

Supply—External Affairs

would be the case. A great many important events have been taking place in the world, and I know that many of the members of this committee would like to hear some observations by the secretary of state on various matters such as recent events in the Soviet union, China and the like. I had hoped he would give us an up to date statement.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The hon. member is asking me to cover a wide area, but I would attempt to do so if he would put questions. However, in the light of the request made by the hon. member for Edmonton West I would like to deal now with one matter which is of current importance. Perhaps I could speak later on some of the other subjects which the hon. member has just mentioned on the basis of questions which he or others may wish to put to me.

I refer, of course, to reports of serious difficulties which are alleged to exist within NATO. I do not wish to hide from the committee the fact that I have been extremely concerned in the past few weeks that some of our major allies appear to be embarked on a collision course which could have incalculable consequences for the western alliance. Two or three weeks ago it looked as though in this context the storm clouds were gathering over western Europe. In Paris on November 2, the French foreign minister, Mr. Couve de Murville, with his usual incisiveness, described the storm warnings as he saw them; the danger of deteriorating Franco-German relations, the danger to the European common market because of the failure of the Six to agree on cereal prices, and the danger for NATO if Germany and the United States were to push ahead with their plan for a multilateral force of mixed manned ships carrying Polaris missiles jointly owned, controlled and financed by the participating nations.

I may say now, reflecting on the events of these past few weeks, that thanks to the efforts which have been made on both sides of the Atlantic by a number of countries, there are indications that given a little more time—and I think this will be forthcoming—accommodations can be reached with regard to some if not all of these major issues. Nevertheless it would be misleading for me to pretend that everything in the Atlantic world is satisfactory, just as it would be improper to reveal in detail what we know of the elements of other peoples' problems based upon the consultations and discussions we have had in Canada and which our heads of missions in other capitals have had with representatives

of friendly governments. We wish not only to keep ourselves informed but to bring whatever influence we can to bear on these problems, in the hope that conciliation may be encouraged and co-operation strengthened among all our allies on both sides of the Atlantic so as to maintain and develop the essential trans-Atlantic nature of the NATO community which is, of course, of such vital importance to Canada.

In the course of the past week consultations took place in Ottawa with the foreign ministers of Belgium and Norway, and we have had discussions, as I indicated a moment ago, with the representatives of other countries here in our capital as well as through our missions abroad. We are by the very nature of our situation, obliged to recognize how much we in Canada depend, as do other NATO countries, on collective security. We live in a world in which the members of the NATO group must proceed with balanced forces to provide for their defence on a purely national basis and through collective effort. We in Canada are therefore, by the very nature of the situation, committed to the doctrine of achieving a balanced defence by making our forces, and therefore our policies, interdependent with those of other members of the Atlantic alliance.

Some of our allies, as we all know, would prefer to see their forces organized on a purely European basis, but not on an Atlantic basis if that means yielding to the United States the final right of decision on matters vitally affecting national security. At the same time we know on no less an authority than that of the French prime minister, Monsieur Pompidou, that a purely European defence—that is, a defence of Europe without the assistance in the final analysis of the United States—is considered a quite untenable hypothesis. In other words there is a large measure of agreement on the basic aims and assumptions of the alliance even in this highly controversial field of how to work out the modalities of military planning and how control is to be exercised and whether the accent should be European or Atlantic.

It goes without saying that we are particularly interested in the evolution of French foreign policy, as is every member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is quite normal that this should be so. An important part of our population is of French culture, and it is a well established policy of this and of previous governments to develop satisfactory relations with France. For these reasons we in Canada believe that we have some obli-