

Uncertainty Ahead In Foreign Policy

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Washington, D. C.—President Johnson seems strongly committed by his public statements of the past three years to carry forward the major lines of United States foreign policy developed by President Kennedy.

But the change in leadership of the western alliance so suddenly wrought Friday by an assassin's bullets has inevitably opened a period of uncertainty about the future direction of United States relations with the rest of the world.

This applies particularly to

relations with Russia and the western allies.

Mr. Johnson recently defended the east-west limited nuclear test ban treaty and the proposed sale of wheat to Russia. He has also advocated formation of a NATO nuclear weapons force urged by Mr. Kennedy.

But now that he is president it remains to be seen how he will handle such issues, especially the possibility of any further agreements with Russia.

A critical related question is whether Soviet Premier Khrushchev will seek to promote friendly relations with the new United States chief executive at the outset, or will embark on a strategy of probing and testing, perhaps by some new tension creating move around Berlin.

The uncertainty about policy extends also to the future makeup of the inner circle of men, including Secretary of State Rusk, whose advice decisively influenced the course of diplomacy during the Kennedy administration.

Washington officials expect, however, that for the immediate future, Mr. Johnson will retain key Kennedy advisers. They are men with whom he worked closely as vice-president.

On the larger issues of foreign policy, Mr. Johnson has been a public advocate and defender of Mr. Kennedy's search for improved relations with Russia while maintaining a high state of military preparedness.

Only last month in a New York speech he spoke out for the test ban treaty and the Kennedy decision to sell wheat to the Soviet Union.

"We are not gambling with our national security," he said. "We are not taking any needless risks for peace. But neither are we foreclosing the future.

"We have no desire to perpet-

uate the burdens and dangers of the cold war, no ambition to doom mankind to the accumulated folly of an intensified arms race, no wish to convince the Soviets that even responsible proposals will be rejected by us without fair or adequate consideration."

Mr. Johnson also has preached unity in Europe and an Atlantic Partnership between western Europe and North America. He has supported the foreign aid program and promised the nations of Asia that the United States would "make any sacrifice and risk any danger" to protect freedom in the world.

In a Nov. 8 speech in Brussels, Belgium, Mr. Johnson urged a speedup in nuclear defense co-operation between the United States and its Atlantic allies, saying the formation of a NATO multilateral nuclear missile force would be "a first step toward a greater European voice in nuclear matters."