

mtesiles and submarine-based missiles, to nuclear bombers. For all practical purposes it will be NATO field commanders who will have the discretion over the use of these weapons. The danger in such a situation is clear, since it means giving each member of NATO some direct control over nuclear weapons, in actual fact even if not by agreement. This, probably, is Russia's main concern.

Politically, the MLF has much more significance. The United States is particularly anxious to shore up the alliance, which has suffered severely from the growing spirit of political and economic independence among the major European powers, and from military irrelevance in an age of ballistic missiles. It has long been known, for instance, that Western Europe could not be militarily defended without the ase

of tactical nuclear weapons, which NATO does not now have. The Americans are also interested in preserving some semblance of their own influence on the continent, and probably see the MLF as a means of keeping a major voice in European military and political affairs. To keep NATO from dying a slow death at the hands of increasingly uninterested European nations, and to give it some degree of military relevance, the Americans see MLF as a key structural and military reform.

The time for a showdown on the multi-lateral nuclear force is rapidly approaching. The noises from European capitals are becoming louder, and now that the elections are over in Britain and the United States, there is little to slow down a final decision. NATO's most serious crisis cannot but cause a major shift in the alliance. It

is unlikely, although possible, that the alliance will break apart. More probable is some kind of compromise, which will provide the British with guarantees against direct German control of nuclear weapons and which will preserve the French independent nuclear force almost untouched. Indeed, it may even be possible for France to opt out of the MLF while remaining in NATO. NATO will probably emerge from its present crisis even more divided than it presently is, and the trend toward autonomy in Western Europe, spurred by De Gaulle's nationalism, will continue unabated. Whatever its military merits, the implementation of the multi-lateral nuclear force will seriously hinder improvement of relations between East and West, and will call for retaliation from the Soviet bloc's Warsaw Pact nations.

Weekly Notes

Nagaland Peace Talks

IT is amazing how facilely the Government of India is being egged on to break off talks with the Naga rebels and return to the trail of violence and bloodshed in Nagaland. Fortunately, the Government does not seem to be in the mood to accept this advice. While understandably there have been some strong words used about the Nagas' demand that Indian forces should withdraw from Nagaland before they can lay down arms, Sardar Swaran Singh has held out the assurance that the peace talks will continue.

The talks began in September and during the last two and a half months there has been a ceasefire which has been by and large honoured by the Nagas. This *in* itself is a gain and it would be foolish to sacrifice it without sufficient reason. This is not to say that any easy expectations of the talks quickly bearing fruit are justified. In fact, the standpoints of the Nagas and the Government of India could not be more irreconcilable. The Nagas have demanded independence or, if India is unprepared for this, a referendum under international auspices to decide their future political status. The Government of India, while it has offered amnesty to the hostiles and other concessions on secondary matters, On the basic issue has firmly rejected anything but statehood within the Indian Union,

These were the positions before the talks started; what has been achieved is that for the first time the Government of India and the Nagas have been brought together for political negotiations. However remote the chances of a settlement as they appear right now, it would be in no one's interest to permit the negotiations to fail at this stage even before the basic issue has been touched. For the Government of India the negotiations are a valuable opportunity to gain a first-hand impression of the mood of the Nagas. This opportunity should not be lost.

Evaluation and Planning

AS the problems facing the planners and the Government grow more numerous and complex, specialisation is continually narrowing and expertise becoming more scarce and valued. Inevitably, the reference of various problems to commissions, committees and 'study' or 'working' groups has come to be an accepted part of our way of life. That the Planning Commission should have considered it necessary to set up a Working Group to "do some thinking on the basic issues bearing on the organisation, set up and content of evaluation" is, therefore, not surprising. Evaluation, purposeful and objective, is unquestionably vital to the progress of the plans. And no one can take exception to the Working Group's statement that evaluation should be uniformly understood and interpreted in all the

States to avoid the "danger of misunderstanding, ineffective use or even misuse of this potent and sensitive weapon in the planning armoury".

The Group, however, does not interpret its task to extend to the preparation of anything like a manual on evaluation. But: the need for such a manual is recognised and the suggestion made that the PEO should take up the work. The Group also considers an estimation of the adequacy of the evaluation machinery in the States as "not within the terms of reference, strictly interpreted". Nonetheless, it gives a brief account of the system in force, based on visits and discussions with five States and questionnaire replies from others. The importance of evaluation, we are told, has come to be recognised by all the States, especially since 1960, and a separate organisation for evaluation exists in as many as 10 States. But evaluation has meaning only if the findings are used to improve the formulation and execution of plans. As the Group remarks "Evaluation as a specialised function requires for its success the existence of a strong planning department". The weakness of the planning units in the States has been only too amply demonstrated. The Group's own finding is that in the majority of the States, planning has not yet been organised as a separate department with adequate status and freedom from other administrative responsibilities. The technical organisation and staffing of such planning machinery