

# worldview

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## A TIME FOR EXAMINATION

As the decade of the 1950's draws to its close there are signs that the nation is about to begin a serious examination of what it has been doing and where it hopes to go. The exchange of visits between Premier Khrushchev and President Eisenhower, the President's proposed travels abroad and the forthcoming summit conference are official manifestations of dissatisfaction with past rigidities and a willingness to at least attempt new approaches. On a wider, less official level one senses an even more urgent concern that our national policies should be brought into line with changing events.

The September visit of Mr. Khrushchev to the United States has proved an occasion for the new examination of American approaches to the Cold War, and the forthcoming Presidential election has given it impetus; but it seems clear that even without the stimulus of these events the examination would take place. The great policies upon which America has based its role as leader of the free world were largely shaped by the Truman administration in response to the challenges of the late 1940's. The administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower has carried them on through the past decade pretty much unaltered (except for such occasional embellishments as "liberation" and "massive retaliation"). But however these approaches served us in the past it is evident, in the very nature of things, that they cannot serve us forever.

History moves at too dizzying a pace for the policies of one era to serve another, and talk of "massive retaliation" would be as dangerously unreal in 1959 as talk of a "fortress America" was in 1949. Whatever new leadership comes to power in next year's election must create policies which, though they are based on the realities of past experience, will meet the problems of a radically changing time.

Whatever specific shape these policies may take (and this should be a matter for the most serious political debate during the coming months) it seems evident that they must be rooted in some hard truths that the nation is only now coming to

accept. Among them the following are surely central.

(1) Communist power is a reality which the free world must finally recognize; this power cannot in the foreseeable future be willed, prayed, or "liberated" away.

(2) Since Communist power has become stabilized in the Soviet Union and is in rapid process of stabilizing itself in China, the Western world must accept some form of coexistence; the only alternative to this is probably no existence at all.

(3) Coexistence will not be "peaceful." The two systems are not destined to be friends. Coexistence will be "competitive" and it will be increasingly economic and political rather than military.

(4) The areas of the world where competition will be most keen—and ultimately most decisive—are the present "underdeveloped," still uncommitted nations. It is in Africa and Asia that the question of totalitarianism or freedom will finally be decided.

(5) While the competition goes forward, the West has no choice but to maintain and develop its nuclear power as a deterrent to overt Communist aggression; at the same time it must maintain stronger conventional military forces so that it can meet limited aggression in a limited way, without accepting the suicidal alternatives of surrender or nuclear war.

(6) This means that the United States cannot, in this generation or perhaps the next, expect "peace" any more than it can accept the folly of war. It must learn patience and sacrifice for the long haul of a contest whose end cannot now be seen.

What we still face, in brief, is the situation which Adlai Stevenson warned us of in 1952 when he said: "This is the eve of great decisions, not easy ones like resistance when you're attacked, but a long, patient, costly struggle which alone can assure triumph over the great enemies of men—war and poverty and tyranny—and the assaults upon human dignity which are the most grievous consequence of each."