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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE BY THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
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The year now ended has been an eventful one for those engaged in the search for peace and security.

During 1954 there have been important successes. There have also been days when the western democracies have had to face disappointments and setbacks. More serious and disturbing than the actual disappointments themselves, however, is the lack of cohesion that they have sometimes revealed between the democracies. On occasions during the past year the essential unity of our partnership, on which the security of the free world rests, has been threatened by tendencies of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic to find for frustration and failure an easy release in mutual recrimination and exasperation.

There have been days, during 1954, when many in the free world have been disquieted by fears that governments might be provoked into hasty or ill-considered action with results which would inevitably commit us all. Others have feared that we might be lulled into an unrealistic and dangerous complacency of the kind that proved so costly to Europe in the 1930's.

Meanwhile the steadily increasing power of weapons and the advancing techniques for their delivery have made the prospect of war more terrifying and, to prevent it, unity, calm, and steady strength more essential than ever.

A few months ago, Sir Winston Churchill pictured us today as from time to time "peering around the rim of hell". Certainly there have been moments during the past twelve months when a consideration of international issues has involved more than a glance in that direction. No one can truthfully assert that we have yet achieved a situation of international order and confidence where this hell of a thermonuclear war is unthinkable.

It is salutary, therefore, to be reminded of the dangers that we face: that of disunity on the one hand, which could lead without physical hostilities to defeat in the cold war; and that of one outbreak of cataclysmic destruction which could come either through miscalculation or through deliberate aggression.

We can, however, take comfort from the fact that the critical periods through which we have passed during the year now ended have proved, on the whole, sobering, rather than shattering to our coalition. Where there have been set-backs, these have been accepted and plans made to recover from them. As the year ends, our coalition for peace seems, I think, stronger than it was at the beginning. We are learning to live with the situation that exists, without panic but without illusions.