

# CHANGING POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PACIFIC

by

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(Editor's Note: *The Asian/Pacific area has become a multipolar arena for four major powers and a host of smaller ones. With the growth of pluralism and the dynamic relationships between nations, the region will remain a major source of problems and international tension. In this brief article, the author attempts to show why the United States must preserve a balancing presence in Asia in order to maintain peace in the area, emphasizing political and economic means while maintaining a credible military capability.*)



The Asian/Pacific area is presently undergoing changes that will have a profound impact on international relations for decades to come. Of the five great power centers in the world—the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union, China, and Western Europe—the first four perceive major interests in the Pacific. The area as a whole contains a large segment of the world's population. The

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majority of the people are poor by the standards of America or Western Europe. Many of the leaders, intellectuals, and "white collar" workers deplore their backwardness and entertain hopes of growing wealth and improved living conditions which often fail to materialize.

President Nixon has brought into effect a new policy aimed at reducing American military involvement in the area. Most American ground combat troops will have been withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam. US forces are simultaneously being reduced in other areas in the Far East. These actions were precipitated by the American people and Congress who became increasingly disenchanted with US actions in Southeast Asia. The United States has fought three wars in the Pacific within one generation. Many Americans feel that we have failed in the latest Asian venture and cry "No more Vietnams!"

At the same time, we see the resurgence of Japan. Already an economic giant, Japan shows signs of playing an increasing political role and of feeling the frustrations produced by major power status. With a burgeoning overseas trade, Japan is aggressively seeking new markets and additional raw materials to feed its home island factories. The United States has been engaged in an economic struggle, primarily over balance of payments, with this, its most important overseas trading partner.

After decades of partially self-imposed isolation, Mainland China is emerging on the international scene. "Ping-pong" diplomacy and President Nixon's trip to the People's Republic of China (PRC) have caused great excitement and high expectations. Peking, formally seated in the United Nations, can be expected to play a far more significant role in international relations, especially as a possible

leader for particular groups of Third World states. The "spirit of Bandung," which quietly expired after 1955, may be reincarnated in a different form—this time within the United Nations. China's delegate to the United Nations, Chiao Kuan-hua, has made a bid for Third World leadership by proclaiming that "China is still an economically backward country as well as a developing country. Like the overwhelming majority of Asian, African and Latin American countries, China belongs to the Third World." He also declared that "We are opposed to the power politics and hegemony of big nations bullying small ones" and vowed that China would never subject others to "aggression, subversion, control, interference or bullying."<sup>1</sup> China, after having been rebuffed by many Arab, African, and Latin American nations in previous relations, is trying a different approach and acting in a more sophisticated and diplomatic manner. The Taiwan problem has not yet been solved. Two hostile governments still face each other across a hundred miles of water no longer patrolled in strength by the US Seventh Fleet. Lest we forget, the PRC has a growing nuclear capability which can readily be used as a psychological tool to enforce its stepped-up diplomatic initiatives.

The Soviet Union, now on a nuclear par with the United States, has shown a greater interest in the Pacific. Soviet naval power has increased in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Brezhnev's call for an Asian system of collective security, although generally dismissed by Asian nations, clearly signaled Russia's intentions to strengthen her position and to contain China. The possibility of Soviet/Japanese cooperation in developing Siberia may have a tremendous impact on the future of Asia.

The end of US participation in ground combat in Vietnam will not see the conclusion of the Indochina War. There is continuing unrest and aggression in Southeast Asia. North Vietnam and the PRC are training and supporting insurgents from throughout Indochina, as well as from Malaysia, Thailand, and Burma. Animosity and invectives threaten another demilitarized zone—the 38th parallel in Korea. However, exploratory talks aimed at

better relations have begun between the Republic of Korea and North Korea.

No longer can the situation be described in terms of bipolarity. The Pacific has become a multipolar arena for four major powers and a host of smaller ones. The general setting and major power relationships briefly introduced here, point to the initial conclusion that the Pacific/East Asian area is likely to remain a major source of problems and international tension in the remaining years of the twentieth century.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the past, only three Asian/Pacific nations have escaped total colonization by Western powers—China, Japan, and Thailand. Undeveloped Asian countries were no match for the modernized West. Japan's victory over the Russians in the war of 1905 was as surprising to Asians as it was welcomed. Spurred on by this victory, Japan's leaders began to plan a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Raw materials from Southeast Asia would accelerate industrial development at home. As a result, the Rising Sun spread throughout the Pacific to the shores of Australia and the borders of India. At the conclusion of World War II, the Asians did not want the return of European colonial power as a replacement for an equally disliked Japanese hegemony. A rising tide of nationalism contributed to wars of independence in Vietnam and Indonesia. The youthful Asian nations were forced to struggle against a myriad of problems, in addition to the critical one of security. Leadership, while highly motivated, lacked experience. It would take years to build an effective governmental bureaucracy. Economies were undeveloped. Transportation was lacking. World War II had caused widespread destruction and had greatly disrupted society in general.

It is important for us to understand the general mood of post-World War II America. There was a real and persistent Soviet military threat in Europe. Communists, commonly supported by the USSR, led insurrections in many parts of the world. In 1950 North

Korea, inspired by Stalin, attacked southward and was later reinforced by the Mainland Chinese who had chased Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists to Taiwan the previous year. Communist insurgents were conducting guerrilla wars in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Burma. Official US policy did not condone renewed colonization of Southeast Asia. However, France returned to Indochina while the United States was intimately concerned with more vital interests in Western Europe and Japan. In the midst of the Korean War, it is understandable that we looked at the French operations in Indochina as complementary to our own attempts to contain Communist aggression. Our support grew until we ultimately were paying for 80 percent of the French war effort. It also seems reasonable that the United States should attempt to resist the Communists in Indochina after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the conclusion of the Geneva Convention of 1954. The world was perceived as a bipolar arena for a struggle between the Free World and International Communism. The American strategic policy in Asia was aimed at the containment and isolation of Communist China. A system of mutual defense alliances and forward military bases ringed both China and the USSR. As the Soviet Union achieved parity in nuclear weapons, a new strategy had to be formulated to replace "massive retaliation." Nuclear warfare was unthinkable—there could be no winners, only losers. The Chinese Communists came to rely on "wars of national liberation." The Third World represented the countryside, and would eventually encircle and defeat the city nations of the modernized world. To counteract this, the US strategy was switched to one of "flexible response." The high priority projects in the defense establishment were those dealing with counterinsurgency doctrine, and special forces trained to win the hearts and minds of the people. One of the objectives of our Vietnam endeavors was to prove to the Communists that wars of national liberation would not succeed.

As the Vietnam War continued, substantial elements of the American people and of Congress became frustrated and finally

disgusted over the seemingly endless conflict. Too many promises of victory around the corner proved overly optimistic. An undeclared war, fought without calling up the reserves, without placing the nation on a wartime footing, and without gaining adequate public support, played a major part in President Johnson's decision not to run for reelection. Americans could not understand why so much effort was being expended with so few visible results in the jungles of Southeast Asia 8,000 miles from the coast of California. Concern was mounting over the domestic ills of our society: the plight of our cities; the rising rate of crime; the pollution of our environment; the unrest of our students; and above all, the increasing tension between our races. The demand for a restructuring of our national priorities made itself heard in the Presidential Primaries of 1968. When President Nixon was inaugurated the following year, he recognized that he had been given a mandate by the American people to get out of Vietnam. "Vietnamization" became the key word in our Asian policy. Since the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine at Guam, there has been much conjecture, especially in the Pacific area. US military forces are being reduced in many countries in Asia. The containment policy has been supplanted by one based on negotiation with both the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. There is increased Soviet interest in the Pacific Area. Until very recently Japan continued to maintain her phenomenal growth rate while experiencing a rise in nationalistic sentiments. What of the future? What does it hold in store for the major powers involved, and the smaller Asian nations?

## **UNITED STATES**

America's leaders have often proclaimed that "The United States is a Pacific Power," even now in the midst of a large scale military retrenchment. During the last thirty years our country has sent its soldiers to fight three wars on the continent of Asia. Our Pacific strategy was to contain communism and to repel Communist aggression everywhere. But



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now, times seem to have changed. It may be surmised, in the opinion of this writer, from our recent actions that today's goals are only to withdraw our forces from Asia as rapidly as possible, hoping that our prisoners of war will be returned. Although we still claim to be a Pacific power, the question can be asked, "Are we acting like one?" This Nation may now be turning her back on the Pacific in the writer's opinion. Arguments are heard to return our attentions to Europe where our real national interests lie. Yet in the light of recent events, the words written by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905 seem both timely and pertinent. "I believe that our future history will be more determined by our position on the Pacific facing China, than by our position on the Atlantic facing Europe."<sup>2</sup> During the last third of this century we will see great changes and a totally new power relationship emerge in the Pacific. We must be aware of them, examine them, and attempt to formulate reasonable objectives.

In retrospect, our post-World War II Asian policy of containment of Red China and prevention of aggression has been partially successful. North Korea failed in its attempt to expand southward. The 38th parallel still marks the division of that separated nation. South Korea has prospered, and its fighting forces have improved greatly to the point where they shoulder a significant amount of the responsibility of the allied war effort in Vietnam. While the United States provided a security shield, all Asian nations gained time—time to develop leaders and improve their economies. Although the United States was not directly involved, the Communists in Indonesia were thwarted in their attempt to take over from a faltering Sukarno. In 1965 Radio Peking announced that Thailand would be the next target. Yet, Thailand has prospered and increased its ability to defend itself.

What are present US interests in the Pacific? We can surely say that we want a peaceful Pacific area, where all nations are free to develop themselves and to trade with each other. The goals that we establish to protect our interests must be both rational and achievable. First, we should play an active

role in maintaining the balance of power in the Pacific, to prevent any nation from establishing a preponderant position. The United States, Japan, China, and the USSR will be the major powers in the area. Other players are the smaller Asian states. This arrangement will be dynamic and we must be flexible. The policies of any one nation will affect most or all of the others. We should attempt to increase our trade within the Pacific community. Finally, we should assist the underdeveloped countries in their attempts to modernize and improve the lot of their peoples.

In 1969, President Nixon announced the Nixon Doctrine. In essence, with respect to our role in the international system, it means:

- that a major American role remains indispensable.

- that other nations can and should assume greater responsibilities, for their sake as well as ours.

- that the change in the strategic relationship calls for new doctrines.

- that the emerging polycentrism of the Communist world presents different challenges and new opportunities.<sup>3</sup> This marks important revision in the forward defense strategy as it concerns mainland Asia, and the containment of Communist China. "Vietnamization" has turned into "Asianization." Only a yet undetermined residual US force will remain in Vietnam. In South Korea we have reduced the authorized American troop ceiling by 20,000 and have expanded our military assistance for the purpose of modernizing the Korean Armed Forces. In February of 1971 President Nixon announced that the United States would reduce its military presence by 12,000 personnel in Japan, 5,000 in Okinawa, 16,000 in Thailand, and 9,000 in the Philippines.<sup>4</sup>

The old Asian strategy was influenced by Cold War considerations and the Domino Theory. The Nixon Doctrine means self-help for the Asians, with economic and technical assistance from the United States, along with a "nuclear shield" to protect smaller nations from aggressive nuclear powers. This policy calls for a reduced US military presence in Asia.



WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL PHOTO

*President Nixon shown with Prime Minister Tanaka of Japan during the Prime Minister's visit to the U.S.*

The Nixon Doctrine apparently has not been applied in quite the same way to Europe. In his statement to C.L. Sulzberger of *The New York Times*, President Nixon declared, "Meanwhile, in Europe, we can't cut down our forces until there is a mutual agreement with the other side. We must stand with our European friends if they will only do a bit more themselves in NATO—as they have indicated they will do."

### **JAPAN**

Within twenty-five years, Japan has emerged as the third largest economy in the world. This has been accomplished after a crushing and humiliating defeat in World War II. No longer is "Made in Japan" the butt of jokes. Just the opposite, the branding is now a credit to some of the world's finest photographic, electronic and automotive products. Although an Asian giant in terms of

economic, technological and financial power, Japan has not yet assumed the mantle of political, much less military, leadership. Will that come next? If so, how soon, and in what form?

Japan in the last five years has begun to face problems that have been confronting other industrialized modern states for decades—such as the effects of rapid urbanization, pollution, sharply rising labor costs, and an ever expanding need for raw materials. "Post-industrial society" type problems will demand early solutions, or at least approaches.

The United States has been Japan's conqueror, mentor, protector, and now feels the thrust of Japanese competition in its domestic markets. Japan suffered two shocks last year. Economically, the United States imposed a tax on all foreign imports and compelled reductions in Japanese textile exports to the United States. Politically,

President Nixon announced his trip to Peking without first consulting Japan. In this situation Japan believed that her vital interests were at stake and that America should have consulted Tokyo. Premier Eisaku Sato offered a mild reflection of Japanese feelings during an interview with David Kennedy, President Nixon's roving ambassador for economic affairs. "The measure taken by the United States at this time runs counter to Oriental logic. It is natural that secrecy be kept in diplomacy. But the United States should have contacted Japan much earlier, since we have always emphasized strong friendship with the United States."<sup>5</sup>

There is a growing youth movement in Japan. Babies born after World War II in 1945 will soon be thirty years old. There is a reduced sense of shame about Japanese aggressions in the war, largely because the majority of the public feels itself to have been uninvolved and therefore not responsible for those actions. A resurgence of national pride is taking place. It is a distinct possibility that this self-assertiveness could be fueled by differences with the United States and cause Japan to increase its activities in the political and military spheres.

Japan has been spending approximately one percent of its Gross National Product (GNP) on national defense. It is now a ranking Free World military power, and stands about seventh, worldwide. This is rather high considering that the Japanese constitution renounces war as an instrument of policy. However, Japan's military posture is constrained by strong political pressure to remain defensive in nature. On one hand, Japan can see the widespread withdrawal of American military forces from Asia; on the other, the growing nuclear capability of the PRC. Can Japan count on the American nuclear shield? Is it still a credible deterrent? Would the United States be willing to incur the risk of a Soviet or Chinese missile attack on one of her own cities in order to protect Japan? The Japanese have not forgotten Hiroshima, but no longer refuse to discuss nuclear weapons and defense. Some inducements for Japan to "go nuclear" are

the increasing Chinese threat, the special vulnerability of Japan on its crowded island base, and the American military retrenchment in Asia. However, it can be argued that a second-class nuclear deterrent is both wasteful and useless. The vast sums of money required may more wisely be expended on the improvement of conventional forces. US nuclear protection may not seem fully credible forever, and Japan must defend herself. It is likely that Japan will keep her nuclear option open while continuing to conduct research and development in the nuclear and missile fields.

The Japanese have seen World War II militarism replaced by endorsement for Article 9 of the Constitution which renounces war as an instrument of policy, and in effect gives up a measure of national sovereignty. It is possible that a return to militarism could take place if Japan's vital interests were threatened.

Okinawa reverted to Japanese administration in May 1972. Japan announced its intention of assuming gradually the responsibility for the immediate defense of the Ryukyu Islands. She must also be concerned with the security of her trade route to Southeast Asia and Western Europe. Up to 90 percent of all Japanese oil imports must pass through the strategic Straits of Malacca. It is rumored that Thailand, with support from Japan, may build an oil pipeline across the Isthmus of Kra. This would mutually benefit both nations. Japan's oil route to the Middle East would be reduced by approximately 950 kilometers. Malaysia and Indonesia have expressed their desire to regulate shipping in the Malaccan Straits.

Since the end of World War II Japan has largely achieved the goals of its Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere by astute economic planning and aggressive execution. Raw materials from Southeast Asia are being funneled into homeland factories. This must be the first time in history that a nation has become so powerful economically, but not militarily. Japan's World War II experiences have been a powerful constraint to rearmament. We are faced with an ironical situation. Japan has "won" World War II

thirty some years later by changing its means—substituting economic power for military.

Japan's future demand for raw materials seems bound to grow, Japan might aid Russia in developing Siberia. So far, interest has been shown by both parties. Japan could use the wood, iron, coal, and natural gas of the region and the Soviet Union would be pleased to receive the development capital of the Japanese. The Soviet Union has a strong bargaining point in reserve. For an appropriate Japanese response, the Russians could offer a World War II peace treaty and reversion of the Kurile Islands to Japanese control.

There are also some compelling attractions for closer Japanese ties with the People's Republic of China. The growing Chinese nuclear capability often mentioned in the United States is not perceived as a direct and present threat by the Japanese. There is a racial and cultural affinity between these two peoples. Is it possible that the centuries-old myth of the "China market" may become a reality? Japan has technological know-how, capital, and the desire to expand. China has the huge population, cheap labor, space, and is making attempts to raise the workers' standard of living. The China market may develop as Japan aids China on her path to modernization. In Japan, Tanaka has replaced Sato and is making overtures to Peking to include hints of early diplomatic recognition.

Japan is conducting increasing trade with Southeast Asia. What is only a possible future relationship with China is now a reality with the Southeast Asian States. Once again, raw materials, cheap labor, and space for industry are the attractions for the Japanese. Japan has contributed significantly in foreign aid in this region, and has helped to subsidize the Asian Development Bank. Very likely their aid is primarily aimed at increasing the prospects for better business.

There are several courses of action that Japan could take relevant to its own security in the Pacific. It could opt for "more of the same"—a close relationship with the United States which provides protection. It could modify the defense arrangement taking more

of the responsibility upon itself. It could also divorce itself from US influence and pursue a more neutral course along with a friendlier relationship with Mainland China. It is likely that Japan will follow a more independent course in the decade of the 70's. Whatever actions Japan takes will be determined by its own domestic policies and national interest. These may not conform to our own desires.

## PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

On 25 October 1971, the People's Republic of China was voted into the United Nations in place of the Nationalist regime on Taiwan. After years of unrest and disruption caused by the Cultural Revolution, Mainland China has in 1971 resumed the initiative in international diplomacy. The invitation to the US ping-pong team to play a series of friendly matches in China was the first outward sign of a major change in the US/China dialogue. Shortly thereafter President Nixon announced his plans to visit Peking. The PRC is seeking better relations with the United States for several good reasons. She sees Soviet divisions facing her along the 4,500-mile border with Russia to the north. There is the danger of a revival of Japanese militarism. Finally, with a retrenchment of US military forces in Asia, China realizes that the United States is becoming less of a threat to her security. It is certainly in the best interests of the PRC to help the United States retrench in Asia. A Chinese military maxim advises, "Do not thwart an enemy returning home."<sup>6</sup>

What will be the results of President Nixon's historic trip to Peking? What does China hope to get out of the exchange? She has gained prestige by having the leader of the West's most powerful nation travel to her capital. The visit could be used to drive a wedge between the United States and Japan. The United States may prove useful in influencing the Soviet Union to refrain from attacking China. The United States could dissuade Japan from becoming a nuclear power. Finally, the United States might be persuaded to go along with a "Chinese solution" to the problem of Taiwan. Many other demands against the United States



could have been made including complete American military withdrawal from Taiwan, the setting of a firm date for withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam, and the removal of all military bases, nuclear missile submarines, and aircraft carriers from Asia.<sup>7</sup>

What could the Chinese have offered in return? Perhaps a promise not to seek a military solution to Taiwan. China might have been persuaded to refrain from supporting the major North Vietnamese offensive aimed at sabotaging President Nixon's Vietnamization plans.

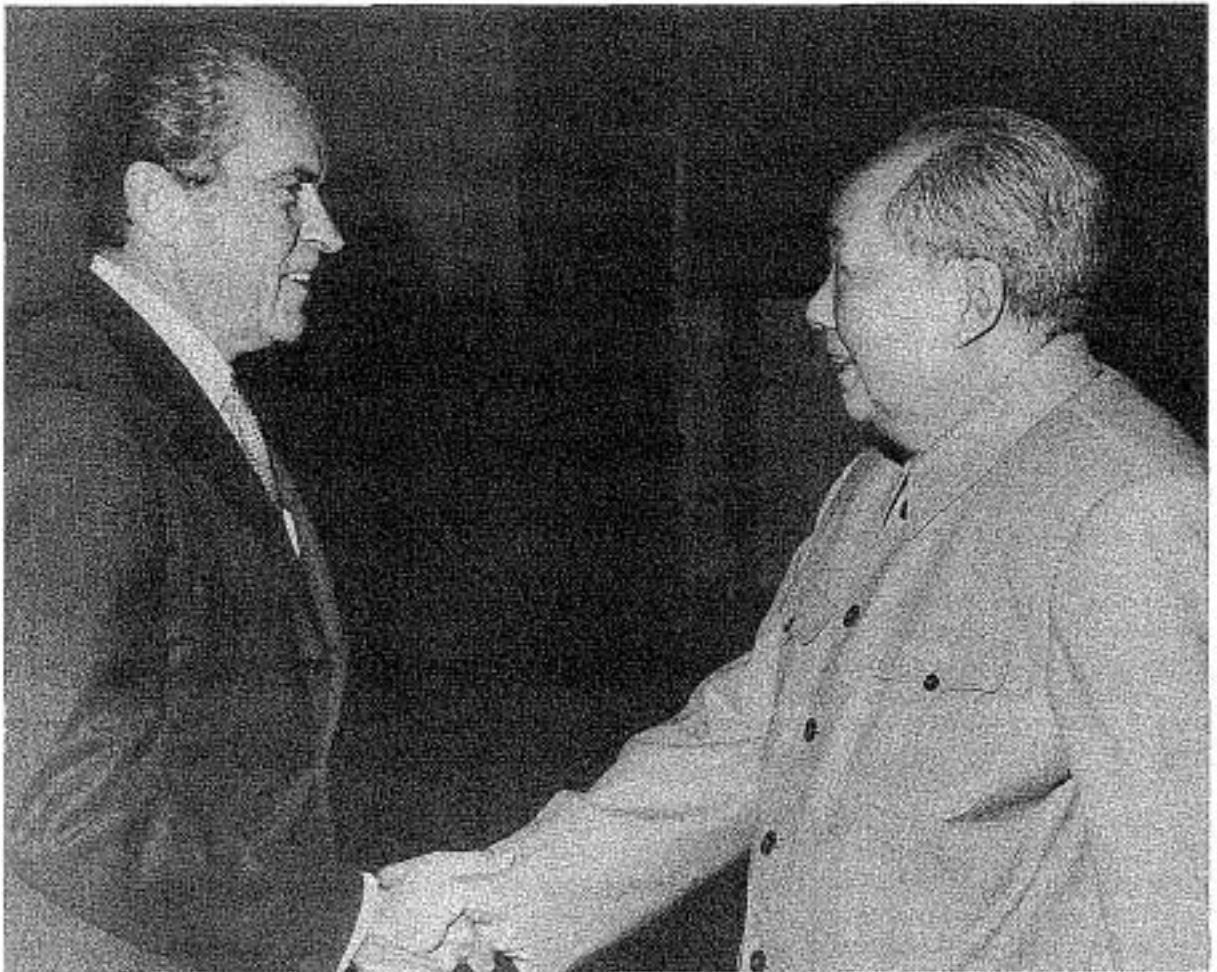
Premier Chou En-lai has discussed China's growing nuclear strength with representatives of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation:

You may ask, why does China want to produce nuclear weapons? We'll do that

to break down the nuclear monopoly, to break down the threat of blackmail. We have made it clear that we carry out a limited number of nuclear tests, we conduct them at a time when the wind blows the radioactive dust first over our populated areas before it goes to other countries. What is more we make it clear that the People's Republic of China will never be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Chou went on to say that his country's first interest was to develop industrially, but that China "will absolutely not become a super power."<sup>8</sup>

The Sino-Soviet split is likely to last a long time. The common border has produced many chronic problems. China views Mongolia as a Russian puppet. There is also



*President Nixon shown with Chairman Mao Tse-Tung during the President's February 1972 visit to Peking.*



*President Nixon shown in the Kremlin shaking hands with President Podgorny after the SALT I signing ceremony during his summit visit to Moscow in May 1972.*

ideological competition. Moscow has charged that Mao has abandoned Communist principles and is aiming at world domination. China was upset when she perceived Brezhnev's proposal to sponsor an Asian collective security pact as a deliberate attempt at encircling and isolating her. However, since the border crisis of 1969, there has been a general easing of Sino-Soviet tensions, except for verbal battles in the UN General Assembly. This trend will permit the Chinese to expend more energy in seeking to extend her influence into Southeast and Northeast Asia.

What will be the outcome of the Taiwan problem? Taiwan has been an important ally of the United States. In 1970 US exports to Taiwan totaled \$463 million; US imports from Taiwan were \$579 million.<sup>9</sup> What will happen to this trade if the PRC takes over control of Taiwan? How will that affect the growing Japan/Taiwan trade? International sanction has been given to claims of "both

Chinas" that there is only one China. A single government, and that now in Peking, represents the Chinese people in the United Nations. There will eventually be a Chinese solution, but it will take time. On the other hand, the Taipei Government might proclaim that it would henceforth conduct her affairs as an independent country, increasing the prospect of tension as Peking sought to gain control of Taiwan. Chiao Kuan-Hua, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, and many other PRC leaders have threatened that "No force on earth can stop us" from liberating Taiwan and returning it to the fold of "the motherland."<sup>10</sup> The Chinese Nationalists will no doubt make strong efforts intended to help reverse the adverse political trends set in motion by Taiwan's expulsion from the United Nations. The governmental reform conducted during the past 20 years will be continued and extended. More emphasis will be placed on youth, and the programs of recent years of bringing

Taiwanese into positions of greater responsibility will no doubt be extended.<sup>11</sup> This may prove successful in coping with growing nationalistic feelings among Taiwanese who desire more self-determination.

## USSR

The Soviet Union is now recognized as one of the world's mightiest nations in terms of military strength. In recent years she has increased her naval presence in the Mediterranean, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. But the USSR faces a dilemma in the Pacific. She wants to increase her influence in the non-Communist states, and sees an opportunity to do so in the light of US troop withdrawals. However, the US departure also opens the door to greater influence of the People's Republic of China. Russia is certainly concerned about her border with China. Frequent border clashes have revived fears of Chinese irredentism.

In June of 1969, Leonid Brezhnev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, startled Asian nations by announcing, "We are of the opinion that the course of events is putting on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia."<sup>12</sup> This was widely interpreted as a Soviet effort to increase her sphere of influence and to contain China. It is likely that the Soviet Union will increase her trade and perhaps her aid to Southeast Asia, but that any attempts to sponsor an Asian association will be unsuccessful.

The USSR and Japan have established a joint economic committee which is delving into the possibility of developing Siberia. This attempt so far has not met with substantive success. However, the potential exists. The Russians could offer the Kurile Islands in return for significant Japanese investment in Siberia.

The Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, has concluded an agreement with Japan to initiate negotiations for a treaty of peace and the reciprocal exchange of visits by the heads of government of the two nations during the coming year. This could signify the

beginning of a new era of improved ties between Japan and the Soviet Union. The Russians see both Japan and the United States moving towards a detente with China, and may perceive advantages in normalizing relations with Japan.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

In our discussions of the major actors that are playing on the Pacific stage, we must not overlook the smaller Southeast Asia states. Representatives from ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have declared that they will seek to neutralize Southeast Asia. Foreign ministers from Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, special envoy Thanat Khoman of Thailand, and Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak have signed a declaration of peace, freedom, and neutrality. This is aimed at guaranteeing noninterference in internal affairs by big powers, and giving the Southeast Asian region time to adjust to a changing balance of forces. Prime Minister Razak stated that South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos also support neutrality.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the past two decades there have been numerous attempts at varying forms of regionalism. Now seems to be the most propitious time for its further development. The Five-Power Arrangement for the defense of Malaysia and Singapore is a welcome addition to the scene. Contributing nations include the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

Two regional political organizations are showing promise. The Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) provides a forum for the consideration of Asian problems and includes Japan and South Korea. This grouping may provide Japan with her best opportunity to increase her influence in the political sphere. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) may be more successful in promoting regional cooperation than previous abortive efforts. She has taken a step towards international trade by approving the formation of a Special Coordinating Committee of ASEAN (SSCAN) to negotiate with the European Economic Community (EEC). Both Cambodia and South Vietnam

sent observers to the ASEAN ministerial meeting in Singapore during April 1972, and have expressed interest in joining the regional organization. The Philippines' Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jose Ingles, has said that the Philippines will propose military cooperation among member countries of ASEAN for regional security.

The Vietnam War has given a boost to the economies of several developing states. Leadership elites have matured, Armed Forces have improved, and industrialization has spread. The smaller nations, having been given more time by the US involvement in Indochina, are far more capable of protecting their own interests than they were fifteen years ago. However, we should not be overly sanguine concerning future prospects. The US withdrawal of its combat ground forces from South Vietnam still leaves a full-fledged war raging in Indochina. Evidence that suggests continued fighting is the Indochina Conference hosted by Chou En-lai in South China during April of 1970. Communist leaders from the two Vietnams, Laos, Cambodia, and Peking pledged support for the deposed Sihanouk's attempts to return to power in Cambodia. Thousands of North Vietnamese regulars are operating in Laos and Cambodia. The PRC is building a road in northern Laos that is aimed at Thailand's border. China continues to support the wars of national liberation in Thailand and Burma. Domestic turmoil causes dissension within several struggling governments. But, in large measure, they will have to make it on their own. The Nixon Doctrine is clear—in most cases we will provide the materiel support while Asians supply the manpower, and then only in carefully selected situations. However, the President has emphasized on many occasions that under the Nixon Doctrine we will stand by our allies, and in cases involving other types of aggression than nuclear attacks against an ally, when we provide the nuclear shield, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. Congress will play a more important part in American foreign policy in the future. The days of Tonkin Gulf Resolutions, giving the executive a *carte blanche* in an undeclared war, are over.

China will undoubtedly become more influential in Southeast Asia. Throughout history she has often had a special relationship with her neighbors. China would like a string of friendly buffer states around her borders, without the presence of American military bases. Southeast Asian nations recognize the emergence of the PRC on the world stage, and the lowered profile of the United States in the Pacific. There is a Thai proverb that is most applicable: "When the wind blows, the bamboo bends." The wind has shifted out of China, and is being felt by the smaller powers. The UN vote to admit Mainland China in place of the Nationalist regime is indicative of things to come. The Albanian resolution was supported by Burma, Laos, Malaysia, and Singapore. Indonesia and Thailand abstained. The only Pacific nations to vote against the resolution were Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

#### **CHANGING POWER RELATIONSHIPS**

Stepping back from the inspection of individual nations or power centers, let us take a look at the "big picture" in the Pacific. We see coming into play four of the top five powers in the world. A new multipolar structure is unfolding including the Big Four and the smaller Asian states. The actors on the international scene are both more potent and energetic, while their numbers are increasing. The growth of pluralism and the dynamic relationship between nations will require sophisticated and timely methods of handling future problems.

The administration of Premier Sato in Japan consistently followed the lead of US policy regarding Mainland China and Taiwan. Chinese leaders were emphatic in their declarations that they did not want a rapprochement with Japan until Sato left the scene. Upon announcing his resignation, Premier Sato urged that Japan continue her close association with the United States, while trying to improve relations with the PRC. It is likely that Japan will decide to continue her policy of concentrating on economic activity while enjoying the protection provided by the

United States. The Self-Defense Forces will probably be modernized and increased in size. It is unlikely that Japan will decide to acquire nuclear weapons unless she perceives a real threat—from either China or the Soviet Union—and becomes doubtful concerning the credibility of the US nuclear shield.

The People's Republic of China may possibly have chosen the role of a stable world power rather than the chief proponent of world revolution. After the Cultural Revolution she has embarked on a diplomatic offensive. Peking has been friendlier to western governments, especially those in the Third World. The seating of the PRC in the United Nations may have crowned China as the international leader of the Third World. If China is not completely successful in reestablishing her hegemony in Southeast Asia, she will at least have a revised and expanded sphere of influence. There will be continued Sino-Soviet tensions. The rift between these two nations could conceivably be closed by Japanese acquisition of nuclear weapons, a fact that the Japanese recognize. Finally, it is certainly within the best interests of the PRC to establish friendlier relations with the United States. Military retrenchment by the United States in Asia, one facet of the Nixon Doctrine, has opened the door to a new era of Sino-American relations. However, Taiwan remains China's most challenging foreign policy problem with respect to Japan and the United States.

In the Pacific at the present time we see more numerous and more forceful international powers. There will be attempts by several to fill the vacuum created by the US withdrawal of troops, and significant withdrawal of American interest in Asia. These nations now seem to be jockeying for position. We may be witnessing a preliminary period of "making friends and influencing people."

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The United States cannot turn its back on Asia on the grounds that her only real interests lie in Europe. In a world of expanding population, and continuous

depletion of natural resources, the United States needs both the raw materials and the markets of the Pacific. To promote a peaceful and prosperous Asia, we must share in the maintenance of an equilibrium of power in the Pacific. It is also opportune that we change our relationship with Mainland China. We should offer to the PRC a phased program of increasing contacts and exchanges. Hopefully, the Nixon visit will point the way to peaceful progress.

There is no foreseeable clash of vital interests in the Pacific between the Soviet Union and the United States, although the Russians would be concerned if they saw the United States and China becoming too friendly. We should continue attempting to reach agreements in our strategic arms limitation talks, and mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. We should not in any way attempt to intensify or escalate the Sino-Soviet split, although it is generally beneficial to us. A war between these two powers would only spread havoc. As the Laotians say, "When the elephants fight, the ants get trampled."

The United States ought to make a clear affirmation of the nuclear shield principle while advocating that Japan build up her conventional forces. A nuclear-armed Japan would cause disruption in the Pacific. Concurrently, we should seek a mutual resolution of our economic problems.

With respect to the Pacific as a whole, the United States should attempt to increase her trade. We need to originate a new and "saleable" foreign aid program that would be channeled primarily through multilateral organizations, like the Asian Development Bank. We should support Asian attempts at regionalism by cooperating to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development of the area. Several Pacific allies will require continued military support for some time into the future. This includes South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. The Republic of Korea will soon be able to take care of herself and the threat posed by North Korea may be diminishing.

We should not rigidly stand by all our prior commitments. It is necessary to realize that

we are going through a period in our history when our national interests are being examined and national priorities are being rearranged. Commitments in the past have been shaped by our national interests. It should logically follow that our commitments must also change as our interests change.

### LESSONS LEARNED

While studying the new power relationships in the Pacific and their future consequences, it would serve us well to deliberate on lessons learned in recent years. Our Nation has been torn apart by the Vietnam experience. For all our altruistic and ideological reasons for involvement, the cost became far too great—in manpower, money, and national cohesion. Nevertheless, we should wait and let history be the final judge. Upon reflection in less troubled and emotional times, it may be decided that American endeavors were in fact worthwhile. Priceless time was gained for developing nations, economies were strengthened, and leadership elites matured. Private pronouncements from most Asian leaders express the view that the US presence was highly desirable and proved to be the counterbalance to Communist China's support for wars of national liberation.

Hopefully we will have learned some lessons from the Vietnam War. Security commitments should be extended only where our vital national interests are at stake. Careful analysis must be made of a government's viability before the decision is made to support it. We should not become too attached to any one national leader. We need to relearn the lessons previously taught in World War II and Korea that air and sea power alone can neither stop infiltration or enemy personnel and movement of supplies, nor destroy the will of an enemy to fight. Our political leaders ought to realize that military operations must be fully explained to the American people and Congress in order to gain their wholehearted support.

The quality of military advice given to our civilian leaders should be improved. We have to guard against the "Can Do" syndrome. It is

a matter of professional pride that a soldier will attempt to accomplish any mission with whatever resources are made available and in spite of all difficulties and hardships. But what is regarded as a virtue at the lower unit level can be a vice at the highest levels. When the President requests counsel in a crisis situation, military leaders must examine the political constraints which may be entailed. All the difficulties and risks involved in security operations with severe political constraints should be clearly pointed out to the civilian leadership. The "system" may make this a ticklish undertaking. It is possible that a President, when confronted with a military recommendation that urges restraint, may turn to more adventurous and ambitious men who are figuratively raising their hands and shouting, "Hell, sir, let me try. I can do it!" Integrity, loyalty, and professionalism of the highest order must be instilled in our military leaders and those who advise them. The old hard line advocating military action against Communist Bloc aggressions anywhere and anytime, along with unqualified support for allied governments experiencing internal upheavals, is no longer acceptable. It should be replaced by recommendations taking into consideration the motivations and interests of other nations in the multipolar international scene and the "art of the possible" at home.

Today in America we face a new danger. The isolationist sentiment is growing stronger, especially with respect to Asia. While lowering our profile in the Pacific, we are decreasing our expenditures for foreign aid and questioning our support of the United Nations at home. The lessons of Vietnam should not be applied to situations in which they are not relevant. It is essential that we preserve an American balancing presence in Asia, emphasizing political and diplomatic means while maintaining a credible military capability. President Johnson has warned us that "No single nation can or should be permitted to dominate the Pacific region."<sup>14</sup> We must have the wisdom to understand the new power relationships now developing in Asia. We must also have the will to employ all the elements of national power in maintaining peace in the Pacific.



WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL PHOTO

*President Nixon with President Thieu of South Vietnam.*

#### NOTES

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