

States. From each and all of these we must derive encouragement, help and guidance; to each and all of them we have perhaps something unique to offer. Peacemaking in the age of fission and fusion has become indeed a complex and comprehensive undertaking.

In concluding my first lecture last evening, I pointed to some of the difficulties which governments experience or encounter in dealing with international problems of contemporary magnitude. While the wars of an earlier day were slow in getting started and relatively limited in character, it is all too clear, from contemporary forecasts of any future war, that such a war could be instantaneously devastating. In view of such a strategic assessment, the need for swift and decisive action is only too painfully evident and this, for democratic governments which are apparently slower moving, though in the long run no less effective than authoritarian ones, presents great difficulties.

A moment ago I used the phrase 'strategic assessment'. There is also the problem of political assessment which must precede strategy. I spoke of the necessity and indeed the obligation of the traditional diplomatic assignment of keeping our assessment of the international problems confronting us up to date, realistic and fresh. It is this idea which I desire to explore further in this lecture, and to describe in greater detail the international situation that confronts us at present and to make some suggestions about the way in which it might be approached.

To understand that situation, it is necessary to look back, however briefly, over the course of international affairs since the end of the war. While the countries of the West were demobilizing the large forces which they had mustered for the prosecution of the war, the Soviet Union maintained its forces almost intact, and used them as a means for fastening Soviet control on the countries of Eastern Europe, and for threatening the security of other countries around the perimeter of the Communist empire. The USSR also attempted to foment unrest in Western Europe and it made a determined effort to cut the communication links with Berlin. All these acts heightened mistrust of Soviet intentions and caused widespread apprehension. This was raised to fever pitch by the coup which extinguished the independence of Czechoslovakia.

The response of Western countries to all these provocations by which they felt themselves threatened was the formation of the North Atlantic alliance. The purpose of the alliance was to protect the member-countries from Soviet attack and to provide a shield behind which they could work out their own political and economic destinies. However, the forces at the disposal of the North Atlantic alliance in Europe would not have been so effective as they were in deterring Soviet attacks