

But despite the propaganda pressures, Western governments stood firm; Euromissiles were installed; and the Soviet Union, unable to break the unity of the West, agreed to follow the second track of the NATO decision; which led to talks; which led, in turn, to last year's historic agreement. Negotiation was not the Soviet's first option. Their first option was to try to divide NATO. When division failed, they negotiated.

Other factors were, of course, important -- including obviously, the new openness and flexibility that both Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Reagan now demonstrate. But had the "two track" decision failed, or had the peace movement prevailed, there would have been no compelling pressure on the Soviet Union to remove their own missiles.

Let me make a point that should be self-evident. Nuclear war would be terrible. Its prospect frightens children. It frightens adults. But one does not need nuclear weapons to wage terrible wars. Look at Iran-Iraq. Look at Cambodia. Look at the Crusades. The world can't wish away war. We can try to stop it when it occurs. We can send peacekeepers when there is a peace to keep. And we can work to prevent war - using tools that range from foreign aid to the threat of retaliation. In assessing the importance of NATO, it is worth noting Europe, which erupted into violence twice in the forty years before NATO was established, has known no war since that time. So the debate is not between war-mongers and peacekeepers. The debate is about the best way to keep peace and expand freedom.

History has taught us before that no one negotiates successfully from weakness. Certainly the Soviets understand strength. In the late 1970's, as Soviet missiles were deployed, the West learned that words alone don't work. Last year, Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Reagan showed us what happens when the West remains strong and united.

The lesson for us was clear -- that progress requires both the will to negotiate, and the strength to be taken seriously. At the core of that strength was NATO.

NATO is an organization born in dark days. It was created just four years after the termination of the most awful conflict ever known to mankind. A shattered Europe was groping towards recovery, economically, socially, politically and emotionally.