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POLICY STATEMENTS

59/73. THE ATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP; AND DETENTE

Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Secretary of
State for Foreign and Commonwealth
Affairs, in London on October 3, 1973:

In an address to the American Newspapers Publishers Association in London on October 3, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, spoke of the success the European Community is achieving in "feeling its way towards a consensus on ... foreign policy" vis a vis the United States and Eastern Europe.

He stressed the importance of there being no unilateral reduction of troops in Europe pending the outcome of the negotiations on detente.

Sir Alec spoke of the change in the pattern of international relations observable as the last quarter of the 20th century approaches.

"Looking more particularly at Western Europe, the Community as an entity is feeling its way towards a consensus on issues of foreign policy...

"Before the opening of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, working groups set up by the Nine sat together over many months to prepare for talks with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Their experiment in discovering a European view was totally successful and the possibility of cooperation between the Nine became a reality."

When, later on, President Nixon asked for a redefinition of Europe's relationship to the United States, the Nine again sought to formulate their views.

/ "We ...

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"We believe that the Atlantic partnership remains indispensable. The fact that the Community can now speak with one voice on some very important issues does not mean that the close bilateral contacts will lose their value. Not at all. But they will often be supplemented by something new, of real worth; that is, a European consensus on the matter of policy under consideration."

The enlarged Community poses no threat to U.S.-European or U.S.-U.K. relations, the Foreign Secretary reiterated.

"I have always believed that the enlargement of the Community need have no adverse effect whatever on the relationship between the United States and the countries of Western Europe in general, and between the United States and Britain in particular.

"We have a common purpose -- the security and freedom and prosperity of the West -- and we have the will to give effect to this purpose. Given these two fixed points, solutions to any mutual problems can undoubtedly be found."

Sir Alec pointed out, nevertheless, that detente can only come about by a greater degree of mutual understanding between the peoples of East and West.

"No doubt we can make progress at the CSCE in the drafting of a declaration of principles, and perhaps in the economic field. These are both aspects of the whole. But we see more to it than that. Politics is primarily about people, and unless the peoples of East and West can be given a better chance to understand each other more than they do at the moment, we will be building a house on shifting sands."

In order for this process to become a reality, said the Foreign Secretary, "it is vital that the balance of power in central Europe is maintained." He went on,

"We are just beginning negotiations in Vienna on what I continue to insist should be called 'Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.' Any large-scale unilateral American troop withdrawal from Europe would upset the balance which is essential for security, and for that confidence which is vital to the achievement of detente..."

"The United States and Britain both have a key role to play. We are doing so in close consultation based upon our traditional friendship and our identity of aims. You on your side of the Atlantic,

/no ...

no less than our European partners, can rely on the continued efforts of my own country to ensure that the unity of Europe will buttress and reinforce the wider cooperation of the West. I hope that we, for our part, can also count on the patience and understanding of all our friends while we build."

(Prev. Refs. 44/73)
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