

nuclear force does not require the withdrawal of other national forces from the unified command and planning arrangements.

Fourthly, it is true that a nuclear stalemate had developed in place of the earlier United States nuclear monopoly. But this is not new. It has been the case for ten years. Moreover, this fact has not diminished the need for unified planning, if the European countries are to make an effective contribution to the defence of Europe.

Fifthly, I also acknowledge that Europe is not at present the centre of international crises. But until there is a political settlement in Central Europe, it will remain an area of potential crisis, particularly if the arrangements which have brought about stability in the area should be upset.

In my judgment, and in the judgment of the Canadian government, the arguments presented in the French aide-mémoire do not support the conclusion that unified command and planning arrangements are no longer necessary for the defence of Western Europe.

It is striking that all of the other members of NATO have joined in reaffirming their belief in the need for unified command and planning arrangements in a declaration, the text of which I communicated to the House of Commons on March 18. I expect members of the External Affairs committee and the Defence committee will be interested to know that the strongest support for the integrated military arrangements has come from the smaller members of the alliance, who consider that the only way to assure their defence is by pooling their contributions in a common effort. It seems to me that, if the principle of an alliance is accepted, the experience of the last two world wars and the requirements of modern weapons demonstrate the need for unified command and joint planning. Indeed, one of the most remarkable successes of the post-war world has been the development within NATO of effective peace-time arrangements for military co-operation.

I have explained why we and other members of NATO are not persuaded by the French arguments. I wish now to examine the implications of the actions which have been taken by the French government.

Providing NATO itself does not disintegrate—and I see no danger of that happening—the immediate military consequences of the French action are thought to be manageable. France has already withdrawn from NATO command, during the last six years, most of its previously integrated forces. The net loss in forces available to NATO from the announced withdrawal, while significant, will not be too serious, particularly if workable arrangements can be devised for maintaining French troops in Germany. But the loss for practical purposes of French land and air space has strategic implications for the defence of Western Europe, which will have to be carefully studied.

Even more worrying to my mind are the possible political implications. These consequences are, of course, still quite uncertain so that it is possible to speak only in the most general and cautious terms. But it is obvious that the French actions may weaken the unity of the Alliance. This would, in turn, jeopardize the stability of Central Europe, which has been built on allied unity