

'Growing Introversion'.

Questions Trouble Rusk

By Chalmers M. Roberts

DEAN RUSK is not a man to show his feelings in public but he was a troubled Secretary of State yesterday as he left the Senate Caucus Room.

There he had run into an almost solid front of what a perceptive British observer, Alastair Buchan, recently described as "the growing introversion of America." Rusk did his manful best to defend this Nation's world-wide commitments and to deny that the United States considers itself "the world's policeman" trying to "establish a Pax Americana."

But Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.) and his fellow members of the Senate Preparedness subcommittee gave Rusk little comfort. They carped about American over-extension in commitments; potential manpower shortages, the gold drain and the failure of allies to pay their share in terms of men, and diplomatic support both in Europe and Asia.

The questioning was mostly desultory and Rusk fobbed off the senators with generalizations. The issue was never really joined because politeness was the order of the day and members were limited to 10-minute interrogations.

But the intent was clear and ominous from the Administration's point of view. It is true that Rusk already had run into the same thinking in appearances before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and at some House hearings as well. Yesterday, however, the front of opposition seemed more total than ever, encompassing those who are both doves and hawks on Vietnam.

Stennis left no doubt as



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to what he was about. He let in the television cameras, he said the hearings could be historic and he told newsmen he intends to call Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara after a second Rusk appearance next Tuesday.

"The Congress needs and must have all of the facts," said the soft-spoken Stennis in his most determined tone. "We cannot be satisfied with rosy generalizations to the effect that we are fully prepared to meet all of our treaty commitments throughout the world."

STENNIS'S VIEW is that "we must guard against our

commitment that would drain away our manpower and resources and thus leave us weakened and unable to protect ourselves."

None of his seven fellow Senators, Democrat or Republican, took issue with Stennis. Questions from most of them, in fact, reinforced his approach.

None suggested pulling out of Vietnam; in fact, this subcommittee is as hawkish as any in Congress—or more so. None suggested pulling out of NATO or any other commitment but just about everybody wanted the allies to do more than they are doing in Europe as well as to support the war in Vietnam in a way they are not now doing.

In short, senatorial impatience is showing with increasing obviousness. So far it has no real leader and no clear program. It simply wants the United States to do less and, in some but not all cases, to do more at

home instead.

Because the mood is inchoate and perhaps incoherent makes it no less dangerous to the Administration. Rusk's response that President Johnson's policies are simply in the tradition of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy is no answer and the Senators yesterday clearly did not consider it so.

Nor is it an answer for the President to throw open his Cabinet meeting, as he did later in the day, to a mass of generalizations by Rusk and McNamara illuminated by charts and graphs. Indeed, if the Cabinet did spend an hour of the valuable time of the busiest men in Washington listening to the generalizations subsequently submitted to the press, the country had better begin to worry.

No one has yet found a better term for the new mood than Buchan's "growing introversion of America." It clearly is not a return to the isolationism of the years between the two world wars. What it will turn out to be quite probably can be strongly influenced by this Administration.

Stennis's subcommittee, despite the polite words yesterday including encomiums for Rusk personally, is trying to provide the challenge. So far the response has been limited to replaying the record dating back to 1945. That record may look good in the history books but it simply does not satisfy for today and above all for tomorrow.