

to maintain only modest military forces and to rely on the United States for its security requirements, Britain, on the other hand, is a nation whose economic and military strength has undergone a relative decline. But British political influence is still very significant in large parts of the world where British military force is no longer dominant. We have other states militarily very strong in relation to their economic capacity and their political influence. Israel is an interesting example. The circumstances of that country's recent history have compelled it to devote an extremely high proportion of its resources to military purposes in order to survive.

In Israel we also have an example of another dimension to the whole question of the "power" of modern states- the geographical dimension. A nation may play an important part in some region of the world because of its capacity in one or more of the three factors I mentioned a moment ago, but its effective influence may not extend much beyond the region. Israel's military capacity relative to its neighbours is obviously very high and for this, as well as for other reasons, Israel is a key country in the Middle East. On the other hand, in terms of its size and population Israel must be considered as a small country, measured on the world scale.

There is one more dimension we must keep in mind if we would place the nations of the world in some order of rank. It is the dimension of time. A country may be apparently strong and vigorous in one decade but mired in political dissension or plagued by economic crises in the next. The international scene is constantly shifting and the relative strengths of nations are rising or falling. We can never take for granted that the present order will remain unchanged for any great length of time.

Looking at the world today in the light of the variables I have referred to, it appears that there are really only two great powers - the United States and the U.S.S.R. They are the only countries which are at the same time immensely strong in economic, military and political terms and have the capacity to exert their strength not just regionally but all over the world. They have, of course, the supreme ability to exchange intercontinental nuclear annihilation. No other nation is anywhere within reach of that dreadful capacity. It is probably more accurate to refer to the United States and the Soviet Union as "super-powers".

I doubt that there is much point in attempting to classify those nations which are not super-powers. The fact of the matter is that the vast majority of countries have the capacity to exert some influence on the international scene, either in their own geographical area or in the world in general, or in one functional field or another, and therefore they fall into an indeterminate classification. We are nearly all middle powers. Apart from the two giants at the one end and, at the other, a certain number of very small states which are not capable of independent action to any significant degree.

If, then, the world is full of middle powers and their national capacities are of great variety, it is difficult to define a role in international affairs for middle powers as such. It is true of middle powers, as it is of all nations, that their role is largely predetermined by the