 and an outline of national plans for the period from 1969 to 1972.

"As far as Canada is concerned, we reaffirmed the continued assignment for 1968 of our forces in Germany, consisting of : (a) the air division; (b) the Canadian mechanized brigade group. We also confirmed the continued availability from Canada for 1968 of : (a) our already earmarked naval forces; (b) two brigades retained in Canada and already earmarked for Europe.

"In respect of our plans after 1968 we proposed, as forecast in the White Paper of 1964, to substitute one air-transportable brigade group based in Canada for the two brigades now earmarked in Canada. We also outlined, in general terms, proposed reductions in the air division during the next few years. During the next year, we shall be forming our new CF-5 squadrons for the support of mobile command forces. In doing this, we plan to utilize the trained personnel which will become available as a result of later adjustments in the air division.

"Honourable Members will recall that, when the original decision was made to earmark for SACEUR's strategic reserve two brigades stationed in Canada, it was envisaged that it would be feasible to transport the force to Europe in time to make a significant contribution. However, as a consequence of the gradual mechanization of our brigade in Germany and the corresponding changes in Canada, it has become increasingly apparent that the sea-and air-lift required to transport these forces to Europe in a mechanized form would not be available in time to be effective.

"During the past few years, the Government examined a number of proposals to overcome this problem. One of these proposals involved the stockpiling in Europe of mechanized equipment for the balance of the force. Because of the expense and the impractical aspects, this proposal was dropped. As a result of the recent review of our military commitments, both in Europe and elsewhere, we have concluded that another proposal, that of an air-transportable force, would be more appropriate and useful. As additional air transport becomes available, this force, including men and equipment, can be transported to Europe in time to make an effective contribution. It would also provide us with forces of sufficient flexibility to meet other requirements.

"The new strategy of flexible response places more emphasis on dual-capable aircraft. Our air division has both a conventional and nuclear capability and thus is well suited to carry out the requirements of this new strategic conception.