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Heine—and U.S. Strategy

By C. L. Sulzberger

PARIS — Heinrich Heine, better known for poems than prophecies, wrote a strange forecast in 1842, six years before the Communist Manifesto was published and three-quarters of a century before Lenin's revolution seized Russia.

"Communism is the secret name of the dread antagonist," said Heine, adding: "Wild, gloomy times are roaring toward us, and a prophet wishing to write a new apocalypse would have to invent entirely new beasts. . . . The future smells of Russian leather, blood, Godlessness, and many whippings."

This sounds like a Manichean vision of a pre-Marxian Foster Dulles. Nevertheless, there is a weird streak of precision in Heine's words. For certainly today the future smells strongly of Russian power pervading even the pleasant aura of détente.

The plain fact of the matter is that the U.S.S.R. is steadily increasing its arms manufacture, the quality of its weapons, and improving the strength of its military forces—ground, air and sea. One can get an excellent indication of the Soviet ordnance industry simply by examining the equipment of Moscow's clients during last autumn's Arab-Israeli war.

Syria alone had 2,350 tanks. This compares with 800 in the French Army today—and yet there are only seven million Syrians as against 51 million Frenchmen. Comparable figures apply to Egypt, which had a greater store of arms than Syria but also a much larger population. The U.S.S.R. has now established an armaments industry so colossal that it can continue replacing losses of such matériel.

The United States armaments indus-

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try suffers in comparison. The huge Lockheed organization, on which American aerospace effort draws heavily, teeters between bankruptcy and foreign sale. Petroleum shortages slow down automobile production, a main source for armored equipment.

The Russians sent their Arab clients arms previously tested in Vietnam where, because Communist forces were subjected to steady American hammering from the air, anti-aircraft weapons featured. The United States, which had total air superiority in Vietnam and assumed Israel would have a comparable edge in the Middle East, was short on anti-aircraft defensive aid in that theater.

The June 2, 1973, accord signed by Messrs. Nixon and Brezhnev implicitly forswore any intention of gaining a unilateral advantage by one or the other superpower and promised measures preventing accidental outbreak of nuclear war. Certainly the spirit of this accord was violated by Russia in the Middle East and the result was the famous American October alert of all its forces.

Looking back on recent history, one can see that Moscow has steadily gained in the superpower race. The strategic result of Israel's Six-Day War was permanent entry into the Mediterranean of a Soviet fleet. In 1968 the Russians occupied Czechoslovakia with only mild Western demurrers, reasserting its might in Eastern Europe. In 1971 Soviet-backed India smashed United States-allied Pakistan.

The United States has gradually lost in the superpower rivalry. One result

has been a loosening of bonds with its NATO allies where a *sauve qui peut* mood is developing.

The United States can never use conventional forces in any showdown confrontation with the U.S.S.R., which has over ten times as many divisions. Russia is also ahead in space weapons, such as the fractional orbital bomb system. The only basic asset left to America is its atomic-missile complex, provided this is maintained on the level of "sufficiency" called for.

But to deter, a country must not only have a minimal number of weapons but must prepare to use them effectively. This is the obvious reason for the shift in strategy implied in Defense Secretary Schlesinger's statement Jan. 10. He said henceforth some of our missiles would be aimed at Soviet military targets instead of only at cities.

No Moscow Government would start a nuclear war with America, knowing its population centers were targets for revenge—unless such a Government was confident it could first wipe out virtually all United States missiles, on land or under the seas.

Washington aimed its ICBM's only at Soviet military targets during the nineteen-sixties when it knew it had a big edge and could hit back against any attack without blackmailing cities. Now it heems less confident. By resumed aiming at Soviet silos today it implies another strategic alternative—employing the first nuclear strike in any theoretical war.

There would be no sense in pointing missiles at an enemy's silos to destroy them *after* they had been emptied—after their ICBM's, formerly inside, were already whizzing toward the United States.