

serious. If serious, they will endanger us all. But because of its power and its leadership, mistakes made by the United States - even less serious ones - may give rise to graver dangers for all members of the Alliance, for all the men, women and children who make up the Alliance.

It is for this reason that all the nations of the free world, all the citizens of the free world, have a direct and vital interest in your foreign policy. Governments are usually discreet in giving public evidence of that interest. Private citizens in democracies are not always so discreet.

It must at times be irritating to you to have private citizens in other countries taking sides in your debates in your own country on your own foreign policy. But that is the penalty of greatness in a democratic community of free nations living on the edge of catastrophe where the foreign policy of each directly affects the lives of all citizens of the community. And if the interest seems sometimes ill-informed and the criticism seems undeserved -- that is a difficulty which we face in all our countries in this abnormal world.

The problem for you of the United States differs in degree but not in kind from the problem with which your allies are confronted. The United States, because it bears the heavy burden of the leadership of the free world, has the right and duty to bring its views to the attention of its allies in an effort to convince them of the wisdom of the policies which the United States considers should be adopted by the members of the Alliance. Usually those views are expressed privately through diplomatic channels, with moderation and studied courtesy. Sometimes they are put more forcefully. Occasionally - very occasionally - the argument breaks out into the open as it did at Lake Success on the issue of Chinese intervention in Korea. When that happens, we, your allies, find out in our turn what it is like to be on the receiving end of public criticism from citizens of an allied and friendly country - criticism of the inadequacy of our actions, our lack of common sense and our lack of resolution. And we may sometimes feel, as you would do in similar circumstances, that the interest of some members of your public in our views is ill-informed, and your criticism undeserved.

What it comes down to, I suggest, is this. If the North Atlantic Alliance is to be fully successful, it must be firmly based on a broad measure of agreement between the North Atlantic nations and peoples, not only on the objectives of the Alliance but on the major questions of international political strategy and international political tactics. Agreement on objectives is relatively easy to secure for we share in the North Atlantic community the common heritage of Western Christendom, we believe in the same virtues, we share the same values.

But agreement on how to reach those objectives is less easy to secure. For each of our countries sees the world from a different point of view and any view of the world from any point of view is distorted in some respects just as any map of the world has some distortions. Each of us does not always see the same world; each of us does not always look with the same eyes; or interpret what he sees with the same brains; at times interpretation is even affected by different prejudices.

This may appear to be a weakness in the Alliance; but it is not necessarily so. Indeed it may be one of the great sources of strength of the Alliance.