

been since the creation of NATO. The Soviet Union has steadily strengthened its military forces. It has achieved nuclear parity. It has the ability to project its power world-wide and is meddling directly or through surrogate forces in the Third World.

The NATO Alliance must continue to be a credible deterrent to Soviet expansionism. We must reckon with Soviet power and not negotiate with the Soviet Union from a position of weakness. Yet nothing appears to threaten a rift among the peoples of the Alliance as much as our recent collective decision to position American intermediate-range cruise and ballistic missiles in Europe, a decision taken, it should be remembered, in response to a European demand and designed to counter an existing Soviet threat. Yet Western Europe has seldom before seen such large demonstrations against nuclear arms.

The Europeans' fear of war runs very deep. They are determined to learn the lesson of their own bloody history and not to repeat it. But the lesson is not so clear as it once seemed. Some Western Europeans are uncomfortable with United States leadership but at the same time they do not have the capability of ensuring their own defence. They, in particular, also have a great deal at stake in their economic relationship with Eastern Europe. In these circumstances, it can be tempting to try to opt out of the East-West contest altogether. But that contest is for the preservation of Western values of liberty and democracy. Opting out would neither protect those values nor guarantee safety nor even ensure prosperity over the longer term. The discovery of a nuclear-armed Soviet submarine in neutral Sweden's waters has given thoughtful Europeans, at least, reason to pause and reflect.

There are stresses today within the Alliance. There are also pressures from outside it. There continue to be challenges and Poland is only the latest -- to our collective commitment to the defence of our fundamental human values.

These difficulties are not new. We shall surmount them today, as we have in the past, through the recognition that there is an overriding commonality of values and interests which binds us together. Solidarity within the Alliance is of vital importance today. But it does not require unanimity in perception or in action. Our national interests are not identical. National governments will not respond in precisely the same manner to events which affect them differently. The essential issue is whether, in the end, the necessary resolve remains to defend our freedom. That resolve is the cement of our Alliance and I am fully confident that it does, and will, endure.

The challenge in West/West relations, if I may call them that, is to restore confidence in the soundness of our