

worldview

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NEITHER WAR NOR PEACE

The crisis in the Middle East exposes starkly the danger of the great conflict that we were beginning to think had been successfully bypassed.

Only a few years ago shrewd and informed political observers said that the United States, after a long period of intense concentration on international affairs, would be able to turn much of its vast energies to domestic problems. Their argument was persuasive. The U. S. and the USSR — the two superpowers — had successfully tested each other's resources and resolves and had arrived at a *modus vivendi* that was at least acceptable.

The testing had been tough. It included, for example, the series of encounters over the status of Berlin, the war in Korea, the decision of the U. S. not to intervene in the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the decision not to support the English-French-Israeli efforts in the Suez crisis the same year. The new understanding between the U. S. and the USSR and the development of new rules tacitly accepted by both powers were, according to this analysis, firmly established by the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Each country had tested the limits of the other and was aware of the boundaries within which it could safely continue to challenge the other.

For nations as powerful as the United States and the USSR foreign affairs will always demand much attention. But in a projected world that is relatively tranquil, where foreign policy is something other than coping with one crisis while preparing for another, America should be able to direct much of its best efforts to domestic problems — to the deep-rooted racism, the poverty amid affluence, the pollution of natural resources and the cancer of urban decay. For a brief period, for a breathing spell, it seemed as if we would have such a world and that America was prepared for severe self-scrutiny and for the necessary and drastic changes such a scrutiny would imply.

But the "minor" irritation in Vietnam festered and became the horrible thing it is today, international conditions became increasingly unpleasant and uncertain, the tentative *détente* between the great powers became more tentative. And now the war between Israel and her Arab neighbors threatens to

SOME THOUGHTS ON
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

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QUENTIN L. QUADE

RESPECT FOR DISSENT

PROLIFERATION:
THE NEED FOR CAREFUL ANALYSIS

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draw the two great powers into a confrontation both would wish to avoid.

Both in Vietnam and in the Middle East the people who must suffer the damage that war inflicts are those people whose countries are engaged in the war. But one of the facts of international politics is that few conflicts between countries – or even within countries – are viewed as isolated events by the major powers. Each area of conflict threatens to become an arena into which they are drawn to test, once again, their strength, their resolve and their principles but also their shibboleths, their untried theories and their uncertain political wisdom.

There are a number of unpleasant ironies in the present situation. Supporters of Administration policy in Vietnam can point out that those who urge U. S. intervention in the Middle East are re-

lying upon the same principles that the Administration claims as the basis for its Vietnam policy. But those who are critical of our Vietnam policy can point out that it is our intense involvement in Vietnam that inhibits strong U. S. action in an area where our commitments are clear and long-standing.

The Administration has said that the U. S. is neutral in the Middle East crisis. Insofar as that is true it is a most unstable stance. If the Soviet Union continues to exploit the very dangerous conditions of the Middle East, the U. S. will soon seem to be given only a Hobson's choice, i.e., not at all. But when, in political affairs, one is faced with a Hobson's choice it is because a succession of previous decisions has brought one to that pass.

J. F.

in the magazines

In a sixteen-page article which appears in the spring issue of *The American Scholar*, Nathan Glazer has surveyed the role of "Student Politics in a Democratic Society." While there will be disagreement with the sociologist's conclusions, his rehearsal of the problems raised for the university, for the student body and for American society in general by the degree and kind of political activity initiated on the campus is a significant contribution to current debate on the subject. Glazer's concluding remarks indicate some of the points raised in his discussion.

"There is unquestionably a tension – there should be a tension – between the university and society. This tension exists in the fact that the university should not take as seriously and immediately as those

actively engaged in society the problems of society. It can look at these problems in historical perspective; it can try to strip these problems of the emotions that invest them; it can try new and strange and even playful alternatives, in thought and in experiment. Thus, I would argue, there is still some virtue in the independence of the university in some measure from the immediate problems of society, although these virtues are not often exploited.

"This independence is threatened from a number of quarters. One threat is from the insistent demand that the university be helpful – the demand from business and government that it offer practical aid. . . . Another threat is from the vocational conception of the university. . . .