

THE "PACIFIC DOCTRINE": US SECURITY POLICIES IN ASIA
AFTER VIETNAM

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On December 7, 1975, upon his return from a journey to China, Indonesia and the Philippines, President Gerald Ford announced a "Pacific Doctrine", the first and principal point of which is that "American strength is basic to any stable balance of power in the Pacific". The implementation of this "Pacific Doctrine" premise in the months ahead means essentially a commitment to three distinctive American policy positions.

- First, there is a US acceptance of an increasing international, including Soviet involvement, in Asia's international relations, and a concomitant adoption of a more sympathetic flexibility toward attempts by Asian, particularly Southeast Asian, nations in working out their own diplomatic and national security systems.
- Secondly, and without taking anything away from the first position, the US is signalling its commitment to an island based strategic parameter, well off but running the whole length of the East Asian mainland, from Japan through Indonesia, up to and including Australia and New Zealand, thus continuing to make of the Pacific Ocean an "American lake".
- Thirdly, there is the development of a necessary military and logistical support system to bolster the first two policy positions, involving not just a retention

of military bases and necessary contingents of men and material, but also a further deployment of ever more sophisticated monitoring and surveillance systems, located in and strategically linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This inter-Ocean intelligence network, as it were, hems the Asian mainland in, permitting the US to be of Asia, while not actually being in it, or being in it only to a minimal "low profile" degree.

Effects of Detente

As to the first policy position, it involves the simultaneous application of big power "detente", the relative permeability of the Asian region to competitive influences and penetration by the major powers, and, in turn, a readiness of the Asian powers to "internationalize" in growing but controlled measure their economic development and to broaden the range of their diplomatic contacts. Whatever the degree of Sino-Soviet hostility in the years ahead, or the vicissitudes of the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) between the US and Russia, it is seen as crucial to US policy aims in Asia, as well as to the "internationalization" of Asia itself, that Washington as long as possible remain in an actual or potential posture of cordiality toward Peking and Moscow. American policy makers appear to believe that without the US in a modulating or balancing role in a global sense, it would be far more difficult for the Asian nations themselves, especially those in a former or continuing semiclientage position toward the US like the Philippines, to develop greater independence in their own foreign policies. Apart from the advantages which President Gerald Ford, as an announced candidate for re-

election to the US Presidency derived from his visit to China in early December, 1975, that journey (and others like it), whatever critics may say about it as a "non-event", remain nevertheless highly desirable in the context of the new US perspective of itself.

Washington as "balancer" particularly facilitates the establishment or improvement of diplomatic relations with the governments of the USSR, of its East European satellites, as well as of People's China, by Asian governments previously reluctant to do so. One who doubts this should ask whether the mutual diplomatic recognition between the People's Republic of China and the Philippines, and between China and Thailand, both in 1975, the Soviet agreement to provide assistance to Indonesia's second five year national development plan, the slowly improving pattern of Soviet and Chinese relations with Japan, and even the recent breakdown in some of the rigidities of South Korea's "Cold War" diplomacy in respect of East European states (a prelude, perhaps to improved relations with the USSR) could have occurred, when they did, without detente, and its corollary of the Nixon-Kissinger initiatives in improving relations with China.

But there is another side to the coin. It may be that Kissinger's foreign policy design is too "romantic", and that the global power balance appears to be moving steadily in the Soviets' favor anyhow, as one critic, a former US Assistant Secretary of Defense, has alleged¹⁾. Certainly the current close Soviet relationship with Hanoi, particularly in the context of the latter's pressures on and ill concealed hostility toward the new Communist regime in Cambodia, and Hanoi's stepped up aid to the Thai Communist guerillas, must raise disturbing questions about

the implications of the growing Soviet political presence in Asia, a presence backed, moreover, by frequent new displays of Russian naval might in adjacent waters. In much of Southeast Asia, however, the loosening effects of detente on regional diplomatic relations are likely to continue to be felt, at least in the foreseeable future, although, again, the apparant scale of Soviet current strategic aspirations and other Soviet moves in the Asian region justifiably fill observers with some foreboding, particularly those who were persuaded of a generally more prudent Soviet policy toward the Third since Krushev's fall from power²⁾.

Still, at this juncture, there is nevertheless a certain heady effervescence for most of the Asian nations in the thought that at least five world economic and/or political power blocs, the US, USSR, People's China, the European Economic Community and Japan, have a growing stake in their commodity production and industrial development. The disaster of the Vietnam involvement is not only an object lesson for the US, but it is hoped by those in Asia who believe in a possible post-Krushev Soviet sobriety in dealing with the Third World, also for the USSR, while the victory of Vietnamese Communism, being also a victory for a particular kind of Vietnamese nationalism, has also accentuated the worth of nationalist self confidence among Vietnam's neighbors generally, even if they are apprehensive about Hanoi's future intentions. From Rawalpindi to Bangkok, Manila and Djakarta, there is now redoubled emphasis in official policy pronouncements about the significance of "national self reliance", and on the discovery of the means to strengthen it. More than for other parts of the world, perhaps, for Asia US detente

policies and withdrawal from Vietnam are national extensions of each other, signalling belated recognition of the need for an accomodation of both former global antagonists and of a new Asian self reliance³⁾.

This Asian self reliance is presently in search of its own format of individual national and collective security. Paradoxically for most nations of the region, however, this search is structured by a formal or informal dependence on one or more of the big powers, while, at the same time, these nations insist on a maximum degree of "non alignment", "independence", or even "neutralization" as policy ideals. An example would be the Indo-Soviet treaty of August, 1971, which, presumably, arose in a, for New Delhi pressing set of circumstances (i.e. the accelerating crisis in what was to become Bangladesh) demanding strategic assurances, while, at the same time, as Indian commentators in particular have emphasized, embodying explicit recognition in the text of the treaty of India's continuing policy of "non-alignment" and precluding formation of alliances directed against the other party⁴⁾. Since November, 1971, with the so-called Kuala Lumpur Declaration, members of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian nations founded in 1967) the major non-Communist Southeast Asian nations have agreed to exert their necessary efforts in making their region into a zone of "peace, freedom and neutrality", free from the interference of any outside powers. Yet, this has in no way appeared to interfere with the desires of some ASEAN members not only to have foreign forces and/or military facilities on their soil, and to invite increased foreign military assistance, but also to keep as many of the major powers in their area as possible. Discussions have been underway for some time

now between the Philippine and US governments in order, as Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos has put it, to give "full control" over the bases operated by the US military in the country to the Manila government, and to end their condition as de facto foreign enclaves on Philippine soil⁵⁾. The Five Power Commonwealth Defence agreement (involving Malaysia, Singapore, the UK, Australia and New Zealand) has been in an almost continuous process of revision and "phasing out" in the past six years. Yet, somehow, the British, Australian and New Zealand defense commitments to Malaysia-Singapore have never, in principle, been altogether disavowed. Residual British, Australian and New Zealand military, for varying duration, remain stationed in Malaysia-Singapore, and joint naval exercises continue as well.

Non-alignment or "independence" in foreign policy has been an Indonesian foreign policy principle also since the Republic officially attained its independence at the close of 1949. Yet, the Ford administration's decision in 1975 to seek more than double US military grants and credits for Indonesia during the 1976 fiscal year (from US \$ 20 million in 1975, to more than \$ 42.5 million in 1976) was greeted with as much warmth of approval in the Indonesian press, as President Ford's reported assurance to Indonesian President Suharto, during the latter's July, 1975, visit to the US, that "the American setbacks in Indochina have served to redouble US interest in the stability of South-east Asia" and to continue an "active US role in the region"⁶⁾.

"My government believes", Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Rajaratnam declared at the eighth ASEAN ministerial conference last May, "that for us small countries the more big

powers are around in this area the better for us because our options are bigger"⁷⁾.

Continuing US Presence

Sometimes, in their apparent anxiety to keep the US as a big power presence in an area where the USSR and China now seem to be looming so much larger than before in the region's security calculations, Asian opinion makers take comfort from ingenious legal formulations. Bangkok's leading English language daily, for example, taking note of the recent decision of the SEATO governments in September, 1975 to "phase" out the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization over a two year period, observed that this phasing out might not be altogether in Thailand's best interests after all. "While we are putting away the SEATO shield", the daily editorialized, "in a show of our good will towards our neighbors, the North Vietnamese continue to have the full backing of Soviet Russia for their designs to take over all of Indochina". Hence, the daily continued, it was "encouraging" to know that the Thailand government while "scrapping" SEATO "is not going to tear up the Manila treaty which gave rise to SEATO"⁸⁾.

The reference is to the "Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty" originally signed at Manila on September 8, 1954, by Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the US; Pakistan subsequently left the organization after the Bangladesh crisis, and France has become inactive. The treaty provides that the parties consider an attack on any one of them as endangering the "peace and safety" of the others (the US,

in a separate "understanding", declared that this applied only to "Communist aggression" but would "consult" in the event of other kinds of attack⁹⁾. True, nothing in the treaty compels the signatories to set up a SEATO organization to be sure; yet without such an organization the heart of the Manila treaty is likely to be gone, unless substitute structures of cooperation and consultation are found. It is, perhaps, characteristic of current security perceptions in Asian capitals that even the remaining shell of the Manila treaty, even without the formal SEATO organization, like the remaining shell of the Five Power Commonwealth Defence Agreement, seem to offer at least some "in-offensive" but necessary assurance of protection. "Our continuing stake in the stability and security of Southeast Asia", as President Gerald Ford put it in his December 7, 1975, "Pacific Doctrine" formulation, may well be served by this same "low profile" commitment.

This search by Asian nations for a new security format that, to a degree, makes use of big power protection, is predicated on the assumption by Asian nations concerned that despite occasional bellicose rhetoric the Big Powers themselves realize the need for their protective participation and are willing to accommodate each other in the process. Japan affords an illustration.

Early in 1976 an intergovernmental committee, composed of ranking military from both countries, will begin providing increased coordination of Japanese and US security programs. President Ford's agreement with Japanese Premier Miki last August, that the peace and security of the Republic of Korea is essential to the preservation of such peace and security in the rest of East Asia, "including Japan", structures explicit and interlocking US de-

fense commitments in Northern Asia, both on and off the Asian mainland. In his "Pacific Doctrine" address, President Ford reiterated that "partnership with Japan" is "a pillar of our strategy". The Japanese are well aware, however, of the irony that this dependent arrangement renders their nation less, but not a great deal less, sensitive to competitive big power reaction than if Japan had decided, henceforth, to take its own defence more fully in hand and become militarily more "self reliant" in keeping with its status as an economic giant. The difference is that Japan's security arrangements with the US remain relatively more acceptable to the USSR and China, provided Japan's military establishment does not go much beyond, say, 1% or 2% of its Gross National Product (in 1974 it was 0,8% of its GNP, or nearly \$4 billion) than if the spectre of Japanese militarism were raised again with significant expansion of its armed forces. In other words, Japan's strategic and security posture is based on an implicit big power accomodation of the US protective role, and on Japan's own military weakness, an arrangement which finds big power perceptions in remarkable accord with the tenor of Japan's domestic politics where "cold war diplomatic issues" have more easily led to "political disaster" for the government than in other countries¹⁰⁾.

Asian states, then, in their search for a new security format, are, rightly or wrongly, counting on some measure of big power mutual forbearance. Commenting on the establishment of Sino-Thai diplomatic relations in July, 1975, Singapore's leading daily editorialized that "China is prepared, for the time being, to accept a continued American military presence in the region, even as Thai students are demonstrating for its accelerated with-

drawal"¹¹⁾. Indonesia's able Foreign Minister Adam Malik, in an address in San Francisco, in September, 1975, noted that Vietnam had demonstrated that intervention in Asian affairs could be costly to a big power, and that "this realization should persuade the major powers to see the wisdom of a commonly agreed posture of greater restraint in their relationships with Southeast Asia"¹²⁾.

How far the Asian nations can count on big power mutual "restraint" is, of course, hardly predictable. But for the moment, at least, certainly China appears to see advantages in an American military presence in the region. Indeed, in the calculations of some of her neighbors, China may well have some cause for concern over the Communist ascendancy and unification of Vietnam, since the Chinese "now have on their border an important Communist state which has for the past 15 years been on terms of equal friendship with themselves and the Soviet Union", as one Bangkok daily has put it¹³⁾. At the same time, both China and the USSR utilize the USA as a convenient whipping boy in their own policy rhetoric, accusing each other of endorsing, or at least permitting, the continued machinations of Western "imperialism" in Asia through the remaining US military facilities and bases in the region. While President Ford declared that the "normalization" of US relations with China is one of the premises of his "Pacific Doctrine", the question must arise as to whether a certain limited degree of Sino-US animosity is therefore not in the interests of the US, in that it assists in preserving a necessary independence in America's position as a global "balancer".

In their battle of mutual verbal accusations, which has the curious effect of making the often analyzed Sino

Soviet dispute sometimes seem to appear in Asia as one of the rituals of the big power mutual accomodation process, the Soviets continue to underscore the presumed reasonableness of their by now more than five year old suggestion that a new collective security system be developed for Asia. This proposal, over the years, has been gradually fleshed out so as to include concepts of mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, avoidance of the use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of disputes. These concepts, Soviet commentators now assert, are in keeping with the agreements of the recent Helsinki conference, and, allegedly, only "Peking's great-power hegemonic policy" is adversely affected by these Soviet proposals "as a red rag does a bull"¹⁴).

Be that as it may (and in her diplomatic assurances to a number of her neighbor states in recent years People's China herself has stressed commitment, among others, to non-interference in the internal affairs of others), Asian powers, from Japan to Indonesia and Westwards, also consider that in the interests of the necessary big power accomodation upon which the security strategies of the Asian nations heavily depend, a projection of a relatively pliable, non-aggressive, image is certainly essential. As one of Indonesia's top military figures, General Soemitro, former head of his government's chief national security agency (the "Command for the Restoration of Security and Order" or Kopkamtib) has put it, Indonesia's doctrine of ketahanan nasional or national resilience, involves, among others, a "non-belligerent attitude" and an "inward looking orientation" in the development of public policies, even as good relations are maintained with other countries¹⁵).

Japanese defense establishment spokesmen see the problem in a similar way. In a recent interview the Director of Japan's Self Defense Agency, Michita Sakata, declared that his country's "best security" lay in "for us not to cause war", and that "stabilized national living" would be the best guarantee against a revolt by domestic "anti-establishment" forces which might provoke, in turn, an "indirect aggression" by an outside power¹⁶⁾.

This "stick to your own knitting" and "don't make anybody mad" philosophy, finds a number of Asian countries, nevertheless, already confronting revolts at various levels of seriousness by "anti-establishment forces" with outside powers are abetting already by their "indirect aggression", if claims of some of the victimized countries can be believed. Specifically, these are the local Communist guerilla insurgencies, rooted in some cases in anti-Japanese resistance movements during World War II, but continuing to this day in a geographic arc that ranges from Northern Burma to the Southern Philippines. And, whether in Burma or the Philippines, the proposition that China over the years has aided these insurgencies with trained agents, weapons, and propaganda seems well established¹⁷⁾.

In Thailand, there are more than 5,000 Communist insurgents, assisted by North Vietnamese military and by supply networks stretched across Laos, and operating in the Northeast and Northern parts of the country. Meanwhile, in Southern Thailand, near the Malaysian frontier, a more complex insurgent problem (involving Muslim secessionist rebels, mere bandits and terrorists, as well as Communists) confronts both the Thai and Malaysian governments.

In recent months top Thai military (perhaps the major

hidden factor in Thai politics today) have repeatedly voiced their alarm over the intensifying Communist guerilla insurgency in the country. Thai Defense Minister, Major General Praman Adireksan, in expressing his "serious concern" over stepped up Communist activity in his country, also reflected the Thai military's frustration generally in the context of present government caution not to move too forcefully against the rebels and their suspected sympathizers when he said that "The government cannot do anything, much less take drastic action, because it would be criticized for suppressing the people; but no one says a word when the government's soldiers are harmed" by the Communists. Praman added that while both the CIA and the KGB were attempting to manipulate events in the country, "we see that the people are not at all worried about the KGB which is the more active of the two". Earlier, the newly appointed commander in chief of the Thai Army, General Bunchai Bamrunghong, had already put on the record his own serious concern over the accelerating momentum of Communist insurgent "armies" operating in "sensitive areas all over the country", using "highly sophisticated weapons" and "getting foreign support". By early November, 1975, Thailand's National Security Council had sent a set of policy guidelines to the government of prime minister Kukrit Pramoj, emphasizing the need to develop domestic stability and giving top priority to the suppression of terrorists and insurgents. The guidelines noted the importance of developing a "national ideology" so as to enhance the identification between people and their political institutions¹⁸⁾.

Problems of Insurgency

Whether such efforts at "nation building" are likely to be effective in Thailand (or, for that matter, elsewhere in Asia where promotion of "national resiliency" has now become a prime policy concern) remains, of course, to be seen. US government sources meanwhile reported in August, 1975 that according to their senior analysts various Asian governments, and particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, today had little confidence that Thailand would, in fact, have the ability to resist local insurgents once the Communists had succeeded in consolidating their control throughout North and South Vietnam. Some other US officials, to be sure, did not share this alleged pessimism, but by October, 1975, Asia's leading political and economic affairs weekly reported that "The contingency planning has already started against the fall of Asia's' dominoes. Thailand would probably cave in without much of a struggle before a determined shove by Hanoi-led guerillas, Indonesian military observers believe".¹⁹⁾

Neither Thailand, nor for that matter any other Asian country, is in imminent danger of collapse by virtue of a sustained Communist insurgency. But American intelligence analysts, at present, appear to be particularly concerned about the high level of support of North Vietnam, including party cadres, military advisers, and "volunteers" and weapons, moving across Laotian territory, and being given to the Thai Communist insurgents. This support, in light of Hanoi's evidently close relationship with Moscow, has seemed particularly ominous to those observers who hoped for a possibly "restraining" Soviet influence in a unified Communist Vietnam, flushed with victory in its own long

"people's war".

Moreover, whether one turns to India, where, the New Delhi government alleges, Naga and Mizo secessionist rebels in the Northeast Frontier region have been receiving training in and weapons from People's China, or to Malaysia, where Maoist oriented, local, Chinese Communist insurgents have increasingly added urban terrorism to their long standing rural "people's war" against the government, or to half a dozen other Asian states, domestic stability is in various degrees - and sometimes quite seriously - impaired by a Communist insurgent or terrorist problem. Big power accommodation in Asia evidently means also, then, some accommodation of these insurgencies, in the sense that limited support for either side in the fighting is allowed (i.e. with the US supplying equipment to the government side, and People's China or Hanoi providing training, arms, and propaganda support to the insurgents), while neither the big powers, nor the insurgents and their government opponents, are pressing for a short term or all out victory.

In the security calculations of the Asian states today, therefore, the problem of domestic insurgency is a serious (and in the case of Thailand rapidly becoming ever more serious) but not yet a critical factor that has become sine qua non to all other policy planning. Indeed, in the Philippines a serious, secessionist Muslim rebellion in the Southern islands, where some insurgents have been widely suspected of receiving monetary assistance and supplies from Libya and other Arab states, and where Maoist guerillas have also been active, appears to have been contained through conciliatory and economic development oriented policies of the Marcos government. Still, as Malaysia's

Home Affairs Minister Tan Sri Ghazali has pointed out, while accomodation among the big powers encourages mutual restraint among them (a restraint in turn essential to the Asian nations' own strategic calculations at present, as has been noted above - vdK), "such restraints are purely on their terms" and "not necessarily favorable" to the Asian countries concerned²⁰). Rather, as Ghazali puts it, the element of "great power collusion" begins to obtrude. Just so, but it appears to be a price that the Asian countries may have to pay.

For to ask: is the current big power posture of "mutual restraint" in dealing with the decades long problem of Asian insurgency necessarily to the interest of the Asian countries involved, is rather profitless unless meaningful alternative conditions can be offered. And in the post-Vietnam war era of Asia's political and diplomatic relations, persistent foreign backed struggles between insurgents and their "establishment" opponents appear likely to remain a fact of life for quite some time to come. There is, to be sure, no denying the interlocking of the potential international danger as well as the debilitating effects on the Asian countries concerned, of the persistent insurgent problem. Bangladesh, already ravaged by war, natural disaster, disease, and poverty, is a case in point.

The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975, and the "counter coup" of the following November 4, have significant ramifications for Sino-Soviet rivalry in South Asia, not least because of the prominence of avowed pro-Moscow and pro-Peking parties and armed gangs in the country. The Rahman regime had had, from the start, the official endorsement of the pro-Soviet wing of Bangladesh Communism, while pro-Peking groups exploited the regime's

allegedly one sided foreign policy orientation toward India and the USSR. The end of the Rahman government brought in little over two weeks also official Chinese diplomatic recognition (August 31), after Peking, anxious to develop new tactical openings in South Asia, during the preceding year had already pressed advantageous trade negotiations on the Dacca government²¹). The approval of Peking and Bangladesh's pro-Chinese political factions for the now overthrown President Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed, Mujib's original successor after the August 15 coup, was not because he held notably pro-Chinese views (Mushtaq, rather, had the reputation of being mildly pro-American), but because his rise seemed to herald a policy less dependent on India and her Russian ally. The November 4, 1975, "counter coup", and Mushtaq's overthrow (for reasons still not clear), and the emergence of the "majors" regime of A. Muhammad Sayem and General Ziaru Rahman, suggest no alteration in the new Bangladesh posture of greater warmth toward the US as well as China, and a corresponding coolness toward Delhi and Moscow. The picture is obscured, however, by the operations of private terrorist and guerilla groups, some of which had assumed Maoist revolutionary principles during Mujibur's administration but whose present attitude is not clear. In any event, the dynamics of domestic politics in Bangladesh since its 1971 independence have tended to sharpen as well as reflect big power competition for influence in South Asia, on terms that can hardly be advantageous to the region itself. How much "non-alignment" or "independence", let alone "neutralization", as a regional Asian policy ideal, whether in the Indian Ocean area, or among the ASEAN states, are going to be worth under these conditions can only be speculated upon.

New US Defence line in the Pacific

In the meantime, US military planning is going forward with the development of a defence parameter which ranges from Korea and Japan, to Australia and New Zealand, and which protects Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, but which excludes Malaysia, Singapore, and, depending on her future political course, also Thailand²²⁾. The US military manpower commitment to this new defense line will be about 180,000 men, 850 combat aircraft and 60 combat ships. Some 55,000 US military personnel will remain in Japan and Okinawa, 45,000 in Korea, 20,000 in the Philippines, 15,000 in Guam, 5,000 in Taiwan, and 40,000 in the US Navy's Seventh Fleet. With the previously noted doubling of US military assistance to the Indonesians, the US Military Assistance Advisory Group in Djakarta no doubt will grow. Even in areas where official policy is to accentuate the removal of uniformed US military support personnel, it appears that informal, covert support, dispensed by US "civilian" advisers instead, will go on nevertheless. Thailand, where the US tactical presence is quite likely to continue on various airfields and intelligence surveillance stations once openly under American military control, is a case in point.

The context of this US military commitment in Asia in the post-Vietnam war era, is one based on a judicious, simultaneous, development of deterrents, logistical support for sub-regional client states, and tactical counter-strike capabilities, predicated, however, on avoidance of getting drawn into another Vietnam-like quagmire on the Asian mainland²³⁾. On the one hand, the US global strategic nuclear deterrence is to be kept and improved, and the Asian region is important in terms of whether it enhances

or detracts from the credibility of this overall deterrence. On the other hand, the US, without becoming involved again in a protracted ground war herself, will make available the necessary counter-insurgency arsenal to friendly governments with which to combat local Communist guerilla operations; but here the emphasis will be on technological sophistication of equipment, not on US manpower inputs.

Much of the strength of the new US defense parameter will depend on the selection and cultivation of states that are in a position to stabilize the security of their immediate sub-region: Indonesia (like Iran in the Middle East) is a prime US choice for such status in Southeast Asia, possibly Pakistan in South Asia, depending on the course of the Indian-Soviet alliance, and South Korea in Northern Asia.

The overt "client" status of such US-selected, sub-regional "stabilizers" would be minimized, of course, as much as possible; relatively innocuous forays by these "stabilizers" into the foreign policy field, demonstrating "independence", like, e.g. Indonesia's support for the "Zionism is Racism" resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly recently, would be tolerable to the US, though hardly encouraged, unless they were needed to refurbish quickly a battered image of official "non-alignment".

The logistical support base for the new US defense parameter, however, would not lie exclusively in the countries within the parameter itself (e.g. South Korea, Japan, or Taiwan), as their political position may eventually become unstable. Rather, the US seeks a line of "unsinkable

aircraft carriers", i.e. small island stations that can serve as permanent bases for swift, "surgical" tactical counter-strikes (as in the case of the recovery of the "Mayaguez", for example), or as the nodes of extended surveillance systems. At an approximately ninety degree angle from each other two lines of such bases and surveillance stations are in process of development: one reaching across the Indian Ocean from Kagnew, Ethiopia (a "tracking" station), across Diego Garcia and on into Indonesia (where the US is assisting in an extensive new "communications" network), and the Northwest Cape and Pine Gap facilities in Western and Central Australia; the other going from Australia northwards, across the Philippines and into Guam and the Northern Marianas, and culminating in Okinawa, South Korea, and the Japanese home islands.

The curious history of US interests in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, and its significance for Southeast Asia has already been noted elsewhere²⁴). But it is also necessary to describe briefly the lesser known US efforts to secure a new chain of permanent bases in the Western Pacific. In 1947 the US became the administrator under United Nations auspices of the so-called "Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands", i.e. the more than 2,100 formerly Japanese controlled islands and atolls of Micronesia, of which the Northwestern part, the so-called Mariana Islands District, embraces such islands as Saipan, Tinian and Rota, of World War II fame (Guam lies just outside and is not part of the Trust Territory). With the advent of the Kennedy Administration, US expenditures for and capital inflow into Micronesia significantly increased, one suspects because of the region's strategic significance in the context of the then growing American involvement in the Viet-

nam war, and in an apparent effort to "encourage the Micronesians voluntarily to choose closer association with the United States"²⁵⁾.

Despite this ploy a Congress of Micronesia, in 1970, at first rejected a Nixon Administration proposal to have the area become a self governing commonwealth associated with the US, in the manner of Puerto Rico, though later, in 1972, both parties in principle accepted a modified "free association" autonomous status for Micronesia, leaving foreign and defense affairs to the US. But Micronesians demanded, however, that the US also agree to the right of Micronesians unilaterally to declare their independence at some time in the future if they chose to do so. The latter provision proved a stumbling block to Washington. And according to some observers the Nixon administration, despite protests from other Micronesian areas, now began to promote the idea of a separate commonwealth status for the Mariana Islands District under the name "Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands". This new promotional effort was eventually successful among the inhabitants of the District and, with its strategic interests in the area protected, Washington now felt it could become more flexible to other Micronesian aspirations. By the end of 1974 the US appeared ready to grant the rest of Micronesia semi-sovereign status with defense and foreign affairs remaining under US control for a fifteen year period, after which Micronesia could declare its independence.

On February 15, 1975, at Saipan in the Marianas, US and Mariana representatives signed a "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands". This "Covenant", which awaits approval by the US Congress, would

make most of the inhabitants of the Mariana Islands District US citizens, and their territory into a public legal entity largely similar to Puerto Rico, with local autonomy assured, but with the US retaining extensive controls over external and defense affairs. The "Covenant" also provides that sizable enclaves of territory shall be made available to the US government on a long term lease basis, in order "to carry out its defense responsibilities", specifically 7,203 hectares (17,799 acres) on Tinian Island "and the waters immediately adjacent thereto", 72 hectares (177 acres) on Saipan Island at Tanapag Harbor, and the whole of Farallon de Medinilla Island (some 83 hectares or 206 acres) and the immediately surrounding waters.

Under the "Covenant" all these enclaves would be made available to the US government for 50 years, and the US government would have the option of renewal for another term of fifty years. In full settlement of this lease the US government would pay the Government of the Northern Marianas, including for a second fifty year term if extended under the renewal option, the total sum of \$19.5 million - a small payment indeed, considering the strategic value of the enclaves. But, additionally, the US pledges to pay the Government of the Northern Marianas "guaranteed annual levels of direct grant assistance" during seven years following the effective date of the "Covenant". This assistance includes \$8.25 million for budgetary support for government operations, of which \$250,000 will be set aside for a special education training fund, \$4 million for capital improvement projects, \$1.75 million for an economic development loan fund, as well as a pledge to make available to the Northern Marianas "the full range" of US federal service programs available to the other territories of the US²⁶).

The 6,000 or so inhabitants of the Northern Marianas favor the "Covenant" and evidently see significant advantages in the promised US grants in aid. In light of this, opposition from the rest of Micronesia to the proposed separate Marianas' Commonwealth status - an opposition that comes as well as from the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations - means little to the US which is content to wait so that it may strike a quid pro quo with the independence aspirations of the rest of Micronesia. In any case, the US already regards, and is using Saipan, Tinian and much of the Mariana Islands District to a considerable degree, as a private military reserve, and the proposed "Covenant" will, from a strategic point of view, merely legalize and accentuate the status quo for the future. To skeptics who question the strategic need of the Northern Marianas, particularly in light of existing US control of nearby Guam, the most common answer given by American military is that "Guam is no longer enough", e.g., that an emergency such as the recent influx of Vietnamese refugees badly overstrained the island's resources. A less publicly voiced reason is US military concern over the rapidly increasing political restiveness and sophistication of the native Guamanian population and what this may eventually portend for the continuance of the heavy concentration of US military facilities (including the US Pacific area's Strategic Air Command headquarters, a Polaris submarine base, and a huge communications complex) on the island. A military "fall back" position for the vast reaches of the whole American strategic system in the Pacific is considered to be obviously advantageous at this time of renegotiations concerning the status of US bases on the Philippines, and of the always volatile political

atmosphere in Japan on the matter of the US military presence.

It is the Indian Ocean "leg", rather than the Micronesian chain of the new offshore US security system in Asia, that deepens concerns in the region over big power rivalries in the post Vietnam era. Indian Ocean waters carry an estimated 50% of Western Europe's oil supplies, 90% of those of Japan, 60% of those of Australia, and 80% of those of the African states. And as US and Soviet naval squadron activity increases in the Indian Ocean (US combatant shipdays in the Indian Ocean rose from about 800 in 1968 to 1,410 in 1973, while those of Soviet combatant ships jumped from 529 to 2,487 in the same period), Peking's spokesmen have begun castigating the Russians' "wild ambition" and "insatiable" search for "new military bases" in Southeast Asia and the "menacing threat" to the countries of the region as vessels of the Soviet navy are sent "to ply the Indian and West Pacific Oceans"²⁷).

The Indian Ocean and ASEAN

Whatever the delay occasioned by Congressional and other critics, the US is firmly committed to transforming what began as a communications station on Diego Garcia island into a modern, up-to-date, naval and airbase, with extensive supply and refueling facilities, and capable of delivering a major strategic punch - "our second Guam", as one senior American naval intelligence officer enthusiastically put it recently to this writer.

In and around the edges of the Indian Ocean, the big power rivalry is obviously building (e.g. in the early

months of 1975 the Soviets, after consolidating their influence in Somalia on Africa's Horn, began forging close military and economic ties with Mozambique, even before this Portuguese colony became independent, looking toward the securing of Soviet naval rights)²⁸⁾, as at the same time new uncertainties developed with the recent granting of independence to the Comoros islands, near Madagascar, and with the planned independence for the Seychelles Islands in June, 1976 . The appearance of ever more, small, independent island states in the Indian Ocean area introduced potentially significant future strategic variables confronting the new US security system as well as the aspirations of states like India and Sri Lanka to make the Indian Ocean a "zone of peace".

Against this backdrop also, Asian regional cooperation may well be compelled to take unexpected turns that will be displeasing to one or more of the big powers. For example, as the Indian Ocean is developing as a new area of big power competition, pressures within some of the adjacent Asian nations to transform their own budding structures of "regionalism" into new security systems are likely to grow, with inevitably adverse reaction from various quarters.

In mid-1975 Pravda took good note, for example, of the Indonesian military press and its recent suggestion that ASEAN include military cooperation among the future cooperative activities of its member states, including establishment of a council of ASEAN defense ministers and the holding of common military maneuvers. Pravda termed it "strange" that the recent "positive" changes that had occurred in Indo-China (i.e. the consolidation of Communist power there) were apparently being offered as a "pretext" for a revival

of the "bankrupt policy" of establishing "anti-Communist military blocs" in the area²⁹). What direction Asian regional cooperation will take in face of these new super power pressures, remains to be seen.

Notes

- 1) G. Warren Nutter, Kissinger's Grand Design (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, DC, 1975), p. 25 .
- 2) Vladimir Petrov, US-Soviet Detente: Past and Future (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, DC, 1975), pp. 53-54 .
- 3) See, e.g. Justus M. van der Kroef, "Indonesia: Strategic Perceptions and Foreign Policy", Asian Affairs, January-February, 1975, pp. 161-172 .
- 4) M.S. Rajan, "Indo-Soviet Treaty and Non-Alignment", Indian and Foreign Review (New Delhi), February 15, 1972, p. 11 .
- 5) The Times Journal (Manila), July 8, 1975 .
- 6) The Indonesian Times (Djakarta), July 7, 1975, and Antara Daily News Bulletin, vol. 27, no. 500, October 30, 1975, p. II .
- 7) Cited in Francis J. Galbraith, "Southeast Asian Policy After the Vietnam Disaster", Asian Affairs, July-August, 1975, p. 330 .
- 8) The Bangkok Post, September 11, 1975 .
- 9) Legislation on Foreign Relations, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 1080 .
- 10) Mizuo Kuroda, "Some Basic Elements of Japan's Foreign Policy", Pacific Community (Tokyo), April, 1974, p. 383

- 11) The Straits Times (Singapore), July 2, 1975 .
- 12) Adam Malik, "Balance of Power in Southeast Asia", The Asian Student (San Francisco), September 27, 1975, p.5.
- 13) Bangkok World, June 12, 1975 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service Bulletin, hereafter FBIS, June 17, 1975).
- 14) V. Kudryavtsev in Izvestia (Moscow), August 28, 1975, (Current Digest of the Soviet Press, September 24, 1975).
- 15) Soemitro, "Southeast Asia's Strategic Posture in the Seventies", p. 15, in: The World of Strategy and the Foreign Policy of Nations (Djakarta, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1973).
- 16) Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), November 14, 1975, p. 29 .
- 17) On Chinese assistance to Burmese Communists, for example, see "The Economist" (London), April 27, 1974, p. 46; for the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries see Justus M. van der Kroef, "Peking, Hanoi and Guerilla Insurgency in Southeast Asia", Southeast Asian Perspectives September, 1971, pp. 1-67, and Jay Taylor, China and Southeast Asia. Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1974) .
- 18) Ruam Prachachat (Bangkok), October 5, 1975, and the Bangkok Post, September 30 and November 4, 1975 (FBIS, October 1 and 7, November 4, 1975).
- 19) The Sarawak Tribune (Kuching), August 13, 1975; Far Eastern Economic Review, October 10, 1975, p. 5 .
- 20) New Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), October 28, 1975 (FBIS, November 6, 1975).
- 21) Sreedhar, "A Chinese Presence in Bangladesh", China Report (Delhi), May-June, 1975, pp. 3-5 .
- 22) The following description is based on H.D. Steward, "The Pentagon Does a Big Rethink on Asia", The Sarawak Tribune, July 22, 1975 .

- 23) The following description is based on Michael T. Klare, "The Nixon/Kissinger Doctrine and America's Pacific Basin Strategy", Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, April-June, 1975, pp. 6-7 .
- 24) Cf. Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Indian Ocean Problem - Some Southeast Asian Perspectives", Southeast Asian Spectrum (SEATO, Bangkok), April, 1975, pp. 27-38 .
- 25) Judith Miller, "New Pacific Outpost", The Progressive, June, 1975, p. 27 . I have heavily relied on this informative article in the present paragraph.
- 26) For the text of this "Covenant" and the military lease proposals see International Legal Materials (Washington, DC), March, 1975, pp. 344-365, ff. In February, 1976, the US Senate approved the "Covenant" to establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, following approval by the US House of Representatives last July of a slightly different measure. Differences between House and Senate are expected to be resolved shortly in a joint Committee and President Gerald Ford is expected to sign the "Covenant" bill before the Summer of 1976 .
- 27) "Indian Ocean Security", Bulletin of the Africa Institute of South Africa (Pretoria), 1975, no. 2, pp. 43, 45; The Sunday Times (Singapore) July 6, 1975. See also Alexander O. Ghebhardt, "Soviet and US Interests in the Indian Ocean", Asian Survey, August 1975, pp. 672-680 .
- 28) The Indonesia Times, June 13, 1975 .
- 29) Yury Aminsky's "Commentator" column in Pravda, August 31, 1975, (The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, vol. 27, 1975, no. 3, p. 3) .