

PROSPECT FOR

AMERICA

The problems and opportunities
confronting American democracy—in foreign
policy, in military preparedness,
in education, in social and economic affairs.

THE
ROCKEFELLER PANEL
REPORTS

VI. Elements of a New World

In a world changing rapidly, it is important to discern the next phase as well as to grasp the fundamentals of the present one. In this section of the report, we put down some of the big things that seem to be happening. They set the stage for the problems with which the next phase of foreign policy must deal. They are capable of being affected in their impact and in the speed of their development by deliberate choices of policy.

DECLINE OF THE NATION-STATE

The nation-state as it was conceived in the sixteenth century and as it has existed throughout the modern age is now transforming itself. In this report it has been necessary to talk in terms of nations as if they were still the solid entities, watertight and sovereign, that traditional theory describes. In fact, they have not been that for a long time. The growth of the modern world has seen the interdependency of nations and communities increase to a point where independence, at least in the sense of self-sufficiency, is seriously eroded. If the United States were to be confronted with the necessity of existing apart from the trade of the world, apart from its intellectual and spiritual currents and the support of allied and kindred nations, it would quickly realize that independence can be pushed too far.

The modification of the nation-state has been confused by the fact that the aspirations of peoples all over the globe are today finding expression in the slogan of nationalism. What animates these peoples is a resolve to emerge rapidly and conclusively from the era of colonialism. They are going somewhere, but it is a real question whether they are going where they think they are. Many

of them simply would not possess in any circumstances the prerequisites of self-sufficient nationhood. They certainly do not possess them in a day when even the most firmly established states find many insufficiencies within their own borders and a constant necessity to enlarge the definition of their interests. In a deep way, emerging states seem to recognize the inadequacy of their avowed goal. Even while they affirm their nationalism they grope toward those larger groupings in which alone they can hope to find their needs met.

The new nationalism may thus be a halfway house. It may provide a point in the line of the rapidly evolving development of the former colonial peoples. But it is not a resting place where men can hope to build viable communities for themselves and for their children.

The eating away of the national idea has been brought about by a world-wide economic system the essence of which makes it impossible for a state to find sufficiency within its own borders. It has been brought about also perhaps most dramatically by new developments in weapons and warfare. In classic theory the essence of the state—in addition to economic self-sufficiency—was its defensibility. It comprised a territorial expanse internally pacified and outwardly defended. Order within and a reasonable security against invasion from without: these were the opposite sides of the coin of nationhood. Smaller nations have long had to accommodate their thinking to the fact of vulnerability, but the development of air warfare blurred the significance of borders for large states as well. Even then it was possible in theory to stop the airborne invader over the frontier. The coming of the missile age, and with it the seeming impossibility of keeping the homeland from being penetrated, will complete the process that is making the modern nation an open and exposed, rather than a tightly bounded, territorial unit.

In another way the new weapons have accelerated the erosion of nationalism. The technological skill and financial resources necessary to develop these weapons and to produce suitable delivery systems reinforced the tendency toward a bipolar world—a world, that is, with two superpowers in juxtaposition to each other. Even without atomic weapons, the United States and Russia would no doubt have found themselves thus opposed, with a superiority of power dwarfing other nations. In the nineteenth century,

Toqueville already discerned that outcome. But for the past decade this bipolarity has been linked with the new weaponry, and in that period the two superpowers have as by an irresistible force transformed not only their own nature but the nature of the states and nations grouped around them.

American security is now meaningless apart from the security of the free world. From our point of view, the American territory remains as an inner citadel, but for all practical purposes the United States' defense area is far wider. Within these boundaries of the free world, other nations have kept their integrity and freedom; but their own responsibilities for defense have been transformed. They have been conscious, moreover, of varying degrees of mutual constraints and interdependency.

As for the relations of the countries within the Communist orbit, subjection has been the normal course. Yet it would be a mistake to ignore how the Soviet leadership has been compelled by the forces of nationalism and self-determination to grant varying degrees of autonomy. The satellite countries present something less than a uniform subjection. Khrushchev's hints (in Leipzig, March 7, 1959) of a new commonwealth structure for the Soviet bloc deserve attention.

If the bipolarity of the past decade diminishes significantly, the relations between states will once again alter. But the effects of recent historical experience will not be lost. The nations will still find themselves linked in regional groupings of various sizes and varying degrees of integration. It will be difficult for them to affirm the kind of independence that they possessed, at least in theory, up to the division of world power between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The combinations that will then become possible are suggested by the richness of international life that has grown up, to some extent unnoticed, in the past decade and a half. Nations have not only been finding new affinities within the overarching structure of the two great superpowers; they have also been working out new relationships as a consequence of economic and technological forces. The nation-state in its existing form has not permitted certain vital functions to be adequately or efficiently fulfilled. Markets have not proved large enough. Sources of raw materials and credit have not been organized on a sufficiently broad or stable base. Accordingly, we have seen developing a wide

variety of institutions reaching across the old borderlines. Sovereignty has been relaxed in specific fields, but experience is proving that by voluntary pooling of efforts for certain ends, the nations are not diminished in any essential way, but rather gain an enhancement of what they have. Real power is increased as the meaning of sovereignty is reinterpreted.

Among the institutions that have been thus created are cooperative undertakings for specific, limited purposes, such as the European Coal and Steel Community, Euratom, the European Common Market, and the beginning of comparable arrangements elsewhere, as in Central America; arrangements to stabilize price and distribution of certain commodities; and finally, monetary and credit arrangements as in the European Payments Union, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Monetary Fund. Nor should it be overlooked that, outside of governments, the modern corporation is carrying on a considerable part of the world's economic activities, inevitably assuming functions that cut across boundaries, and playing an important though little-noticed role in internationalizing the economic substructure.

Discernible in many areas is a tendency for nations to involve some parts of themselves in different groupings or associations. Thus the Western European countries have for purposes of defense been part of an Atlantic community, while for economic purposes they have been part of a European community. Certain of these countries have further sliced off specific economic functions—such as the production of coal and steel or the development of atomic energy—forming from the segments new communities, that do not engage the entire nation-state. These new communities, carved out of the existing sovereignties, have their own capitals, their own civil services. Such developments are bound to increase. We are on the threshold of what will undoubtedly be a vast and many-sided institutional growth. What we have seen already is enough to suggest that the nation-state, as traditionally conceived, is no longer the sole possible unit of political power.

In general, it may be said that the less complex social structures tend to form themselves into groupings that maintain something of the character of traditional alliances—though even here with an interdependence born of twentieth-century needs—while the mature social and political organisms of the Western world tend

to group themselves by functions, with overlappings and intermixtures that are often striking in their ingenuity.

These developments within the nation-state system offer diplomacy in the second half of the twentieth century tools of great flexibility and promise to work with. Americans have been traditionally concerned with community building—though too often they have proceeded uncritically on the assumption that the example of their own union can be duplicated in entirely different conditions. They have now a rich field in which to test their experience.

ARMS AND DIPLOMACY

The shape of foreign policy has been profoundly affected by the developments in weaponry brought in with the atomic bomb and now the missile age. In a previous passage we have indicated the way in which these new weapons have heightened the tendency toward bipolarity, concentrating great power in the two nations that have been able to develop them to their fullest extent. We have indicated also how the relationships of other countries to these great powers have been affected; how, indeed, the very nature of their national existence has been altered.

There are other major ways in which the new arms have affected foreign policy. The support that these arms and our over-all military strength have brought to our diplomatic objectives scarcely needs to be stressed. The atomic bomb, while it was a United States monopoly, provided a shelter beneath which the free world could organize for defense; through dangerous years it afforded an effective counterpoise against the threat of Soviet manpower. With the monopoly broken, a new and delicate equilibrium—"the balance of terror"—has come into being. The nations have, as a result, been preserved from general war through a decade and a half despite the persistence of aggressive Soviet designs.

In subtle ways, through the same decade and a half, the nature of these new weapons has affected the atmosphere and conditions of diplomacy. The extraordinary destructiveness of these weapons has made it increasingly difficult to translate their force into a practical instrument of policy. The greatest Communist gains, including the communization of China, were achieved in the immediate postwar period when the United States possessed a mo-

nopoly of these weapons and therefore, in theory, a vast superiority of power. That power was not effectively converted into pressure in support of diplomatic aims. In the case of the United States, even when it had monopoly of the atom bomb, public opinion imposed severe restrictions upon its use. As a deterrent to all-out war, massive retaliation may well be a sound concept; but the futility of the weapons makes the retaliatory threat less credible when it is applied to situations of "nibbling," of local aggression or subversion. The very lack of credibility may tempt the other side to move at a lower level of force, thus creating a situation in which we feel compelled to respond with equal or greater force.

Atomic weapons and the military doctrine to which they gave rise can cause new difficulties in maintaining our alliances. These weapons have been recognized by all countries concerned as providing an essential underpinning for NATO. Yet the inequality of power resulting from the fact that they have been in the possession of two nations of the alliance and not of others has inevitably caused strains and has required special care to maintain mutual understanding and confidence. While the bomb was a United States monopoly, Europeans tended to fear lest the United States use it too readily; when Russia broke the monopoly, the fears were expressed lest the United States be slow to use it in case of aggression against them for fear of exposing its own shores to Soviet atomic power. The uneasiness generated among Europeans by these separate fears—each understandable in the particular circumstances—has tended to work against the development of Atlantic unity.

The overhanging presence of atomic weapons has, besides, tended to make change and adjustment in the international order difficult to effectuate. The threat of a nuclear holocaust has made the use of force subject to great risks. This might conceivably be a gain if, with force inhibited, diplomacy were able to take charge. But with the balance so precarious and the results of upsetting it so potentially catastrophic, diplomacy, too, becomes hesitant. At key points, such as Korea and Berlin, we have witnessed what has been called "a slowing down of history." In a world where everything else is speeded up and underlying social and economic developments move at an unprecedented rate, these situations remain fixed.