

thousands — hundreds of thousands — of exhaust-pipes; it remains a major factor driving people from the hearts of large cities. New York's financial problems have their origins as much in political patterns that arose during the period of mass European immigration as from the newer problems of impoverished Puerto Ricans and blacks seeking welfare benefits.

All these problems are intensified in the cities where the riots of a few summers ago burnt out whole commercial districts. But no one fears a "hot summer" this year.

The changes do go beyond the symbolic level. The costly, Ford-inspired effort to bring life back to the heart of Detroit, so-called "Murder City", may perhaps be doomed by problems that resist material solutions, but it is a brave attempt and belongs in the American tradition of conscious efforts to shape the future.

Continuing concern

There are three particular areas, however, where nations friendly to America have continuing cause for concern and from which, equally, opponents may derive satisfaction. These lie in the military position of the United States and in some aspects of the political and diplomatic processes.

In a world where the predominant nuclear fact is the existence of vast "over-kill" capabilities, shifting national advantages may be more theoretical than real. The only objective compatible with survival is protection of the nuclear stalemate. It has been accepted that only three future courses remain feasible in the conduct of international rivalries: Cold War, limited war or *détente*. Each of these requires effective levels of conventional weapons.

When stated as a percentage of gross national product, American military spending has declined from 9 to 6. The draft has been ended and the size of the American forces has declined by 600,000 from the levels existing before Vietnam. The Soviet forces have risen by just under 1.5 million men in the last 16 years and at 4.4 million are twice the size of American forces. If the United States is unwilling to increase its military spending, its allies are doubly so. Yet the military expenditure of the Soviet Union continues to rise steadily, providing not only the necessary nuclear component of defence but a very high level of non nuclear forces. A substantial portion of this can be partly disregarded as essentially to the Soviet Union's own sense of security and hence essentially defensive. A further portion is directly attributable to severe tensions within the Communist

world, notably those with China. An impressive marginal strength in all arms, but particularly in the naval branch, remains. It cannot be ascribed solely to defensive objectives and is available to influence events to other ends.

The history of the Soviet Union includes remarkably little military aggression by great-power standards, although there has been a conspicuous reluctance to withdraw the Red Army from any area where it becomes established. The policies of the U.S.S.R. have been steadfastly expansionist in other ways, however, and official spokesmen of that country have not pretended that the development of *détente* deters this. *Détente*, which is simply a means of managing and accommodating tensions, is under attack in election-year America and the President has removed the word from his vocabulary, though presumably retaining the policy. He has also removed from his Cabinet the Secretary who had the most hard-headed and realistic approach to contemporary tensions, James Schlesinger.

Conventional forces

As Defence Secretary, Mr. Schlesinger argued for a high level of conventional forces — in part because he feared that nuclear risks were increased without them, in part because he believed in the possibility that the Soviet Union would use its marginal military strength at least to exert pressure and secure influence, if not for direct interventions. American military strength has been used so freely in the last quarter-century that this possibility ought not to seem unreal, yet Mr. Schlesinger's countrymen dismiss somewhat lightly such appraisals as this:

"The decade ahead will be a testing time for the Western democracies. The outcome will critically depend on the role the United States assumes, on its ability to attain renewed consensus and common purpose, and on its willingness to maintain a sufficient margin of military power to preserve a military balance in those sectors of the Eastern Hemisphere vital to our security. . . . The United States today still represents the only potential counterweight to the military and political power of the Soviet Union. . . . We may resent that fate or accept it, but it remains the fundamental reality of global politics."

In post-Vietnam America such a rigorous view of responsibility is not yet welcome. Simultaneously, there is evident a Congressional distrust of the management of American foreign policy. In part this is a legacy of Watergate, in part an outgrowth of Dr. Kissinger's carelessness

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