

expansion, as did Russia's implied threat of direct intervention. But Dr. Kissinger's subsequent attempt to secure Russian agreement with a peace settlement that the superpowers could then impose on their allies emphasized that, like Bismarck, he continued to see force as an instrument of policy but that, like Metternich, he would try to ensure that its use would be tempered by a recognition of the need to preserve the system of management by the superpowers. The other major powers — China, Western Europe and Japan — were excluded from this exercise in harnessing force to the preservation of the *status quo*, since China could only threaten it with nuclear weapons, a self-limiting threat, while being unable, like Western Europe or Japan, to intervene with conventional forces.

Limitations on intervention

The limitations on intervention crucial to stability have been those on the superpowers' use of nuclear or conventional force. Since neither America nor Russia could use force to tilt the balance of power in its favour, they could, in Dr. Kissinger's view, best advance their interests by agreeing that both would retain their mutually-recognized spheres of influence in Western Europe, a process made explicit by the West German acceptance of East Germany's borders in the Federal Republic's treaties with Russia and Poland and in the multilateral CSCE talks, with MFR between the superpowers underlining their acceptance of the postwar division of Europe.

With the strategic arms race taken out of the superpowers' political relations by a political decision, they could underline their interest in securing the balance of nuclear deterrence against destabilizing technical changes with agreements upgrading the "hot line" (October 1971) limiting their offensive and defensive strategic forces (the SALT I package of May 1972) and signing a formal accord on the prevention of nuclear war (June 1973).

The resulting sense of superpower interdependence was emphasized by the Nixon-Brezhnev meetings in Moscow in 1972 and Washington in 1973 and by their bilateral discussion, in the SALT II negotiations, of reductions in Forward Based Systems (FBS) for delivering nuclear weapons on the battlefield. Together with the superpower use of MFR to facilitate reductions they had agreed on in their forces in Europe, FBS levels were seen by the West Europeans as vital to their security, because they symbolized the U.S. guarantee against political pressures from

the U.S.S.R. Yet the United States seems likely to resolve both questions in consultation with its main adversary, Russia, rather than its main ally, Western Europe, while the East Europeans would not be informed of any Russian decisions on force levels. If, then, Dr. Kissinger's pentagonal balance provided a framework for a stability based on a changing, rather than static, international system, he apparently envisaged only changes acceptable to the superpowers. But could such a system gain acceptance by the lesser powers?

Condominium or balance?

Clearly the crucial question in evaluating Dr. Kissinger's five-sided balance was the degree to which it was an accurate description of both the existing balance of military, economic and political power and of the likely threats to stability it would face in the 1970s. Despite its defects to be expected of such an oversimplification of a complex balance, the pentagonal balance has proved to be an accurate descriptive mechanism in the years since 1968. The world has remained militarily bipolar, if economically multipolar. Thus Western Europe has continued to gain in economic importance while remaining militarily dependent, in the event of a resort, on the United States. Dr. Kissinger has obeyed his own injunction, in *Troubled Partnership*, to refrain from tempting to solve the political problems of the Atlantic alliance with military hardware, as in the United States attempt to meet West German concerns over the United States guarantee with a meaningful offer of nuclear sharing, the bilateral Nuclear Force. As the problems of the Atlantic alliance have just been discussed here (Charles Pentland's article in *International Perspectives*, September-October 1973), suffice it to say that Kissinger's Atlantic Charter speech should not be underestimated because overshadowed by the Middle East crisis.

West Europe prime concern

Dr. Kissinger has always, rightly, emphasized that the area of prime concern for the United States must be Western Europe, because the two are so interdependent, but that this very interdependence means that their joint problems can be solved, only managed. Ideally, this would be furthered by European unity, but, like all Americans, Dr. Kissinger tended to assume that Europe will lag behind, rather than against, the United States. The recent Western European disassociation from United States pressures in support of Israel should logically

Interdependence of U.S., U.S.S.R. emphasized by summit talks in Moscow and Washington