

information which had already been given to Parliament two days before by the Prime Minister, namely that negotiations had been resumed with the United States relating to defensive nuclear weapons systems which had been the subject of previous discussions with the United States.

I want to make perfectly clear that Canada has undertaken no new commitments at the meeting just concluded. It is, however, the policy of this Government to take the steps needed to make it possible for the Canadian forces to discharge the role accepted for them... This was as long ago as 1959. That role would not disappear if Canada failed to carry it out; all that would happen would be that some other member or members of the Alliance would have to shoulder the obligation in our place.

The kind of forces Canada agreed to contribute were to meet part of an established NATO military requirement, and I am sure that no Hon. Member of this House would wish Canada to be placed in the position where it would be foisting upon others a task voluntarily assumed by Canada ... as part of the collective defence effort of the Alliance. I stress the word "voluntarily" because the military contributions to meet agreed force requirements were assumed as a result of bilateral discussions between the NATO military authorities and individual member states, and not all of them saw fit to undertake a nuclear role. I will have more to say a little later in connection with this aspect of the NATO meeting.

... The Spring Ministerial Meeting of the NATO Council is normally attended by foreign ministers to review international developments and appraise the state of the Alliance. Defence ministers also participated at this time because there were on the agenda items affecting the organization of the deterrent forces at the disposal of the Alliance....

The decisions on defence matters taken at the meeting have attracted a great deal of public notice, virtually to the exclusion of all else. I do not wish to underrate the significance of those decisions, for they represented a further step in the integration of elements of the deterrent forces which should go some distance toward improving their co-ordination and control. But I would also draw the attention of Hon. Members to the fact that the emphasis in the communiqué was on peace. The communiqué opened and closed on that note. This is as it should be, for ours is a defensive Alliance, the military activities of which are maintained solely in the interests of the integrity of the member states and therefore of the peace of the world. The whole underlying concept of NATO is the prevention of war, and there is full realization within the Alliance that peace cannot be ensured by military power alone. So the Council has reasserted its desire to seek equitable solutions by negotiation, and it is hoped that the Communist world will come to see that they too have no less an interest in such settlements.

Some of the areas of continuing concern -- Berlin, Cuba and Laos -- are named in the communiqué and were indeed thoroughly discussed in the private sessions of the Council. I reported to