

have been regarded as a healthy sign of independence, while Dr. Kissinger could hardly complain at the European adoption of a position based on considerations of *Realpolitik* (the need to secure oil supplies) rather than traditional sentiments (support for Washington). Instead, he reacted like any other U.S. Secretary of State, denouncing discord in an alliance, NATO, whose only common interests were economic co-operation and the defence of Western Europe against Russia. Nevertheless, the conception of a pentagonal balance implied that, if Western Europe could achieve a common policy on military and economic matters, this would be acceptable to the United States. Whether Western Europe would be able to achieve such unity seems doubtful.

If Western Europe, the area of primary U.S. interest, has only recently received Dr. Kissinger's full interest, this has been because he first had to disentangle his country from what he saw as an involvement in Southeast Asia based on a false, ideological, perception of the United States as being threatened by the spread of Communism in that area. From the viewpoint of *Realpolitik*, the real interests of the United States in Southeast Asia were minimal, necessitating only its continued guarantee of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan against an unlikely attack from China.

Since China's military power could not threaten the United States, while Peking's acquisition of nuclear weapons made it essential to secure China's agreement on the importance of stabilizing the balance of deterrence, the United States would have to accept the resultant changes in the international system, while shaping them, where possible, to its own ends. Hence the withdrawal from Indochina, now implicitly recognized as a Chinese sphere of influence, to reinforce the Chinese rejection of revolutionary ideology in favour of positions more suitable to a major power with a substantial stake in the existing balance of nuclear and conventional power.

Dr. Kissinger had thus defined stability as the existence of a balance of military and economic power in which no single member of the pentagonal balance could seek hegemony and where the preponderance of power would usually support the existing balance of influence between the major members. This influence was defined largely in terms of their ability to disturb the *status quo*. Because the United States and the U.S.S.R. could destroy the exist-

ing international system, their rules for management of crises would have to dominate the system to ensure their continued interest in its preservation, an interest symbolized by SALT I.

Both would have to eschew the claims of ideology in favour of those of *Realpolitik*, as would China, at least in its role as an emerging participant in the nuclear balance of deterrence. China's status here, and as a regional great power, had been recognized by President Nixon's visit to Peking in 1972. Western Europe's nuclear and conventional forces, or rather, those of its members, supported the most stable military balance in the world, that between NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers, a balance whose stability was being formalized in the MBFR/CSCE negotiations. Similarly, the economic interdependence of the enlarged European Economic Community, the United States and Japan was being recognized in the multilateral negotiations on international trade and monetary policy. Dr. Kissinger's pentagonal balance was very much a balance of power, but a stable balance nonetheless. It favoured the two superpowers because they retained an overwhelming preponderance of military, especially nuclear, power and were the only states with global interests. They were balanced, at the nuclear level, by China and in the economic sphere by Western Europe and Japan. The Third World was conspicuous by its absence from Dr. Kissinger's balance, being regarded as irrelevant to, because unable to threaten, stability within the developed world.

Yet, whatever its defects, Dr. Kissinger's conservative conception of an international system whose stability and order could be maintained by force at the expense of justice seemed likely to endure. Like Metternich and Bismarck, Henry Kissinger has ensured that this image of how the international system *should* be ordered will become the basis on which the system *will* be organized because he has understood how it has been evolving. Unlike Metternich or Bismarck, his is not a sterile conservatism, seeking to maintain an impossibly static political system, but a constructive conservatism, building on the existing foundations of stability to construct a system capable of absorbing any foreseeable changes. The Metternich system lasted from 1815 to 1848 and that of Bismarck from 1870 to 1914, giving the world nearly a century of stability still envied today; may not the Kissinger system last as long?

*Military balance between NATO, Warsaw powers being formalized in negotiations*