

There is ample ground for difference of opinion and policy in these different approaches to a common problem; for criticism by the one side of the selfish concentration of the other on short-range national interests; or, in reverse, for criticism of an unhealthy and exclusive concern with considerations of abstract morality which are inappropriate in respect of what is, after all, a matter of practical international politics and strategy.

Why have these differences between national attitudes to this Far Eastern problem not developed into an open split? I suggest that it is because her allies have, by and large, been willing to let the Americans - who have had to pay the piper - also call the tune in this matter and have gone along, albeit at times reluctantly. This, in its turn, was possible because the United States has not pushed matters to the point where an armed conflict with Peking was certain to result. There has also on occasions been restraint shown by the Communist side; a restraint inspired perhaps by respect for American power. In any event, we have escaped in the Far East - if not in the Middle East - the more harmful consequences of a divergence of policy between friends.

This is the more fortunate, and the more significant in its relation to current difficulties, because in some of the more important American moves in Far Eastern policy, which affected others than herself, consultation was not much more effective between the United States and its friends than it has been recently in respect of Mediterranean developments. By consultation, I do not mean one government merely passing on information about a decision after it has been taken. That is really not consultation at all. I mean a frank and complete exchange of views before decisions are taken; at a time and of a character to influence those decisions. We do not have nearly enough of that kind of consultation in the Western coalition. Its absence can get us into serious trouble. It will weaken and may ultimately destroy co-operation. It is time that we realized this and did something about it - except talk.

This inadequacy of consultation is not, as I have said, peculiar to European or Middle Eastern matters. A revealing example, among others, in the Far East is provided by the decision taken in 1950 to authorize United States forces to move beyond the 38th Parallel in Korea. This was a decision of the United Nations. It was bound to have far-reaching consequences, as it did have. The policy of the United States in regard to it was, of course, of first, indeed of decisive importance. Admittedly the United States was primarily concerned. But the effect of the decision to cross the Parallel, especially if it led to an extension of hostilities beyond Korean, was bound to be felt and shared by the friends and associates of the United States. It might have been expected, therefore, that before any decision was taken in Washington there would have been a thorough exchange of views between the United States and