

ments. 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. 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 areas I mentioned a moment ago, but its effective influence may not extend much beyond the region. Israel's military capacity relative to its neighbors 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.

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 all over the world. They alone - at least in the immediate future - have the supreme ability to exchange intercontinental nuclear annihilation. 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 exerting influence to any significant degree.

The capacity of the super-powers to affect the destiny of other nations is so great that middle powers must clearly be vitally concerned about the policies of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Middle powers have a right and a duty to seek to influence the actions of the super-powers. This influence is likely to be more effective if middle powers can find ways to act collectively. Indeed, it might be taken as a general rule for middle and small powers that they can be most effective in almost every field of international activity if they act together.

Sometimes a middle power may be able to play a special role in a situation where the super-powers, locked in contest for world-wide influence, dare not make a move. Such cases are rare, however, and their importance should not be exaggerated. Canada's initiative over the Suez affair in 1956 is sometimes cited as an example of this role for a middle power, but there were very special circumstances at that time.