

The answer to this question is of critical importance in understanding our present situation. The answer lies in part in a mutual recognition of the incalculable consequences of modern war, so dramatically brought home by the Cuban crisis of last October, when, for a few perilous days, the world stood on the brink of thermonuclear war. I think, perhaps, that near catastrophe brought home a realization that traditional conceptions of victor and vanquished have been overtaken by technological advances in the art of war. In an age when war has become so totally and indiscriminately destructive, self-interest dictates that war be set aside as a rational instrument for the furtherance of national aims. Paradoxically, this fact has given both sides in the Cold War a common interest in the avoidance of conflict, without any change in the circumstances which give rise to the tensions of the Cold War in the first place, and without any abandonment of the goals of international Communism.

Comprehending Communist Change

The second factor, of equal consequence, which has put some degree of East-West accord within easier reach is the changes which are occurring both within the Soviet Union and in Moscow's relations with other Communist capitals. We must try to understand these changes, for without that understanding we shall be unable to assess the nature of our opponent and of the contest. Having made some assessment of what these changes may mean, we must search diligently but without illusion for such opportunities as they may offer of finding a means of living sensibly in this world without jeopardizing either our security or our fundamental democratic values.

The myth of a monolithic, centrally controlled and directed international Communist movement is daily being exposed by despatches emanating from Peking and Moscow. The main centres of power in the Communist world are beginning to act more and more as national entities impelled mainly by national rather than ideological considerations. Moreover, they are speaking in the tones not of friends and allies who have had a difference of opinion but in the harsh language of enemies. While we have long known that Communist China has never truly been a satellite of the U.S.S.R., the new element is the unrestrained public disclosure of the depth of the rift, revealing as it does the extent to which national interests within the Communist world are now in conflict.

New Alignment Means New Problems

General de Gaulle described this development well in his July 29 reference to "the beginning of an opposition between a European (Communist) empire and the empire of China". Given the unreasoning militant nature of Chinese Communist policies and the fact that views on the inevitability of war are at the very root of Sino-Soviet differences, the gulf that is opening within the Communist camp itself may perhaps offer new common ground between the Western world and some of the older Communist states. With