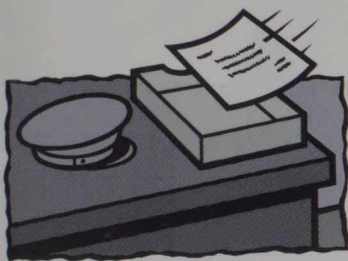


DEFENCE NOTES



NATO Summit in Rome

■ Meeting in Rome on 7 and 8 November, the NATO heads of state issued a lengthy communique outlining a "New Strategic Concept" for the alliance. Seeking to respond to the pace of change in Europe, the communique dealt at some length with the unique position of NATO as a security bridge between Europe and North America. "NATO," it commented, "embodies the transatlantic link by which the security of North America is permanently tied to the security of Europe," and it called for "a framework of interlocking institutions tying together the countries of Europe and North America."

Despite this reaffirmation of the inseparable transatlantic link, the Rome meeting took place amidst continuing uncertainty about the full implications of a Franco-German proposal to expand their joint army brigade. In mid-October, Presidents Mitterrand and Kohl wrote to other European leaders suggesting that, as part of a EC treaty on political union, the joint brigade could be expanded to a corps of multinational units under the control of Western European Union. This organization, a left-over from the early 1950s, played little or no role while the threat of a Soviet attack glued the NATO members together, but it has come to the fore as the possible institutional basis for a European security system.

The Rome communique appeared to support this movement, referring to "the process of developing a European security identity," and acknowledging that, with the strengthening of the European pillar, "the European members of the alliance will assume a greater degree of responsibility for the de-

fence of Europe." More informally, however, US leaders do not appear certain about the intentions of France and Germany. President Bush was quoted as saying: "If, my friends, your ultimate aim is to provide independently for your own defence, the time to tell us is today."

Nuclear Weapons in Europe

■ The "New Strategic Concept" added little that was new in describing the previously agreed reorientation of NATO forces towards smaller, more mobile units with greater emphasis on reinforcement. However, following the sweeping measures announced by President Bush on 27 September to withdraw army and navy tactical nuclear weapons, the Rome communique, of necessity, dealt with the place of nuclear weapons in NATO strategy. The communique reaffirmed that US dual-capable aircraft, (those able to carry both conventional and nuclear weapons) supplemented if necessary by naval forces, would continue to contribute "sub-strategic" nuclear forces to European defence, thus maintaining the trans-atlantic link to the strategic nuclear forces of the United States.

At the same time, the Rome meeting addressed the question of Soviet nuclear forces, the control of which has become a matter of increasing concern to NATO. Shortly after the August coup, the new Soviet chief of Staff, Vladimir Lobov, insisted that tactical nuclear weapons were under strict control, explaining that key components of the weapons were kept under separate authority and "must be brought together" in order to arm the weapon. Other US reports have suggested that Scud missiles are accompanied by special KGB units holding the warheads in separate trailers. The KGB and the Soviet army have separate command channels, both of which must authorize firing of the missile. Such reassurances notwithstanding, leaders at the Rome summit made clear their concerns about Soviet nuclear weapons. Despite the dissenting

views of France, other NATO countries – including Canada – indicated that future aid to the Soviet Union would be tied to reassurances that all nuclear weapons were under a single authority with satisfactory security procedures.

Canadian Defence Policy

■ On 17 September, just four years after the 1987 Defence White Paper promised a major build-up of Canadian forces, Defence Minister Marcel Masse revealed the long-awaited revised plan for the future structure of the armed forces. Mr. Masse refrained from specifically identifying the future threats which the Canadian forces might face, noting instead that the East-West confrontation has given way "to an ill-defined, relatively uncertain situation with respect to possible threats to security and world peace."

Although the statement contained few surprises, a number of key issues were apparently resolved. First, the two Canadian bases at Baden-Soellingen and Lahr in southern Germany will be closed in 1994 and 1995 respectively. Canada will continue to maintain a task force of 1,100 military personnel in Europe, with the location and nature of the force yet to be decided. In addition, Canada will continue the commitment to provide one battalion group to the NATO Composite Force, and will maintain one brigade and two squadrons of CF-18s to be placed at NATO's disposal in the event of a European crisis, and "capable of intervening anywhere in the world."

The Masse announcement also indicated that the Canadian navy will focus its activities more generally on Canadian coastal waters with less emphasis on the specific task of protecting the sea-lines of communication to Europe. Instead of a third batch of six Canadian Patrol Frigates, long-run plans envisage the procurement of six fast patrol corvettes, and twelve coastal

patrol vessels to be operated by the naval reserve and capable of mine counter-measures. The submarine replacement programme appeared to narrowly survive the review, with the promise of "up to three of an eventual six" conventionally-powered submarines.

Unlike the 1987 White Paper, the review offers no specific time frame for the reorientation of the armed forces. Recognizing the reality of the deficit, however, Masse indicated that "over the next few years" the level of defence budget increases would exceed only marginally, if at all, the rate of inflation. In this situation, the key to maintaining an effective military is the percentage of the budget allocated to the procurement of new equipment. The review promised to increase this percentage from 22 to 26 percent in four years, with a "target figure" of 30 percent.

In addition to reducing the overall numbers of military personnel from 84,000 to 76,000, therefore, the statement revealed the military concern that "unnecessary infrastructure [i.e. bases] should be eliminated immediately," but then promptly recognized that "socioeconomic reality militates against this prospect." A review of proposals for base closings is underway. [For more on this subject see page 5]

Among many references which indicated that in the future the forces will be structured primarily for the surveillance and patrol of Canadian territory, the review also promised an increased surveillance capability in the Arctic. In early November, the difficulties and responsibilities of the Canadian military in the Arctic were unhappily illustrated by the crash of a resupply plane on approach to the military base at Alert. Despite the courageous efforts of the rescuers, it seemed apparent that the resources needed to respond promptly to military or civilian air or sea accidents in the far north are not in place. □

– DAVID COX