

There is another difficulty - the over-riding need for constant and vigorous re-thinking of our international position, the need for new ideas, new insights and new interpretations. I might observe here that this is a traditional requirement for the diplomat, but in the light of the impact on foreign policy of ever-widening educational opportunities and the emergence of better-informed public opinion, it has come to acquire a special importance for the peacemakers of the contemporary world.

I have attempted to outline some of the complexities and the variety of considerations which must be fused into policies and courses of action by democratic governments. Preceding policy decisions, however, is the need to develop an informed and accurate collective view of the nature of the problem or challenge which confronts the West. This involves a continuing diplomatic assignment and imposes the obligation to keep our assessment of the problem realistic, up-to-date and fresh. This is not, I reiterate, a new task; it is the one aspect of diplomacy which has altered perhaps least throughout the period of sweeping changes that I have been discussing. What is new, however, is its complexity and its urgency in an international scene where power is no longer diffused and balanced among groups of nations but has become, in effect, polarized in new titanic contenders, one of which is, of course, the Soviet bloc. The task of accurate assessment becomes more difficult where a group of nations such as the members of NATO are confronted by the enigmatic problems posed by the Soviet bloc, where the cultural gap between the different societies to which the power polarization corresponds has made it difficult to know and to understand one another, and where this latter difficulty, serious in itself, has been compounded by the deliberate isolationism which has surrounded the development of Soviet society.

It is with this lack of basic understanding and the difficulties in making accurate assessments of Soviet intentions, whether political, military, or commercial, as they affect the policy of the West in seeking an accommodation with the Soviet Union, that I intend to deal in my second and concluding lecture tomorrow evening.

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