

to develop. Authoritative voices tell us there is no alternative to *détente*; that *détente* must be confirmed and extended; that it is, or must be made, irreversible.

It is true that there are many who find cause for grave doubts about *détente* in Soviet conduct, particularly where that has involved the accumulation of new weapons systems and the long-range projection of Soviet power.

We need to take these matters seriously, but not despairingly. So long as there is no real progress towards disarmament, large armed forces will continue to exist. Their weapons will grow old, and have to be replaced by newer ones from time to time. This will be as true for the Soviet Union and its allies as for NATO. It is necessary to cut into the arms race at a particular point; agree that some kind of rough balance exists; and try to halt and eventually reverse the process. This is difficult, not impossible. At the level of intercontinental weapons systems, indeed, this is what SALT I and SALT II are all about. If the United States' Senate acts soon to ratify SALT II, we may see the beginning of a halt to the nuclear arms spiral, at least in some of its manifestations. The problem then will be to continue and extend the process, to see that it comes to apply to new weapons systems as well as old ones, to theatre nuclear weapons as well as intercontinental systems, and to conventional arms as well as to nuclear arms.

So far as Europe is concerned, it is not visionary to foresee that something like this may happen. There are many strands. Some pass through the Vienna talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions; others through the machinery of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe; still others through the machinery of the two military alliances. We may see further channels opened yet to deal with all the aspects of arms control and disarmament in Europe. At present, the prospects are confused and obscure.

Two things, however, stand out: There is general agreement that a stable balance of security could be established in Europe at lower levels of force; and in recent months there has been an extraordinary proliferation of proposals from both sides as to how such a balance might be achieved. Does this mean that, some appearances notwithstanding, there will be a better chance to make progress in arms control and disarmament in Europe than at any time in the past generation? Perhaps so. We must certainly lose no reasonable chance to test the possibility. These are the issues that will underlie the debates in the North Atlantic Council in which I will be participating next week.

But the process will be neither short nor simple, and while it continues, we shall have to see to it that our own forces meet the requirements of a balance at existing levels in both quality and number.