

had they not been supported by the even greater deterrent force represented by the nuclear weapons available to the United States Air Force. It was the nuclear superiority that clearly rested with the United States in the years immediately after the war that, more than any other factor, set limits to Soviet ambitions and Soviet pressure.

As we all know, however, the era of nuclear superiority was of very brief duration. The Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb in 1949 and followed that success with the successful testing of a hydrogen bomb in 1953. The relative nuclear capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union cannot be assessed exactly. But there can be no doubt that while the United States assuredly had the power to inflict a devastating nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union for its part would also be able to launch an attack on North America which could wipe out a number of our largest cities. In these circumstances, the notion of nuclear superiority would seem to have lost most of its meaning. Instead, we would seem to have entered an era of virtual nuclear stalemate.

In general, the most urgent objective of the West during the past decade has been to provide the defensive strength and political unity that have been necessary to check the outward thrust of Soviet ambition and Soviet policy. We must still continue to keep that objective rigorously in mind. Any other course might well be suicidal in view of the ambiguous nature of Soviet intentions. But the time has come, it seems to me, when we must try to supplement the policy of containment with a more supple and soberly approach. In a situation so critical and so dangerous that any serious miscalculation might result in a holocaust to destroy not only civilization but the race itself, we cannot rest content with a policy of drawing military lines between the antagonists, necessary though that may be. We must be searching with all the patient skill and clear insight that we can command for solutions which will place a greater margin of safety between humanity and the abyss.

It is my deep conviction that we in the West can move forward in this momentous task only by a scrupulous, energetic and imaginative effort to understand the civilization which has chosen to be antithetical or even antagonistic to much of what we are and what we stand for. The immediate challenge is one of the diplomacy of the West; but in an age of informed and influential public opinion, the ultimate challenge is to our Western educational systems. For it is a fact that the so-called Iron Curtain is culturally a thousand years old, that our educational systems still limit the content of instruction to human experience west of the Elbe, and that our conventional academic disciplines, more particularly in the social sciences, have evolved primarily from a contemplation and analysis of Western society. I am not unmindful of the fact that during the