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SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PROBLEMS OF OUR TIMES — PART I



THE U.S. ROLE IN THE WORLD

By Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, we are at the beginning of a new year, a new session of Congress, and a new administration. It is appropriate that all of us give renewed thought to the problems which confront our country and to the courses of action which we can take. Each of us can make a contribution to understanding. Each of us has the responsibility to do so.

It has been pointed out to us by our leaders that our country has enjoyed great economic gains over the past several years. Incomes are higher. More people are working. Despite the demands of war, we are also spending large sums on education, health, housing and many other social programs. We have made great strides also in removing the last vestiges of legalized segregation and discrimination and in developing positive guarantees of equal treatment under law to all people. We are asked to look to these and many other signs with pride, as marks of progress.

Yet despite these signs, we find our-

selves a troubled Nation. The elections of last year revealed the depths of discontent. Those leaders promising change were the ones who generated enthusiasm. The final choices presented in November made few happy, and the leader finally chosen has the mandate, not of Heaven, but of only a precarious, earthly plurality, far from a majority of the voters, or the people.

The new administration must seek to quell the discontent of the Nation as a matter of political survival if for no other reason. But discontent can sometimes be tempered, or at least made manageable, without attacking basic problems. It is my thesis that such will be the course of this administration. And it is my purpose to focus our attention on the basic problems confronting us, not on making the discontent of our times manageable through the illusion of progress or change.

It is quite obvious that in the forefront of the causes of our discontent is the war in Vietnam. It makes very few people