

*Supply—External Affairs*

Franco-Canadian ministerial meetings which began over a year ago. It is my expectation that the whole subject of how to ensure a greater sharing in the direction of the alliance will be thoroughly aired at the NATO ministerial meeting and at consultations which will take place at that time.

Any development that could create a special group within the western alliance to the detriment of a broadly based trans-Atlantic NATO alliance is bound to be of concern, I wish to re-emphasize, to this country. By the same token any development that could start an irreversible trend toward the break-up of our alliance or to an alliance based on continentalism of either a North American or European variety will be contrary and prejudicial to our national interests.

The smaller countries of the alliance, because they must depend on collective security for their defence, have special cause to seek a way out, and this was emphasized to us in the talks that we had with Mr. Spaak and Mr. Lange here last week. The extremely useful discussions that we had gave us an opportunity of emphasizing the large area agreement that does exist on the basic aims of the alliance, even though in this highly controversial field, there are divisions of view as to how we should conduct the strategic planning of the organization. These discussions reinforced my view that special efforts would have to be made to convince our allies that a fresh examination is essential if the alliance is to avoid a perilous division over certain aspects of its policy.

We have asked our allies who have supported proposals for a multilateral force whether the present form of the proposals is necessarily the only way to deal with what all of us recognize to be necessary, a means of giving the European members of the alliance a greater degree of participation in the strategic arrangements of NATO. There is always a danger that a formula appropriate to one period can harden into policies which are too rigid to another.

We should ask those who do not like the multilateral force and the proposals based on it, and who suggest that our alliance does not correspond to the realities of 1964, what is suggested as an alternative. I am sure there is no member of the alliance that would not welcome constructive counter proposals. Since all members of NATO recognize—and this was fully apparent at the last NATO ministerial meeting at The Hague—that the need for the alliance remains undiminished. It follows that we can neither afford to split the

alliance in two nor plunge it into a course against the will of a major member.

It is to the avoidance of these extremes that the Canadian government is devoting its most careful attention at this time in the discussions we are having. It is traditional for Canada to look for a compromise when friends disagree. As I suggested a few weeks ago, we believe there may be an alternative course that has not yet been sufficiently explored. We have wondered whether we could not make use of the existing machinery within the alliance to bring about a greater sharing in the military direction of NATO.

In the next few weeks, when all NATO countries will be preparing for the December ministerial meeting, we shall be exploring—indeed we have already begun to do so—with our friends general lines of approach designed to meet the situation that has developed and which has been developing for some time, in the hope that we can strengthen NATO. The usefulness and the necessity of NATO in this nuclear, interdependent period continues to be so obvious, I am sure, to anyone who fully appreciates the difficulties in the world situation.

The world situation has featured a number of important developments within the past few weeks. The changes in the top direction of the government of the Soviet union have naturally evoked conjectures. We have been given the assurance both here in Ottawa and by the government of the Soviet union in Moscow, that these changes do not involve any change in foreign policy; nor do they mean a reversion to the Stalinization of an earlier period.

In addition we have been faced with the critical but notable fact that the Chinese people's republic has successfully detonated an atomic bomb. While this was anticipated and to a great extent discounted, particularly in the western world, no one can be oblivious to the fact that it has produced a very important reaction in the continent of Asia itself. This additional factor is one which will be noted not only by NATO members but must be noted by nations all over the world. We in Canada are of the view, as we were of the view before this event took place, that in the 18 nation group meeting in Geneva which is discussing the problems of nuclear and conventional disarmament, there was an opportunity for all countries, particularly the major countries which obviously have such influence on the state of international tension, to join in conclusions and ultimately in the discussions which have taken place.