

If there have been changes within the Alliance there have also, of course, been changes in the context in which the Alliance is operating. The Soviet world is no longer anything like the monolithic entity it was in the early stages of the cold war confrontation. There has been an element of reassertion of national identity and national interest in the countries of Eastern Europe. There has also been a growing rift between the Soviet Union and China, a rift which ostensibly relates to ideological interpretation, but into which factors of national interest also enter to a very considerable degree. The Soviet Union itself is facing many of the problems of a sophisticated modern economy -- the problem of growth, the problem of technological change, the problem of reconciling competing claims on a limited aggregate of resources, and the problem of adapting traditional doctrine to the dictates of practical reality. The Soviet Union also faces the manifold problems and responsibilities that go with great-power status and great-power commitments in a rapidly changing world.

All this has tended to alter the configurations of the cold war. The development of a more extensive pattern of economic, cultural and scientific exchanges between the Soviet world and the West is evidence of this. So is the agreement on a limited nuclear test ban which was signed in Moscow in August of last year and to which 107 countries have now adhered. But we cannot afford to lose sight of the obverse side of these developments. We cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that, as little as two years ago, the Soviet Union was apparently ready to plunge the world into nuclear conflict. We cannot lose sight of the fact that there has been no significant reduction in the Soviet forces facing the Alliance. We cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that there is continuing deadlock between us and the Soviet Union on the crucial problems that divide us -- on disarmament, on German reunification, on Berlin. We are hopeful that these problems may be amenable to a reasonable solution through patient negotiation, and that is the policy we are pursuing through the Alliance. We are also hopeful that the change in the leadership of the Soviet Union will not diminish the readiness of that country to negotiate with us in a positive spirit. For the moment, however, I can see no reason why we should not continue to be vigilant in our policies. Nor do I think this is a time when we can afford to be indifferent to the state of the Alliance on which, individually and collectively, we depend -- and will continue to depend -- for our security.

One of the central features of the Alliance has, of course, been the United States commitment to the defence of Europe. At the present time, the United States is maintaining close to 400,000 fully-equipped men in Europe, and these forces are backed by the overwhelming power of the United States strategic nuclear deterrent. There is no one in Europe, I think -- and M. Pompidou, the Prime Minister of France, affirmed this only the other day -- who would dispute the fact that the defence of Europe would be impossible in present circumstances without this United States commitment.

If that is accepted, what then is the meaning of what has been called "the European revolt against the American nuclear monopoly"? The answer, I suggest, may be put as follows: The Europeans feel that there has been a change in the balance within the Alliance. Specifically, they would argue that Europe is now immensely more stable, more prosperous and more powerful than it was in 1949, when the Alliance was founded. They would argue further that this dictates