

## NATO

forces from their present roles in Europe and to plan the reduction of the total number of Canadian forces which are stationed there. The size and timing of these reductions remains to be decided when our planning is completed.

We have said all along that all this would be done in consultation with our allies. I do not see where we differ with the members on the other side on this particular point. The government has stated that it will begin consultations with our NATO allies on our proposals for the planned and phased reduction of the Canadian forces stationed in Europe at the ministerial meeting of the NATO Defence Planning Committee, which is to be held at the end of May of this year.

The normal procedure used by the NATO member nations to consult with each other regarding any changes which they plan to make in their forces assigned or earmarked for assignment to the integrated NATO commands, such as the Allied Command in Europe or the Allied Command Atlantic, is the NATO defence planning review. The May meeting of the Defence Planning Committee will initiate a new cycle in the NATO defence planning review, which for the first time will be carried out over a period of two years.

The main task of the defence ministers at this meeting will be to decide, in the light of an appreciation of the military situation to be presented by the NATO military authorities, what guidance, political, economic and financial, should be given to the NATO military planners as the basis for their preparation of the over-all NATO force plans for the years 1971 to 1975, inclusive. The major NATO commanders and the NATO military committee will develop their force plans in the light of the guidance provided by the ministers. Again, I refer to some of the remarks that this is entirely a military organization controlled by generals. This is not so. The political direction is clearly indicated in that procedure.

NATO force planning must take into account the military plans of the member nations, and I think it only reasonable, at the beginning of a new NATO planning cycle, that Canada should provide its allies and the NATO military staffs with as much indication of its planning intentions as is possible. It is my expectation, Mr. Speaker, that phase II of our defence policy review will have advanced sufficiently by the end of May, that I shall be able to present to my NATO colleagues a fairly detailed outline of that part of our

[Mr. Cadieux (Labelle).]

force plans affecting our present NATO undertakings.

Hon. members will be aware that national undertakings to commit forces to the NATO commands are given for a period of one year. Our present undertakings extend to the end of 1969. As a part of the NATO defence planning review running separately from, but in parallel with, the development of the over-all force plans for the years 1971-75, we shall be asked during the next few months to inform NATO what forces we plan to commit to the NATO commands during the year 1970. Our plans for this one year will be reviewed with the NATO military authorities and our allies in the fall and we shall be asked to adopt them as firm commitments until the end of 1970 at the ministerial meeting in December. I trust that this explanation will clear any misunderstandings that have recently come to light.

As the house will know, Mr. Speaker, well established procedures exist, through the Permanent Joint Board on Defence and other bodies, for continuing consultation with our United States allies on matters affecting our joint efforts in the defence of North America. As the plans to implement our new policy take shape, we shall be using these procedures to discuss with the United States government how we can best contribute in future to the defence of the continent. Joint studies have already begun on the plan for modernization of the system of bomber defence. We shall be able to decide how we can most usefully contribute both to the surveillance of our air space and to the modernized anti-bomber system as those studies proceed. We shall also be seeking early occasions to consult the United States government as to how we can employ the maritime and land forces which we require for our national purposes to the best advantage in furthering our mutual interests in defending the continent.

As hon. members will understand, this period of planning and consultation will take some time. No doubt during this time there will be conjecture as to what we plan to do. As Minister of National Defence, I am concerned that these conjectures will have an upsetting effect on the members of our forces. We, as members of parliament awaiting the results on election night, can understand the feelings of the forces during this period.

• (5:40 p.m.)

It will be a difficult period during which time a number of changes will be discussed