

NATO

a conference made by the Warsaw pact countries at their meeting in Budapest last month. For years, the alliance has been attempting to achieve a parallel and balanced force reduction on both sides. The Budapest communique has not been rejected, and all avenues are kept open. It is being studied in Washington. The alliance is approaching the communique with great concern. This concern is obvious, since there are conditions which NATO must accept if the proposed European security conference is to be successful, such as the acceptance of the present division of Germany, the present boundaries in Europe, and only European countries are to participate.

Since 1945, we have been involved in serious discussions on disarmament. At that time Canada felt so concerned that the government sent General McNaughton to New York to lead our delegation in these discussions. Since 1956, we have been participating in the 18-nation disarmament conference in Geneva. Despite the fact that some agreement has been reached on the peaceful uses of outer space and non-proliferation, the basic fact remains that Russia and its Warsaw pact allies have not made one move on the question of basic disarmament of their forces.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stafford: We have sent two of our most prominent advocates of disarmament, General Burns and Ambassador Ignatieff, to lead the Canadian delegation at Geneva. The Russians have shown us that they are less than enthusiastic in agreeing to any bilateral reduction in armaments. In fact, they have gone in the opposite direction. The Warsaw pact has never been stronger. With the invasion of Czechoslovakia, NATO is now facing a hard core of front-line fighting Russian troops. At a time when NATO nations should be showing a solidarity of resolve and determination, we are the termites that are chewing away the very foundations of NATO. We are the ones who are demonstrating to the Warsaw pact nations that we no longer support in an effective manner the collective security and principles upon which NATO was founded 20 years ago.

Our present policy regarding NATO weakens the alliance and suggests to the communists that if they just wait, perhaps NATO will disintegrate by itself without their having to make any concessions in their forces for a reduction in NATO forces. The communist doctrine for the triumph of communism throughout the entire world has never

changed. The Communists combine that fixed goal with any amount of tactical flexibility so they can change their line by adopting a hard line one moment and a soft one the next, but none of these zigs and zags indicate any change.

Surely, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands is not suggesting that we practice unilateral disarmament. In the 1930's the countries of the free world were the only ones to disarm, and the results were disastrous. Surely, the hon. member is not suggesting that NATO members are not willing to discuss bilateral disarmament and carry it out if possible. The whole history of the United States, for example, is in itself evidence that the United States would be only too happy to disarm if it could be done in safety. The hon. member seems so concerned that we differ with the United States that he does not even take the time to consider that the United States could be right.

Every member of this house would like to see us spend our money on feeding the hungry nations of the world, curing disease and developing the have-not nations instead of spending so much on defence. This is so obvious that it defies repetition. The advocates of such a policy, in venting their emotional theories, never reveal the secret of how it can be done in safety if only one side is willing to disarm.

Both Canada and the United States are members of the Atlantic community of nations, and NATO is as important to the preservation of freedom on this continent as it is in Europe. President Nixon, in his address to the NATO ministers council in Washington, when speaking of NATO said:

We celebrate a momentous anniversary. We celebrate one of the great successes of the post-war world.

NATO members present at this momentous anniversary were very concerned over Canada's future in NATO. The U.S. State Department handled the situation very diplomatically. Instead of criticizing Canada for talking of pulling back, they praised Canada for deciding to stay in the alliance at all. They were looking at the positive side. The United States was very diplomatic because they realize the surest way to justify Canadian policy in the eyes of Canadian nationalists is for the United States to oppose it.

The United States has practised this attitude of restraint on many other occasions. The United States swallowed its anger when