

Western world. From the era of free-wheeling independence in foreign policy we have recognized the need for and moved towards a greater degree of inter-dependence. A fusion has taken place, making foreign policy a more comprehensive undertaking. Watching this phenomenon, however, the haunting question cannot but come to our minds: Has the fusion been sufficiently great or adequate in nature to counterbalance the fissions which have revolutionized the international community? If the answer could be in the negative, let me remind you of some of the difficulties which democratic governments face in effecting a transformation of this order.

The inherent slowness of democratic government to act is at once their strength in domestic affairs where swift and precipitant action is often arbitrary and unjust, and their weakness in international relations, where speed of decision is coming more and more, as a matter of survival, to be an imperative requirement. The combined resources of the Western world are indeed vast; but we have now seen on three desperately perilous occasions, in 1914, in 1939 and in December of 1941, following Pearl Harbour, how agonizingly long a time is needed for their mobilization and deployment. And when we had finished with the Kaiser and his General Staff, and when we had destroyed Hitler's fascist formations, how eager we were to believe that the world was now safe, and that sensible men could now go about their reasonable tasks; and how readily and how speedily we disbanded our armies, and scrapped our armaments. When confronted with the urgent threat or the even more urgent reality of war, the democracies, given time, have proven themselves invincible; but with the coming of peace, which as a reasonable and sanguine people we trust will be permanent or of long duration, we are constitutionally incapable of perpetuating our enmities, or of remaining armed to the teeth when no enemy is immediately in view. When confronted with an imminent peril, our governments are prepared to impose and our peoples are ready to accept, almost any diminution of traditional liberties, and almost any device of the totalitarian states, and these devices, it has been our experience, we can apply more effectively than they; but only if we have the time to do it.

Democracy's apparently built-in inertia is, however, in so far as decisive diplomatic action is concerned, a problem which has its roots deep in our own political and cultural heritage. There are for us, certain cherished values and ideals which we are not prepared to sacrifice - we may suspend their applicability in times of crisis but we cannot approve their permanent submergence - simply to facilitate an accelerated diplomatic reaction time.