

greatest possible unity, both for defence and development and to ensure that no one of them will dominate the others; and finally, the United Kingdom, the bridge between the two, linked to Europe indissolubly by many ties and perhaps, above all, by the complete disappearance of the Channel in the air-atomic age; but linked also to North America in a unique way, because that continent—I hope that I will not be misunderstood in putting it this way—is now occupied by two former English-speaking colonies; one of which is proud to retain its political and monarchial association with the 'Old Master'.

We have now laid the foundations of this Atlantic community in NATO. Indeed that may be the most important thing that we did when we signed in Washington seven years ago the treaty bringing this international organization into being. On the other hand, what we did then may prove to have been as insubstantial and ephemeral as the signatures attached to many an international agreement which at the time seemed a veritable Magna Charta, but whose very name can now be found only in some doctrinal thesis. The near future will tell. There is no assurance yet that NATO will survive the emergency that gave it birth. That emergency was itself born of the fear—for which there was sufficient evidence—that unless the Atlantic countries united their resources and their resolve to defend themselves, they might succumb to aggression one by one. It seemed clear when the NATO Pact was signed, even to the mightiest power, that national security could not be guaranteed by national action alone. So we built up our collective defences and by our unity and strength have made NATO into a most effective deterrent against aggression. In doing so we have removed the greatest temptations to aggression: disunity and weakness.

If however, international tension now seems to ease, and the threat of direct military attack to recede, the fear which brought NATO into being in the first place will also recede; and the temptation to relax our defence efforts and indulge in the luxury of dissension and diversion will increase.

We may, in fact, be approaching a period—if, indeed, we are not in it—when NATO will lose much of the cohesive force which has hitherto held it together. There are those who are counting on this loss being fatal to the whole concept of NATO and the Atlantic community.

These dangers must be faced. Defence strength and unity must be maintained, yet we may not now have for this purpose the same incentive which we have had before.

We must, therefore, develop a stronger bond of unity than a common fear. As the challenge of the Communist nations to our free institutions takes new forms, avoiding tactics and policies which risk nuclear devastation, NATO should in its turn, while maintaining whatever collective military defensive strength is necessary, develop new impulses for unity and community.

NATO cannot live on fear alone, nor can it become the source of a real Atlantic community if it remains organized to deal only with the military threat which first brought it into being. A new emphasis, therefore, on the non-military side of NATO's development is essential. It would also be the best answer to the Soviet charge that it is an aggressive, exclusively military agency, aimed against Moscow.

We are now faced by the challenge from the Communist bloc of competitive co-existence: or, to put it another way—of all conflict short of full scale war. This may be an improvement on the imminent possibility of nuclear devastation, but it is a long way from the security of co-operation co-existence and it has not removed the menace of Communist domination.

Answer Must Be Found

The NATO countries must find the answer to this new challenge; by demonstrating the quality and value and sincerity of their co-operation, between themselves, and with all members of the international community. We have here a new opportunity as well as a new challenge, and if we do not take advantage of it, speeches about the Atlantic community will, before long, have as little meaning as those about the lost continent of Atlantis. As the material and technological gap between the NATO countries and the Soviet bloc diminishes, it will be all the more important to maintain the distinctions in other and more important respects: and to ensure that these are more fully understood and valued.

This will require closer co-operation—political and economic—within NATO than has been the case; finding new ways by which we can build up and strengthen our own sense of community—and show others that what we are building is no selfish and exclusive way.

I hope that the meeting of the NATO council later this week will find the answers to some of these questions. And begin a serious and practical search for the others. So it should be an important meeting, if not an easy one. At it we may find ourselves discussing policies rather than power: aims rather than arms: division rather than divisions.