

is without precedent in peacetime. We have adopted the principle of "balanced collective forces" as the basis for our defence. Here is the text of paragraph 5 of the summary of conclusions:

The Council unanimously agreed that if adequate military defence of the member countries is to be achieved it must be along the lines of the most economical and effective utilization of the forces and material at the disposal of the North Atlantic countries. They accordingly urged their governments to concentrate on the creation of balanced collective forces in the progressive build-up of the North Atlantic area, taking at the same time fully into consideration the requirements for national forces which arise out of commitments external to the North Atlantic area.

It seems to me this is no less than the principle of the international division of labour to be applied amongst the members of the North Atlantic community for collective defence. We are now pledged to do within the framework of the North Atlantic alliance what each of us has already been doing within our national defence system. We shall try to agree amongst ourselves which of us is the best able to concentrate on certain types of defence preparation.

This principle may come to mean the further application to defence of new techniques and tactics of scientific warfare; and eventually, possibly, to the abandonment of the old concept of defence by great masses of conscripted infantry, the bulk of which would be reservists called up on the outbreak of war.

In this planning allowance has to be made for the fact that certain states have commitments which are external to the North Atlantic area. Allowance has also to be made for the specially exposed position of some states to meet an initial attack. The acceptance of "collective balanced forces" does not of course imply a strategy by which less exposed countries, or at least countries less exposed to ground attack, can collect their resources of men and material behind the ramparts of sacrifices made by others so that eventual victory can be achieved. North Atlantic strategy cannot mean, and our agreement does not imply, a strategy of liberation after destruction and occupation. There could be no hope for Europe in that strategy because the next time there may well be nothing to liberate.

On the other hand our strategy cannot be based on plans for national action alone, through national forces developed for national territory alone. The new principle recognizes, if I may pick out a purely hypothetical example, the waste and futility of one country trying to build battleships, let us say, if there are enough of these already in the navies of other members of the group. This principle in its turn must rest on the firm assurance that the other battleships, if I may continue that example, will be at your service if you need them. Therefore I think that this decision in favour of balanced collective forces is of vital importance. Of course it is a decision of principle only. Many bridges will have to be crossed before its application can be worked out in practice. We do not yet know how it will affect the detailed responsibilities of any particular member of the alliance. As far as this government is concerned, in our defence policy we have already accepted this principle and have been trying to relate our policy to the defence of an area rather than merely to the defence of a country. We have been going on that principle and we will gladly do what we can to continue its application.