

Supreme Commander of the NATO forces, to interfere in the political life of the allied countries. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that the French have the right to choose their own leaders. However, taking everything into account, the warnings issued and steps taken by the Americans had both form — admittedly rather awkward — and content. In warning the socialists in a country against an alliance with the Communists, Washington is not questioning whether this country will remain within the Alliance in the case of an electoral victory; it says that this country, co-governed by Communists, cannot be a sincere ally of NATO, first because its security priorities would not be the same as those of its 14 partners and secondly because allowing Communists within the fortifications built specifically as a defence against Soviet expansion would be the same as giving Moscow its own special spy in the Western camp.

To reply by defending the right of the French or the Italians to choose their own leaders is to avoid answering the very question on which both the future of American world leadership and the fate of the NATO allies depend. Canada's case is special, since American leadership with respect to its affairs is not provided through NATO; for this reason Canada's diversification by way of the "Third Option" can operate on the bilateral level without harming its Atlantic connection. However, this is not the same as the general relations of the Atlantic allies with Washington, in which a loosening of Atlantic ties necessarily leads to a weakening of American leadership.

Paradoxically, in the refusal of the Europeans to answer Washington's real question, there is a deeper, firmer commitment than in all the vague statements of principle intended to appease the United States. Because, in fact, in order to respond suitably to the concern voiced by

the Americans, the European reply could come only after each of the countries involved had thoroughly discussed, within its own borders, the validity of the Atlantic connection. What is, in fact, happening? Refusing to comment on the content, the allies approached are answering with comments on the form of the measure; they avoid saying, for example, that NATO is an anachronism and that having American leadership is like dragging round a ball and chain. And if a European socialist avoids giving such an answer, it is because he has no choice, for the time being, but to remain in the Alliance. Does this mean that a Communist, then, could enter into the Alliance? Probably not, because if, as Dr. Kissinger has charged, this popular front is merely a vote-catching manoeuvre, it is difficult to see how such a coalition of convenience between opposition parties could survive the obligations and specific commitments these parties would have to honour once in power. All the same, to become unduly concerned, as Washington is doing, is also to have a very low opinion of the other partners, which, in the specific case of Portugal, while refusing Spain's entry, have shown a pro-Atlantic spirit that should be reassuring.

In conclusion, can we say that the American alliance system, founded on the negative approach of containing a Communist adversary, necessarily needs an unsettled world situation in order to survive? To a certain extent, perhaps; but the essential thing is the connection not so much between the allies and Washington as among the allies themselves — in short, the feeling of belonging to a single democratic system that favours individual liberty and the other common denominators of high-mindedness and vitality without which an alliance is nothing more than an agglomeration of interests without any real impact on the course of history.

*European socialists have no choice but to remain in Alliance*