

result of the serious drought there last year, and partly as the result of the economic blockade imposed on that country by the Cominform. Moreover, Roumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania are now, contrary to the provisions of the peace treaties, in possession of sufficient military forces to make them collectively powerful, as well as threatening and aggressive, neighbours.

But the danger to the free world is still greatest in Western Europe itself. Recognition of that fact was the reason for the signing of the North Atlantic Pact in the spring of 1949. Since that time progress has been made in increasing the military strength of the countries associated in that pact; but this progress, although it is being accelerated, has not been swift enough to remove anxiety. Western Europe is still relatively weak, and still stands open to Soviet conquest. It is a glittering prize. Its capture would put the Soviet Union in possession not only of the source and centre of western civilization, but also of industrial capacity which would enable them to rival the productive resources of the whole of the western hemisphere. We over here would then be in a desperate position indeed.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that our involvement in other areas of the world should not prevent us from recognizing that Western Europe is the key point for the defence of the whole of the free world—which includes, incidentally India and Pakistan as well as Canada and the United States; and we should co-operate with our allies in the North Atlantic Treaty in building up forces large enough to deter the Soviet Union from launching an attack in that area.

Respect for Asian Opinion

... These western European dangers and developments must, then, never be forgotten in determining our Far Eastern policy. In formulating that policy—and this is another general consideration—I think we should bear in mind also that there is a new and great tidal movement of nationalism sweeping Asia. In some countries, China for example, it is mingled and confused with, and possibly it is at the moment dominated by, the aggressive forces of Soviet communism. But it is operative in other Asian countries besides China, and it has a vitality of its own. It is something which I believe is deeper and more lasting than communism. Indeed, nationalism—alleged to a restless and insistent demand for a better life—is the most important political phenomenon in Asia today. Therefore in framing our policies we must try to avoid offending the legitimate national and social aspirations of Asian peoples, or their desire to have a chief part in the determination of Asian affairs.

Improvement of Economic Conditions in Free Asia

We must also do what we can to improve the economic conditions and human welfare in free Asia. We must try to work with rather than against the forces struggling for a better life in that part of the world. Such co-operation may in the long run become as important for the defence of freedom—and therefore for the defence of Canada—as sending an army to Europe, in the present immediate emergency. Economic and technical assistance is one form of such co-operation. Many members in the house will have read the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia. This imaginative, and, I think, well-founded report, which was published last November as the result of the work of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, points the way to the kind of effective assistance which we in the west can offer to the free peoples of Asia. They stand in very great need of capital for economic development, and of technical assistance. For Canada to supply either the capital or the technical assistance in any substantial volume would mean considerable sacrifice, now that the demands of our defence programme are imposing new strains on our economy.