

As a result, there may well be an attempt to apply a renewed 'Nixon Doctrine' (under some other guise, of course), to Western Europe; or, at least, there will be pressure on the administration to do so. This will make more difficult the reconciliation of policies towards Western Europe with policies directed to other areas of the world which also affect the relationship. Obviously, of primary importance here is the state of Soviet-American relations. It will be a very bad outcome of the election if the new president finds himself abandoning the search for an acceptable basis for detente with the Soviet Union while, at the same time, making unrealistic demands on Western Europe. Such a state of affairs will lead to a great deal of stress in the American relationship with Western Europe. For example, unless the Soviet-American talks about arms control get back on track, the American led attempt to revise NATO's military posture will not be successful. This does not necessarily mean the ratification of SALT II in its present form (something which looks to be politically impossible at this juncture), but it does mean the reopening of an arms control dialogue. Perhaps the Soviet-American contacts established in Geneva in October on limiting their respective European nuclear arsenals will do this. If President Reagan is to sustain a productive transatlantic relationship, then he must also establish a satisfactory relationship with the Soviet Union.

Whatever happens, short of a major international crisis, the European allies can be expected to seek and practice a greater autonomy in their foreign policies. The danger is that an ineffectual American foreign policy will lead both sides of the transatlantic relationship to lose sight of the fact that each side needs the other. Therefore, it is to be hoped that Western Europeans, and such leaders as Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in particular, be sensitive to the political difficulties of the American presidency.

The electoral victory of Helmut Schmidt in October should make it easier for West Germany to play a mediating role here and make it easier for the Chancellor to overcome any personal reservations he might have about the occupant of the White House. Where possible, it is in the European interest to compensate for the failures of American leadership, not by taking initiatives that are independent and inconsiderate of American interests, but which recognize that there are mutual interests in the transatlantic relationship which are of vital importance to all. If the Europeans justify their independent actions in matters of common concern in terms of the inadequacies of American leadership, then it can be demanded of them that, within their limitations, they exercise a leadership that is superior to the one they criticize.

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