

Mr. David McIntosh: Sir, do you think there can be any improvement in relations between the NATO countries and the Warsaw Pact countries so long as the Vietnam war continues?

Mr. Martin: There is no doubt that the war in Vietnam is a beclouding fact but, notwithstanding that, I believe a great improvement in our relations can be reached. We have been ourselves in very close touch with the Government of Poland over the role of the Commission in Vietnam. These have been useful and helpful discussions. The Minister of Trade and Commerce will shortly be going to Poland on a trade mission. We ourselves are engaged in preliminary trade talks with other Eastern European countries. Mr. Winters will shortly be going to the Soviet Union to discuss trade matters. We hope to have a delegation of parliamentarians from Czechoslovakia here this summer; we are anticipating the visit of a group of parliamentarians -- I hope under the leadership of Mr. Polyansky, one of the important members in the establishment of Government in the Soviet Union -- in the month of July. It is possible that I may myself be going to the Soviet Union between now and the next three or four months. We are now trying to work out a satisfactory and mutually convenient date. We have all noted the developments in Roumania. I think it is true to say that, notwithstanding the situation in Asia, there has been a considerable improvement in relations between the countries which are in NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers in their individual contexts.

Mr. Anthony Wright: You have said in the House, I think, Mr. Martin, that you are seeing Mr. Couve de Murville on Monday. Who else are you seeing?

Mr. Martin: Yes, our meeting of the 14 will take place on Monday and he and I have agreed to meet Monday night. On Sunday I shall be seeing Mr. Rusk and the Italian Foreign Minister, Mr. Fanfani. On Saturday I will be lunching in Amsterdam with Mr. Luns, the Dutch Foreign Minister. Mr. Luns, as the senior foreign minister -- that is, the foreign minister who has been in office in that portfolio longest -- will preside on Monday over the meeting of the 14. That is not a NATO meeting. That is a meeting of practically all of the NATO countries. I shall preside as President at the meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday, which is a formal NATO meeting, at which France will be present.

Mr. McIntosh: Sir, you said in the beginning that improvement in East-West relations should be done in consultation rather than alone.

Mr. Martin: Essentially in consultation.

Mr. McIntosh: Does this imply a criticism of General de Gaulle?

Mr. Martin: It is a fact that we believe that the strength of any alliance depends on the effectiveness of the consultative arrangement, and, while any head of government has the right, and, indeed, all of them at some time or other have exercised the right, of going to other capitals, including the Soviet Union, we shall hope that whatever positions are taken would be positions that were not inconsistent with the general interests of NATO itself.