21. Meanwhile some of the immediate fears of large-scale all-out military aggression against Western Europe have lessened. This process has been facilitated by evidence that the Soviet Government has realized that any such all-out aggression would be met by a sure, swift and devastating retaliation, and that there could be no victory in a war of this kind with nuclear weapons on both sides. With an increased Soviet emphasis on non-military or para-military methods, a review is needed of NATO's ability to meet effectively the challenge of penetration under the guise of co-existence, with its emphasis on conflict without catastrophe.

22. Certain questions now taken on a new urgency. Have NATO's needs and objectives changed, or should they be changed? Is the organization operating satisfactorily in the altered circumstances of 1956? If not, what can be done about it? There is the even more far-reaching question: "Can a loose association of sovereign states hold together at all without the common binding force of fear?"

23. The Committee has been examining these questions in the light of its firm conviction that the objectives which governments had in mind when the Pact was signed remain valid; that NATO is as important now to its member states as it was at that time.

24. The first of these objectives - as has already been pointed out - is security, based on collective action with adequate armed forces both for deterrence and defence.

25. Certainly NATO unity and strength in the pursuit of this objective remain as essential as they were in 1949. Soviet tactics may have changed; but Soviet armed might and ultimate objectives remain unchanged. Moreover, recent events in Eastern Europe show that the Soviet Union will not hesitate in certain circumstances to use force and the threat of force. Therefore the military strength of NATO must not be reduced, though its character and capabilities should be constantly adapted to changing circumstances. Strengthening the political and economic side of NATO is an essential complement to - not a substitute for - continuous cooperation in defence.

26. In spite of these recent events, Soviet leaders may place greater emphasis on political, economic and propaganda action. There is no evidence, however, that this will be permitted to prejudice in any way the maintenance of a high level of military power in its most modern form as a base for Soviet activity in these other fields.

27. We should welcome changes in Soviet policies if they were genuinely designed to ease international tensions. But we must remember that the weakening and eventual dissolution of NATO remains a major communist goal. We must therefore remain on guard so long as Soviet leaders persist in their determination to maintain a preponderance of military power for the achievement of their own political objectives and those of their allies.

28. This brings us again to the second and long-term aim of NATO: the development of an Atlantic Community whose roots are deeper even than the necessity for common defence. This implies nothing less than the permanent association of the free Atlantic peoples for the promotion of their greater unity and the protection and the advancement of the interests which, as free democracies, they have in common.