

Address given by Henry A. Kissinger (New York, 23 April 1973)

This year has been called the year of Europe, but not because Europe was less important in 1972 or in 1969. The alliance between the United States and Europe has been the cornerstone of all postwar foreign policy. It provided the political framework for American engagements in Europe and marked the definitive end of U.S. isolationism. It insured the sense of security that allowed Europe to recover from the devastation of the war. It reconciled former enemies. It was the stimulus for an unprecedented endeavor in European unity and the principal means to forge the common policies that safeguarded Western security in an era of prolonged tension and confrontation. Our values, our goals, and our basic interests are most closely identified with those of Europe.

Nineteen seventy-three is the year of Europe because the era that was shaped by decisions of a generation ago is ending. The success of those policies has produced new realities that require new approaches:

—The revival of western Europe is an established fact, as is the historic success of its movement toward economic unification.

—The East-West strategic military balance has shifted from American preponderance to near-equality, bringing with it the necessity for a new understanding of the requirements of our common security.

—Other areas of the world have grown in importance. Japan has emerged as a major power center. In many fields, "Atlantic" solutions to be viable must include Japan.

—We are in a period of relaxation of tensions. But as the rigid divisions of the past two decades diminish, new assertions of national identity and national rivalry emerge.

—Problems have arisen, unforeseen a generation ago, which require new types of cooperative action. Insuring the supply of energy for industrialized nations is an example.

These factors have produced a dramatic transformation of the psychological climate in the West — a change which is the most profound current challenge to Western statesmanship. In Europe, a new generation to whom war and its dislocations are not personal experiences takes stability for granted. But it is less committed to the unity that made peace possible and to the effort required to maintain it. In the United States, decades of global burdens have fostered, and the frustrations of the war in Southeast Asia have accentuated, a reluctance to sustain global involvements on the basis of preponderant American responsibility.

Inevitably this period of transition will have its strains. There have been complaints in America that Europe ignores its wider responsibilities in pursuing economic self-interest too one-sidedly and that Europe is not carrying its fair share of the burden of the common defense. There have been complaints in Europe that America is out to divide Europe economically, or to desert Europe militarily, or to bypass Europe diplomatically. Europeans appeal to the United States to accept their independence and their occasionally severe criticism of us in the name of Atlantic unity, while at the same time they ask for a veto on our independent policies — also in the name of Atlantic unity.

Our challenge is whether a unity forged by a common perception of danger can draw new purpose from shared positive aspirations.

If we permit the Atlantic partnership to atrophy, or to erode through neglect, carelessness, or mistrust, we risk what has been achieved and we shall miss our historic opportunity for even greater achievement.

In the forties and fifties the task was economic reconstruction and security against the danger of attack; the West responded with courage and imagination. Today the need is to make the Atlantic relationship as dynamic a force in building a new structure of peace, less geared to crisis and more conscious of opportunities, drawing its inspirations from its goals rather than its fears. The Atlantic nations must join in a

fresh act of creation equal to that undertaken by the postwar generation of leaders of Europe and America.

This is why the President is embarking on a personal and direct approach to the leaders of western Europe. In his discussions with the heads of government of Britain, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, and France, the Secretary General of NATO, and other European leaders, it is the President's purpose to lay the basis for a new era of creativity in the West.

His approach will be to deal with Atlantic problems comprehensively. The political, military, and economic issues in Atlantic relations are linked by reality, not by our choice nor for the tactical purpose of trading one off against the other. The solutions will not be worthy of the opportunity if left to technicians. They must be addressed at the highest level.

In 1972 the President transformed relations with our adversaries to lighten the burdens of fear and suspicion.

In 1973 we can gain the same sense of historical achievement by reinvigorating shared ideals and common purposes with our friends.

The United States proposes to its Atlantic partners that by the time the President travels to Europe toward the end of the year we will have worked out a new Atlantic charter setting the goals for the future, a blueprint that:

—Builds on the past without becoming its prisoner.

—Deals with the problems our success has created.

—Creates for the Atlantic nations a new relationship in whose progress Japan can share.

We ask our friends in Europe, Canada, and ultimately Japan to join us in this effort.

This is what we mean by the year of Europe.

Problems in Atlantic Relationships

The problems in Atlantic relationships are real. They have arisen in part because during the fifties and sixties the Atlantic community organized itself in different ways in the many different dimensions of its common enterprise.

—In economic relations the European Community has increasingly stressed its regional personality; the United States at the same time must act as part of, and be responsible for, a wider international trade and monetary system. We must reconcile these two perspectives.

—In our collective defense we are still organized on the principle of unity and integration, but in radically different strategic conditions. The full implications of this change have yet to be faced.

—Diplomacy is the subject of frequent consultations but is essentially being conducted by traditional nation-states. The United States has global interests and responsibilities. Our European allies have regional interests. These are not necessarily in conflict, but in the new era neither are they automatically identical.

In short, we deal with each other regionally and even competitively on an integrated basis in defense, and as nation-states in diplomacy. When the various collective institutions were rudimentary, the potential inconsistency in their modes of operation was not a problem. But after a generation of evolution and with the new weight and strength of our allies, the various parts of the construction are not always in harmony and sometimes obstruct each other.

If we want to foster unity we can no longer ignore these problems. The Atlantic nations must find a solution

for the management of their diversity to serve the common objectives which underlie their unity. We can no longer afford to pursue national or regional self-interest without a unifying framework. We cannot hold together if each country or region asserts its autonomy whenever it is to its benefit and invokes unity to curtail the independence of others.

We must strike a new balance between self-interest and the common interest. We must identify interests and positive values beyond security in order to engage once again the commitment of peoples and parliaments. We need a shared view of the world we seek to build.

Agenda for the Future

Economic

No element of American postwar policy has been more consistent than our support of European unity. We encouraged it at every turn. We knew that a united Europe would be a more independent partner. But we assumed, perhaps too uncritically, that our common interests would be assured by our long history of cooperation. We expected that political unity would follow economic integration and that a unified Europe working cooperatively with us in an Atlantic partnership would ease many of our international burdens.

It is clear that many of these expectations are not being fulfilled.

We and Europe have benefited from European economic integration. Increased trade within Europe has stimulated the growth of European economies and the expansion of trade in both directions across the Atlantic.

But we cannot ignore the fact that Europe's economic success and its transformation from a recipient of our aid to a strong competitor has produced a certain amount of friction. There have been turbulence and a sense of rivalry in international monetary relations.

In trade, the natural economic weight of a market of 250 million people has pressed other states to seek special arrangements to protect their access to it. The prospect of a closed trading system embracing the European Community and a growing number of other nations in Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa appears to be at the expense of the United States and other nations which are excluded. In agriculture, where the United States has a comparative advantage, we are particularly concerned that Community protective policies may restrict access for our products.

This divergence comes at a time when we are experiencing a chronic and growing deficit in our balance of payments and protectionist pressures of our own. Europeans in turn question our investment policies and doubt our continued commitment to their economic unity.

The gradual accumulation of sometimes petty, sometimes major, economic disputes must be ended and be replaced by a determined commitment on both sides of the Atlantic to find cooperative solutions.

The United States will continue to support the unification of Europe. We have no intention of destroying what we worked so hard to help build. For us, European unity is what it has always been: not an end in itself but a means to the strengthening of the West. We shall continue to support European unity as a component of a larger Atlantic partnership.

This year we begin comprehensive trade negotiations with Europe as well as with Japan. We shall also continue to press the effort to reform the monetary system so that it promotes stability rather than constant disruptions. A new equilibrium must be achieved in trade and monetary relations.

We see these negotiations as a historic opportunity for positive achievement. They must engage the top political leaders, for they require above all a commitment of political will. If they are left solely to the

experts the inevitable competitiveness of economic interests will dominate the debate. The influence of pressure groups and special interests will become pervasive. There will be no overriding sense of direction. There will be no framework for the generous solutions or mutual concessions essential to preserve a vital Atlantic partnership.

It is the responsibility of national leaders to insure that economic negotiations serve larger political purposes. They must recognize that economic rivalry, if carried on without restraint, will in the end damage other relationships.

The United States intends to adopt a broad political approach that does justice to our overriding political interest in an open and balanced trading order with both Europe and Japan. This is the spirit of the President's trade bill and of his speech to the International Monetary Fund last year. It will guide our strategy in the trade and monetary talks. We see these negotiations not as a test of strength, but as a test of joint statesmanship.

Defense

Atlantic unity has always come most naturally in the field of defense. For many years the military threats to Europe were unambiguous, the requirements to meet them were generally agreed on both sides of the Atlantic, and America's responsibility was preeminent and obvious. Today we remain united on the objective of collective defense, but we face the new challenge of maintaining it under radically changed strategic conditions and with the new opportunity of enhancing our security through negotiated reductions of forces.

The West no longer holds the nuclear predominance that permitted it in the fifties and sixties to rely almost solely on a strategy of massive nuclear retaliation. Because under conditions of nuclear parity such a strategy invites mutual suicide, the alliance must have other choices. The collective ability to resist attack in western Europe by means of flexible responses has become central to a rational strategy and crucial to the maintenance of peace. For this reason, the United States has maintained substantial conventional forces in Europe and our NATO allies have embarked on a significant effort to modernize and improve their own military establishments.

While the Atlantic alliance is committed to a strategy of flexible response in principle, the requirements of flexibility are complex and expensive. Flexibility by its nature requires sensitivity to new conditions and continual consultation among the allies to respond to changing circumstances. And we must give substance to the defense posture that our strategy defines. Flexible response cannot be simply a slogan wrapped around the defense structure that emerges from lowest-common-denominator compromises driven by domestic considerations. It must be seen by ourselves and by potential adversaries as a credible, substantial, and rational posture of defense.

A great deal remains to be accomplished to give reality to the goal of flexible response:

—There are deficiencies in important areas of our conventional defense.

—There are still unresolved issues in our doctrine; for example, on the crucial question of the role of tactical nuclear weapons.

—There are anomalies in NATO deployments as well as in its logistics structure.

To maintain the military balance that has insured stability in Europe for 25 years, the alliance has no choice but to address these needs and to reach an agreement on our defense requirements. This task is all the more difficult because the lessening of tensions has given new impetus to arguments that it is safe to begin reducing forces unilaterally. And unbridled economic competition can sap the impulse for common defense. All governments of the Western alliance face a major challenge in educating their peoples to the realities of

security in the 1970's.

The President has asked me to state that America remains committed to doing its fair share in Atlantic defense. He is adamantly opposed to unilateral withdrawals of U.S. forces from Europe. But we owe to our peoples a rational defense posture, at the safest minimum size and cost, with burdens equitably shared. This is what the President believes must result from the dialogue with our allies in 1973.

When this is achieved, the necessary American forces will be maintained in Europe, not simply as a hostage to trigger our nuclear weapons but as an essential contribution to an agreed and intelligible structure of Western defense. This, too, will enable us to engage our adversaries intelligently in negotiations for mutual balanced reductions.

In the next few weeks the United States will present to NATO the product of our own preparations for the negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions which will begin this year. We hope that it will be a contribution to a broader dialogue on security. Our approach is designed not from the point of view of special American interests, but of general alliance interests. Our position will reflect the President's view that these negotiations are not a subterfuge to withdraw U.S. forces regardless of consequences. No formula for reductions is defensible, whatever its domestic appeal or political rationale, if it undermines security.

Our objective in the dialogue on defense is a new consensus on security, addressed to new conditions and to the hopeful new possibilities of effective arms limitations.

Diplomacy

We have entered a truly remarkable period of East-West diplomacy. The last two years have produced an agreement on Berlin, a treaty between West Germany and the U.S.S.R., a strategic arms limitation agreement, the beginning of negotiations on a European Security Conference and on mutual balanced force reductions, and a series of significant practical bilateral agreements between Western and Eastern countries, including a dramatic change in bilateral relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R. These were not isolated actions, but steps on a course charted in 1969 and carried forward as a collective effort. Our approach to détente stressed that negotiations had to be concrete, not atmospheric, and that concessions should be reciprocal. We expect to carry forward the policy of relaxation of tensions on this basis.

Yet this very success has created its own problems. There is an increasing uneasiness — all the more insidious for rarely being made explicit — that superpower diplomacy might sacrifice the interests of traditional allies and other friends. Where our allies' interests have been affected by our bilateral negotiations, as in the talks on the limitation of strategic arms, we have been scrupulous in consulting them; where our allies are directly involved, as in the negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions, our approach is to proceed jointly on the basis of agreed positions. Yet some of our friends in Europe have seemed unwilling to accord America the same trust in our motives as they received from us or to grant us the same tactical flexibility that they employed in pursuit of their own policies. The United States is now often taken to task for flexibility where we used to be criticized for rigidity.

All of this underlines the necessity to articulate a clear set of common objectives together with our allies. Once that is accomplished, it will be quite feasible, indeed desirable, for the several allies to pursue these goals with considerable tactical flexibility. If we agree on common objectives it will become a technical question whether a particular measure is pursued in a particular forum or whether to proceed bilaterally or multilaterally. Then those allies who seek reassurances of America's commitment will find it not in verbal reaffirmations of loyalty, but in an agreed framework of purpose.

We do not need to agree on all policies. In many areas of the world our approaches will differ, especially outside of Europe. But we do require an understanding of what should be done jointly and of the limits we should impose on the scope of our autonomy.

We have no intention of buying an illusory tranquillity at the expense of our friends. The United States will never knowingly sacrifice the interests of others. But the perception of common interests is not automatic; it requires constant redefinition. The relaxation of tensions to which we are committed makes allied cohesion indispensable yet more difficult. We must insure that the momentum of détente is maintained by common objectives rather than by drift, escapism, or complacency.

America's Contribution

The agenda I have outlined here is not an American prescription, but an appeal for a joint effort of creativity. The historic opportunity for this generation is to build a new structure of international relations for the decades ahead. A revitalized Atlantic partnership is indispensable for it. The United States is prepared to make its contribution:

—We will continue to support European unity. Based on the principles of partnership, we will make concessions to its further growth. We will expect to be met in a spirit of reciprocity.

—We will not disengage from our solemn commitments to our allies. We will maintain our forces and not withdraw from Europe unilaterally. In turn, we expect from each ally a fair share of the common effort for the common defense.

—We shall continue to pursue the relaxation of tensions with our adversaries on the basis of concrete negotiations in the common interest. We welcome the participation of our friends in a constructive East-West dialogue.

—We will never consciously injure the interests of our friends in Europe or in Asia. We expect in return that their policies will take seriously our interests and our responsibilities.

—We are prepared to work cooperatively on new common problems we face. Energy, for example, raises the challenging issues of assurance of supply, impact of oil revenues on international currency stability, the nature of common political and strategic interests, and long-range relations of oil-consuming to oil-producing countries. This could be an area of competition; it should be an area of collaboration.

—Just as Europe's autonomy is not an end in itself, so the Atlantic community cannot be an exclusive club. Japan must be a principal partner in our common enterprise.

We hope that our friends in Europe will meet us in this spirit. We have before us the example of the great accomplishments of the past decades and the opportunity to match and dwarf them. This is the task ahead. This is how, in the 1970's, the Atlantic nations can truly serve our peoples and the cause of peace.