

realism and restraint on vital issues. Indeed, the new Soviet Government has seen fit to assure us officially that there will be no change in Soviet foreign policy either in its pursuit of peace or its policy of peaceful co-existence or its support for the United Nations. We have also been assured that the new Soviet Government will pursue the same policy towards Canada, seeking to improve bilateral relations in our mutual interest. May I say that Canada -- and, I am sure, other Western countries -- will be prepared to continue to explore with the Soviet Government all avenues that offer promise of yielding peaceful and equitable solutions to the vital issues outstanding between us.

We must expect that the new Soviet leaders will be concerned primarily to consolidate their new power and position and to feel their way forward very cautiously. The sharing of the top posts in party and government leadership between Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Kosygin has been traditional after the death or removal of every supreme leader in the Soviet Union from Lenin's day on. In each case it was some years before the posts of Prime Minister and First Secretary of the Communist Party were again combined. Whether this pattern will be repeated again it is too early to tell. What we do know is that, throughout Russian history, there has been a tendency toward the concentration of power in a single ruler. This was as true under the Czars as it has been under the Soviet system. On the other hand, the Soviet people are rapidly becoming more educated and more sophisticated and these trends may well, over the longer term, lead to changes in the traditional pattern of political leadership. Meanwhile we can assume, I think, that there will be some uncertainty surrounding the position of the top leadership in the Soviet Union for some time to come.

I turn next to the explosion of a nuclear device by Communist China, which, I am sure, is a matter of deep concern to all of us. This test will probably be followed by others, increasing the level of radioactivity in the atmosphere at a time when, thanks to the partial test-ban treaty, hazards to health from that source had begun to decline. I deplore the fact that Communist China has in this way affronted the hopes of the world community as evidenced by the overwhelming adherence of countries to and support for the partial test-ban treaty, and has thus further isolated itself from world opinion.

The isolation of Communist China on nuclear questions has, of course, been evident since the signature of that treaty, to which the Chinese refused to adhere and which they have repeatedly denounced as a fraud. Probably because the Peking regime recognized that this stand tended to alienate world opinion, they proposed even then the holding of a world conference of heads of governments to discuss the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons. Now the Chinese have renewed this proposal, presumably in an effort to ward off, or at least to mitigate, world criticism of their nuclear test.

This is not to say that the Chinese proposal for a summit conference on complete nuclear disarmament should necessarily be dismissed out of hand. But we should not forget that the question of nuclear disarmament, important as it is, cannot be considered in isolation from the broader disarmament picture and, in particular, from the problem of conventional weapons and the need to reduce armed forces to safe proportions. As for the Chinese undertaking never to make first use of nuclear arms, while this is at present of little practical