

This view was reflected in the statements of responsible political and military leaders at our meeting. We felt that if we did not relax our effort, the day was approaching when the NATO countries will have achieved the measures of defensive strength, based upon sound economies, which we set out to build four years ago. But we have not reached that position yet.

At its December meeting last year, the Council, in its annual "stock-taking" for 1952, learned that the increase in forces agreed to at Lisbon would have been substantially achieved by the end of the year, and announced that it was planned to make further individual and collective efforts in 1953 to increase, improve and strengthen these forces. At the same time, the Council at the earlier meeting directed that more emphasis should be given to increasing the quality and effectiveness of the NATO forces, and the units necessary for their support.

Thus it was in the light of those previous decisions, and after a review of progress made on the military side since the December meeting, that the Council this April agreed on short and long-term military programmes for NATO.

This agreement established a firm military programme for 1953 and provisional goals for 1954. As the Communique puts it: "...there will be a notable increase in the size of the forces assigned to NATO Supreme Commanders and a considerable improvement in their effectiveness. these factors will add materially to the defensive strength of NATO during 1953".

The Council on this occasion has omitted the publication of specific target figures in its official communique. This omission is deliberate, and was agreed unanimously by all Council members for two main reasons. There was, first, the security factor. We felt that as the armed strength of NATO grows, there is no advantage in communicating official and exact figures of men and guns and ships and aircraft to those who are not our friends and who have a special interest in such details. There is this further point, that emphasis on figures tends to obscure the fact that the qualitative improvement in forces, in the effectiveness and modernity of their equipment, in the organization of adequate support, was of equal importance to numbers.

There were two other points about this "stock-taking". First, we agreed that while our military forces must be prepared for action at any time, we must plan on the basis of the long pull, and without tying ourselves too rigidly to arbitrary planning dates. Second, we were impressed again with the truth that a defence effort which left members of the alliance financially and economically exhausted, would defeat its own purpose. So we reaffirmed the need to take economic and financial factors into account in planning the rate of military progress, and, in the words of the communique, to see "that the development of sound national economies and the increase of military force should be pursued concurrently."

The Paris meeting showed that NATO is learning to work as a team; if you like, as a cabinet of governments.