

On its part the United States has reaffirmed its views on last August on not discussing Spanish membership in NATO, or a U.S.-Spanish alliance, or a bases agreement. It has proceeded to bargain with Franco for naval and air facilities with the backing of Congress, which has voted substantial sums expressly earmarked for Spain. Like Nazi Germany it has found Franco to be a tough negotiator. Last August Portugal reminded the NATO Deputies that approval for the admission of Greece and Turkey to NATO only strengthened the case for admitting other new members, and that Spain was clearly more of an Atlantic Power than either of those countries. In the spring of 1952 the Spanish Ambassador to the United States did suggest that his country might be interested in closer association with the North Atlantic Alliance. During this period the Canadian position might be described as one of discreet concern. There do not appear to have been any expressions of anxiety on the trend of policy to the United States following the receipt of the U.K. memorandum last July. At a press conference on August 7, 1951, after pointing out in answer to a question that Spain's association with NATO was not an immediate problem, the Minister commented that he thought "defence arrangements between Spain and the United States were a matter for those two countries". In March, 1952, during a radio interview, when he was asked if Canada was "headed for some kind of alignment with Franco Spain", he replied that there was nothing that he knew of to suggest that. He pointed out that there had been bilateral talks between the United States and Spain, but it was not on NATO questions.

136. At the request of the Department, National Defence has prepared an appreciation of the military value of Spain in the defence of Europe. This report of January 15, 1952, from the Joint Planning and Joint Intelligence Committee concluded that:

"In view of the current risk of war and the estimated capabilities of the U.S.S.R. before 1954, and although there are areas of greater importance to the Western Powers in Europe and the Mediterranean countries, it is conceded that in event of war before 1954, Spain is of considerable strategic importance to the Western Powers".

The report believed that, from the military point of view, it was desirable to give Spain some assistance, subject to the following conditions:

"(a) It does not prejudice the build-up for the defence of Europe and the Middle East;

"(b) It is undertaken in such a way that it would not promote any serious disharmony among the Western Powers".

The latter stipulation again underlines the strength of the political considerations in relating Spain to Western strategy, and the corresponding necessity for the Department of keeping constantly under review the manner in which these may affect the attitude of the European members of NATO. The fact that NATO had come to be regarded, in Mr. Ritchie's phrase, as "a first-class club for organizing the free world" also makes it imperative to study in ample time problems of membership rather than, again to quote Mr. Ritchie, "to let the organization stumble into new commitments and semi-commitments prompted by the exigencies of the moment".