

worldview

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NEW PROSPECTS, OLD PROBLEMS

At a press conference on March 21, 1963, President Kennedy spoke of the sizeable efforts that were going into questions of a test-ban treaty. In the course of the interview he said: "I see the possibility in the 1970's of the President of the United States having to face a world in which 15 or 20 or 25 nations may have these weapons. I regard that as the greatest possible danger and hazard."

Not all countries shared the concern expressed by President Kennedy—nor do they now. Nevertheless it appears today that the U.S. and Russia may be closing the gap that prevents agreement on a non-proliferation treaty. If the two great powers can agree, they will assuredly bring pressure on those countries that will be responsive to them. Many smaller countries will need no special persuasion since they have long sung the merits of such a treaty.

Nevertheless some of the major difficulties that have been selected out for extended evaluations in the past have not, in the intervening years, undergone a sea-change into something strange and wonderful; they remain the stubborn, sticky, recalcitrant problems they were then. Consider, for example, France and Germany in the West and China and India in the East.

Under General de Gaulle, France has refused to listen with a sympathetic ear to the two great nuclear powers as they anguished aloud about the dangers of proliferating nuclear weapons systems. Better that, de Gaulle declared, than the double hegemony of U.S. and Russia, neither of which seemed inclined to halt much less cut back their own nuclear stockpiles.

Germany, a major industrial and technological power once again, has been forced to rely upon the declaration of U.S. intentions to shelter it under the umbrella of a nuclear deterrent, intentions which need constantly to be renewed. But the position of Germany grows increasingly unsettling to all Western powers, including Germany.

China, which once suggested a major summit conference to discuss the possibilities of eliminating nuclear weapons, has now plunged successfully into the business of making them. Their success in this venture has evoked exactly those

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concerns and reactions that were anticipated. Since they share a common, difficult and disputed border, the two temporary allies, Russia and China, are reassessing their relative strengths. President Johnson, in Malaysia, issued a statement warning that China's testing of nuclear weapons was dangerous—to China. And he announced that China's leaders "must realize that any nuclear capability they can develop can and will be deterred." Unless the word "deterred" has lost its meaning, that statement represents only a policy of hope, however rational. Having entered the nuclear club, though as a still junior member, China is no more likely than France to attend to the desires of the senior members of that club.

The position of India represents in varying degrees that of a number of other countries. These countries are able to begin producing nuclear

weapons of their own. There are a number of reasons not to, not the least of which is the diversion of scarce and valuable resources from necessary domestic programs. Nor is it certain that the possession of such weapons would ensure greater security. But, and it is as large a problem as Germany's, where is India to look for protection against nuclear blackmail? Can it maintain its neutrality and yet choose between the U.S. and the USSR? Can its security be guaranteed by joint U.S.-USSR agreement? And for how long in a world where national interest still seems more enduring than alliances?

The "non-proliferation" treaty, if it is agreed on, will be welcome. But the major problems that derive from the nuclear weapons systems will still be there. The principal issue is their existence and possible use.

J. F.

in the magazines

The *New Statesman*, in an editorial of October 28—reprinted here in part—drew a number of lessons for the U.S. and others from the New Delhi conference of "neutralists," recently concluded.

"During the Fifties, the non-aligned or neutral nations commanded a good deal of admiration and respect, not all of it sincere, in the West. The spirit of Bandung' or 'the moral influence of the Third World' were a popular ingredient of enlightened commentaries. It is difficult to see much residue of this spirit now. On Monday President Nasser, Mrs. Gandhi and Marshal Tito wound up their 'little summit' of neutralists in New Delhi, and hardly a mouse stirred. Some inverted snobbery in former imperial countries has had time to cool off; perhaps we now realize that equality implies that the Third World is not only no worse, but no better than ourselves. There have certainly been some dents in the optimism which greeted the new nations' political experiments. The neutralist 'Big Three,' we may remember, were once the neutralist Big Five, but Ghana and Indonesia, like Nigeria and Brazil, have mainly discouraging lessons to teach European socialists now.

"These are good reasons for tempering, not abandoning, a genuine enthusiasm for the 'Bandung countries.' But the diplomatic weight of neutralism did not all spring from so pure a source. Like the neutralist posture itself, it was a by-product of the most rigid phase of the Cold War. Sometimes cyn-

ically, sometimes through genuine disgust at ideological crusades, the uncommitted nations found themselves in a position to extract aid from Peter by threatening to open friendlier relations with Paul. Neutralism might be branded as immoral, but that was merely bullying rather than a wheedling way of acknowledging its importance. Those days are over. Western countries have realized that they over-estimated the scale and effectiveness of the aid Russia could give, and the extent to which such aid could be used to dictate foreign policy. Far more significantly, the whole international arena has opened up to a point where the Third World would have to be the Fourth or even Fifth World. Neutralism has suffered the same fate as NATO: obsolescence through success. In Paris or in Moscow, governments might claim that 'we are all neutralists now'—with the hypocrisy which that formula usually entails, but paying the tribute which hypocrisy usually pays. The West can at least now manufacture its own neutralist platitudes.

"Under the circumstances the quality of American policy and leadership becomes more vital than ever. It is useless to take refuge in Yank-go-home counter-isolationism. President Johnson has been at some pains to spell out to the American people that their country is a Pacific power as well as an Atlantic one, and that it will have to play as large a part in the one hemisphere as it has previously done in the other. That much is hardly in dispute. But it