

*NATO—European Defence Community*

(b) upon the occurrence of any other event which all of the signatory states recognize to be of a similarly fundamental character.

So much, Mr. Speaker, for the peace contract. The second important event, as I have already indicated, was the signing in Paris on May 27 of the treaty establishing a European defence community. By the provisions of this treaty the governments of France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg and the Federal Republic of Germany have agreed to set up a European army, purely defensive in character, which will be under the operational command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization commander. Within the framework of the North Atlantic treaty, this new treaty seeks to ensure the security of the states which have signed it. I do not intend today to go into detail about the European defence community arrangements, because I know they will be familiar to most hon. members as they have already been made public.

The signing of these two sets of agreements is, I think, a tribute to the sense of political reality and the spirit of reasonable compromise shown by the statesmen and their expert advisers, who have brought the negotiations to a successful conclusion after many months of difficult and delicate discussions. It would, however, be rash to express any easy optimism on the final results, merely because these arrangements have been signed. Both the agreements I have mentioned will have to be ratified by the governments whose representatives signed them, and the road to ratification may not be a short or an easy one. There is as yet no European army except on paper, and there are stiff political struggles ahead both on the international plane and within the countries which are members of the European defence community, before these arrangements will be of any effect on the international plane. The activities of the Soviet union and its communist agents in other countries on the subject of Germany and the recent agreements bear witness by their scope and violence to the growing strength of western defence, and the impression this strength and unity has already made, as well as to the vital importance which the Soviet union attaches to the coming into effect of these arrangements.

There has been, as hon. members know, a lively exchange of diplomatic notes between the Soviet government and the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. In their first note on March 10 of this year, the Russians put forward a draft peace treaty which was obviously designed to appeal to all shades of opinion in Germany, and to delay the conclusion of the contractual

agreements and the European defence community treaty. That latter design, of course, was not achieved. These Russian proposals concerned reunification, the withdrawal of occupying forces, the rehabilitation of ex-nazis—many of whom are now joining the Eastern German army—the abolition of all trade restrictions on Germany, the granting to Germany of national—not international—defence forces, and the granting to Germany of permission to produce armaments on a large scale. In other words, in these Russian proposals there was something for nearly every German. On the other hand, under the same proposals, the reunified Germany was not to be free to enter into alliances, and its territory was not to include the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line. Finally, a four-power conference was to meet at once to settle all these questions.

In their replies to these Soviet proposals the three western governments have taken what I think to be the sensible line, that while the door must not be shut on negotiations with the Soviet union on this matter, there can be no question of a four-power conference—of which the allies already have had some unhappy experiences—until the Soviet proposals have been subjected to searching inquiry and until their real meaning can be ascertained. With this in mind the three governments have concentrated, in dealing with this problem, on the basic question of free elections throughout Germany, and the consequent formation of an all-German government, free both before and after the peace treaty to enter into associations compatible with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. The insistence of the three western powers, in dealing with these, and subsequent Russian proposals, has been on unity with freedom and peace with security. I believe that is a sound attitude to adopt.

Nevertheless, no matter how insincere the Soviet proposals may seem to us, they have a dangerous appeal to German nationalism since they appear on the surface to offer a definite program of unification which cannot fail to attract Germans to whom unification, I suppose, stands above almost everything else at the present time. For this reason, I venture to express the hope that too much time will not elapse between the receipt of Soviet notes on Germany and the dispatch of the western replies. The longer the interval, the greater the chances which the Soviet proposals, however specious they are, will have to work on public opinion in Germany and elsewhere. I think it would be unwise—I am sure the house will agree with this statement—and indeed unnecessary to allow the Soviet union to win propaganda