

The Soviet leadership's domestic political reform program and their forthright assurances, in keeping with their CSCE undertakings, that all nations are entitled to choose, without interference, their own way of development have triggered the relaxation of tension between East and West.

And with President Gorbachev's encouragement, an extraordinarily intense period of reform has been launched in Eastern Europe.

In Poland and Hungary, free elections are producing new governments and new institutions for a new age. Bulgaria seems embarked on the same path. We are witnessing monumental changes in Europe of a kind unimagined even a few months ago.

Historic barriers have been removed and the Berlin Wall, a symbol of fear, immobility and of "old thinking", has begun to come down. Where it once stood for division and animosity, it has now come to signify promise and possibility.

This has happened at a pace that has confounded almost all the pundits and encouraged men and women of good will everywhere. These are circumstances in which there are no losers; with such reform, both sides win.

But reform -- as the Soviet authorities know as well as anyone -- can be fraught with frustrations and uncertainties. It is extremely difficult to deal with the political challenges that flow from rising expectations.

All nations have sought, at one time or other, to come to grips with the needs and aspirations of men and women seeking a better life for their children and themselves. It is not an easy thing to satisfy the dreams and ambitions of a nation. It requires time and patience and a great common resolve.

We, in the West, do not seek to profit from these circumstances to undermine anyone's security. It would be against our interests to try to do so because, in a nuclear age, security is indivisible. In fact, for the first time since the war, genuine peace seems possible.