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NEW TIDES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

By William P. Bundy

FOR THREE decades now, Southeast Asia has been the scene and cockpit of struggles among great powers. Can it now be moved away from this status—unenviable and totally unwanted by its peoples? Can one outline a picture of conditions there that meets the desires of Southeast Asians and is at the same time compatible with the basic interests of all the major powers? Are such conditions more realizable now than ever before? If so, how can one move from here to there, and in particular how, if they were made the ultimate goal, would this affect the play of the hand (in all quarters) in bringing the war in Indochina to a conclusion?

This is the broad and proper way to frame the problem. Indeed, it is the one that fits any thoughtful definition of U.S. national interests. What we care about, and should have always defined as our objective, can be simply stated as “conditions for lasting peace” there—or for that matter anywhere else in the world. This real goal should be seen affirmatively and above all in terms of the aspirations of the 250 million people whose hopes and fears, however inarticulate and vague, define the true tides of the future.

Before trying to outline “conditions for lasting peace” in Southeast Asia, and certainly before making any judgment as to the possibility of attaining them, let us look at what has happened there in the last five years. The picture is wholly different from what it was in the spring and summer of 1965, when the culminating series of major American decisions in Vietnam was taken.

Then, the great-power forces within the area were seen in starkly bipolar terms: the “East Wind” of China was blowing

strongly and thrustingly versus a "West Wind" which was pretty much American alone. Indonesia was tilted far to the left, almost wholly aligned with China, and engaged in a struggle against Malaysia and Singapore in which the British and Commonwealth defenders could only hope to lose slowly. Then, if ever, a Hanoi takeover of South Vietnam seemed likely, in conjunction with other trends, to make probable not only North Vietnamese domination in the Indochina area but a wave of Chinese expansion into the rest of Southeast Asia.

The United States, with these wider stakes much in mind, decided, with the support of others, to stand in defense of South Vietnam. Indonesia went through a miraculous (and tragically bloody) change; and China, after a dramatic series of reverses worldwide in 1965, entered upon the cultural revolution in early 1966. Leave it to historians to trace the connections, if any, between these events. Suffice it to say that they changed the practical and psychological climate of Southeast Asia dramatically in a short space of time. In Indonesia, confrontation with neighboring states and snarling at "neo-colonialism" were replaced by peace within a new multilateral framework that included debt forgiveness from abroad and foreign aid. By 1967, internal chaos had eroded China's prestige and greatly reduced the pressures from the north, at least for the time being. To the American public, any major Chinese threat came to seem so remote that by late 1967 a reference to its long-term aspects by Secretary Rusk (in terms familiar to President Kennedy) was criticized as extremism and the invention of a new rationale.

The stakes *were* changing, and as early as 1966 one thoughtful American, George Kennan, had suggested that the change in Indonesia alone had removed one strong argument for the United States to stick it out in Vietnam. The point was not lost within the Administration, and if the South Vietnamese political troubles of the spring of 1966 had not been speedily redressed, it is just possible that it would have had real weight. Thereafter, and through 1967, there was no thought of change; the Southeast Asian picture appeared to Washington to be brightening steadily on almost every front although formidable costs were multiplying at home.

March of 1968 brought a turning point both in Southeast Asia and in American policy and politics. Not only the outcome in Vietnam but the willingness of the United States to remain en-

gaged in Southeast Asia were suddenly seen to be in grave doubt. This is not to say that the promising elements of 1965-67 had disappeared. Economic growth of individual nations, regional coöperation and multilateral aid continued, and still continue. Indonesia and Thailand, in particular, have taken the lead in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the first grouping in this area for political and economic coöperation.

Nor are the changes that have occurred in the great-power situation seen as deeply threatening, at least as yet. The United States, scarred by the Vietnam experience, is determined to be less deeply involved in the area in the future, and China, though partially recovered from the cultural revolution, is still preoccupied by internal problems and by friction on its northern borders. Both have been cut down to size, and as "great powers" no longer stand alone. The immense growth in Japan's presence and effort is accompanied by its proclaimed intent to play "the leading role" in foreign aid; and with the lesser spread of Soviet economic activity there has come talk of security pacts and evidence of a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. In itself, the idea that there may now be four great powers concerned with the area, and that there is no clearcut alignment even among these four, is wholly welcome. The same is true of the increased presence and interest of Australia and New Zealand, and the slowly growing economic activity of West European nations.

On the whole, save in Burma, the statesmen of Southeast Asia want more rather than fewer ties with the developed countries. The cry of "neo-colonialism" finds little echo today. To be sure, there remain basic concerns regarding the West. One grievance turns on the terms of trade for Southeast Asia's primary and industrial products; if allowed to become worse, this could fester into a really sharp antagonism. But the bogey of a new Western or American economic "imperialism" is largely a figment of the imagination of the New Left in the United States; one does not encounter it to any significant extent in Southeast Asia. Nor would the facts as to the scale and nature of U.S. economic activity in the area support it; and, most crucially, the host countries truly control the terms of access, in no small part because the developed countries are in competition with each other. (If the Philippines is cited as an exception, I would comment that the sooner the U.S.-Philippine relationship changes the better; and

indeed, the United States has shown itself prepared to abandon its favored position at any time.) Ironically, over the next decade, the nearest to a single controlling economic position could become that of the U.S.S.R. as a buyer of Malaysian rubber.

In short, Southeast Asia has come a long way since 1965—and even more strikingly since 1955 and 1960. True, hardly any Southeast Asian nation appears to have found an enduring political form of government. On the whole, governments are generally more responsive than before, and no longer depend on the charisma of first-generation post-colonial leaders. But the combination of a firm structure and an institutional and personal base to run it exists almost nowhere save perhaps in Singapore.

Also true, as George Thomson¹ has pointed out, most boundaries in Southeast Asia are colonial in origin, which can produce claims like that made by the Philippines on the Malaysian territory of Sabah. Also, the sense of national identity is frequently weak, and not felt by minorities or tribal groups. But this is hardly unique. Further, local historical rivalries are still much alive, though muted compared to a decade ago.

All this indicates that substantial degrees of change are inevitable in Southeast Asia in the 25 years ahead, and human experience indicates that outbreaks of violence will not be avoided. Realistic “conditions for lasting peace” do not mean a static absence of change or an end to violence. They can mean only that violence is limited, above all that it does not engage the forces or the decisive supporting weight of major powers.

II

What the last five to ten years have shown in Southeast Asia has been, in an underlying sense: that the individual nations have enough cohesion to stand on their own feet; that, though they face major problems, they can progress economically; that they have developed a new degree of “area spirit” and the beginnings of regional organization (as shown by ASEAN especially); and that they need ties to the great powers, though they do not wish to be a cockpit for any struggles among them.

The period has done even more than that, however. It also has shown that the real estate of the Southeast Asia mainland is not militarily crucial to any great nation, or vitally threatening to any other. This must affect particularly the Chinese view of an

¹ “The New World of Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 1969.

American presence there. There was a time when eminent commentators thought that China's concern on this point constituted the whole essence of the Vietnam problem. I doubt if anyone in Peking thinks that today. I am inclined to think that, though they might never admit it, Mao and his colleagues have been impressed during the last five years by America's evident desire to avoid war with China; the whole experience is one of the elements that may make an easing of tension and growth of communication now possible. But in any event Peking must know both that American bases in Southeast Asia never really added to any threat to China—and that such bases are now to be reduced if not eliminated. It was always true that none of the four great powers could get at the vitals of any of the others via the geography of Southeast Asia. The truth may now be more deeply felt.

The economic resources of Southeast Asia are likewise important to all the powers but vital to none. Its export markets and import supplies have become much more healthily diversified in the last decade, as world trade has expanded. Again, realization of the facts has probably changed even more than the facts themselves. Who today thinks that the area could serve as the rice bowl of China? Or that Japan (much less the United States) would be "vital" affected by the loss of investment opportunities, export markets or access to resources there?

Most recently, even the geographic importance of Southeast Asia may have been exaggerated. One tends to think of the Straits of Malacca as "vital." At least, it has been argued, hostile control of the whole Indonesian archipelago would be a drastic threat to Australia and New Zealand and would face Japan with an economic stranglehold on its oil supplies. As for the United States, even though it needs the route less, its interests would be seriously affected through the damage to its Pacific partners. And, no doubt, someone in Peking has drawn equally grave pictures of China fenced in from access to the southern seas. But is it so? Not in the view of some in Japan who have lately drawn up realistic assessments of what the cost would be of using the Sunda Strait, or even going clean around Indonesia. Painful and inconvenient it would be, but it can be done. After all, the world has adjusted to the closing of Suez.

The point of these changed perceptions is not that Southeast Asia has suddenly become unimportant, but rather that no great

power really need fear another there. As Washington calculations from the 1950s on were based far less on any affirmative U.S. needs in the area than on what Chinese "control" of it would mean, so China must in turn have thought what U.S. "control" would mean. It was the interaction of these two sets of fears that made the situation acutely bipolar and explosive. Now, the degree of realistic concern as to what "worst cases" could mean must be less, so that there should be correspondingly less drive and reciprocal fear.

III

What, then, are the "conditions for lasting peace" that respond to the desires of Southeast Asians, while at the same time being compatible with the interests and interactions of the great powers?

First and foremost, the preservation of the independence of the individual nations.

Second, a continued and in many instances improved rate of economic progress. The economic success stories of the past decade—in Thailand, Malaysia, perhaps Singapore most notably—need to continue and to be joined by others. To be sure, what is progress for some may be a problem for others, as in the case of the "miracle rice" that has been of dramatic help to the Philippines and now Indonesia, but with at least temporary harm to the export markets of Thailand and Burma. There is already a need for major diversification and innovation, and most basically of all, to improve the worldwide terms of trade. The recent United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) resolution, promising reduced tariffs in the developed world, could mean much in Southeast Asia, though it will not solve the problem of free market pricing in key commodities. Only world pooling arrangements could do this, and these do not seem in the cards.

Third, the fullest possible coöperation among the Southeast Asian nations. One of ASEAN's prime virtues is that it is open-ended, and of course also without ideological coloring. The Asian Development Bank and the regional economic projects originated in the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) are likewise practical and wise. For the moment, more is probably not needed; to develop to the full the projects that are now practicable and the sharing of experience in such

fields as population control will be a considerable task. It is not in the nature of the economies of the area, essentially not complementary to one another, that anything in the way of a common market for the area could develop. What is essential is the experience of working and thinking together.

From this may emerge a fourth key element—what for lack of a better term might be called a “common law of change” in Southeast Asia. Something of this sort seems already to have happened in Africa (in the Congo and Biafra), and may be emerging in Latin America. What it means simply is that the nations of an area are the initial judges of whether change and the use of violence or force of any kind are or are not fair and tolerable—and thus are, or are not, to be opposed or supported by others in the area, or by outside nations in a pinch. This could—and should—mean that the area would take an attitude of *laissez-faire* toward many of the changes of government that appear possible, on any broad projection, over the next 25 years; conversely, it could mean a loud protest if there is offensive military action or interference by a great power or a neighbor. In between, an area grouping could enter a neutral judgment on a border dispute while seeking to arbitrate it (as ASEAN has in effect done on Sabah). Though Southeast Asians lack the voting weight of other less-populous areas in the United Nations, one ventures to think that the clear and strong verdict of a local jury would gain wide support, perhaps in the future as a basis for action.

One must add a fifth condition—correct behavior by the great powers. One would like to say that this should consist of a guarantee among interested outside powers that they will not interfere by military or subversive means in the area, and acting on the finding of the local jury, will join together against either an outside power or a local nation that does interfere. This is, of course, far simpler to state than to achieve, even if the will and trust were there. They are not there. Yet this solution must be saved as a goal.

The plain truth is that no security arrangement or combination of security arrangements can be designed in Southeast Asia that remotely covers conceivable forms of aggression. New direct pacts between any regional group and any outside group (on the SEATO model) are out of the question, whether with European, Pacific or northeast Asian outside membership. Any purely

regional security grouping would require a build-up of military capabilities that would be diversionary from the main economic and social effort vital for independence and true "security." This is, I believe, the strong feeling of the most regionally minded Southeast Asian leaders. From this standpoint, the remaining outside commitments in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore are transitional remnants, of crucial importance in getting through the next five to ten years, but not destined to last.

If a great-power guarantee is unrealistic, and other approaches to security are divisive, what contribution are the great powers required to make on behalf of peace?

Twofold, I think. First, a self-imposed "common law of behavior" comparable to Southeast Asia's own "common law of change." Such a code of conduct would at a minimum bar the obvious forms of aggression and pressure-cum-subversion. Ideally, it should in the long run exclude any form of political pressure or manipulation.

The second element might be described as "balance," were it not that in international affairs this has come too often to connote a see-saw with two ends, on which parties of somewhat fixed weights take their stand. Obviously, such a "balance" is far from being the situation of the four powers concerned, now or into the future. The most friendly pair, Japan and the United States, are likely to remain close partners in their broad views and, one hopes, in foreign aid; yet they are bound to assume different security roles and to deal with China quite differently for a time. Similarly, the most opposed pair of the four, China and the Soviet Union, will be (I venture) dancing to Hanoi's tune together, at least in terms of aid, for some time to come.

Rather, the requirement is "equilibrium"—and the fluid equilibrium of the gyroscope at that, for it must allow for major changes in the next 30 years. The absolute requirement is that no power, or any combination of powers, should threaten to dominate. The ideal, beyond that minimum, would be that no one great power should reach a position in any crucial sphere—whether military, economic, or political—where its mere size and presence, even within the code of conduct, are disruptive.

IV

These conditions of peace add up to a truly neutral Southeast Asia. One would even use the word "neutralization" if it had

not been booby-trapped by de Gaulle in 1963 so that it appeared to mean acceptance not only of predominant North Vietnamese influence in all of Indochina but of ultimate Chinese dominance in the rest of Southeast Asia. The objective is simple—that the area should develop as it sees fit, with such help as it desires from outside nations but with interference from none, and that it would accept the correlative obligation of not aligning itself.

How near, one asks, are both the Southeast Asian nations themselves and the external powers concerned with the area to behaving in accordance with these conditions?

For the Southeast Asian nations, the answer is surely that they are very close indeed. The kind of posture here described can be found over and over again in the statements of the leaders of Indonesia in particular, but with a high degree of concurrence among the other ASEAN nations also. Burma remains silent, but the central concept of neutrality has always guided her policy. Even among the nations caught up in the vortex of the war in Indochina, it has remained the stated posture of Laos and Cambodia, and the goal of South Vietnam. Thailand, which might once have been considered the most “aligned” of the mainland Southeast Asian nations, has in effect adopted a second string to its bow and is prepared to replace the first just as soon as possible.

Similarly, much of the behavior of external powers in Southeast Asia now fits largely into this pattern. The multilateral framework of aid to Indonesia is a vivid example, and it is of some note that every effort has been made for some time to keep the door open for Soviet participation within that framework. Similarly, the World Bank, perhaps conscious that it might at some point be accused of being an “aligned” agency, has recently reiterated its willingness to accept Soviet and East European membership.

As for the Soviet Union’s own behavior, there has been a slowly emerging trend to treat Southeast Asia in the same manner as it deals with India and Pakistan and with the same basic fear of Chinese expansion as a major factor. In addition to their need for rubber, the Soviets have a natural interest in the free movement of their commercial shipping through the southern seas, and as time goes on this interest is bound to be reflected in some naval activity. Unless these activities lead to political meddling or a big flexing of naval muscle (to what real gain one finds it hard to see), Soviet behavior should not present a great prob-

lem. The Soviet relationship to North Vietnam could become the most important element, and it is too early to say how this will take shape over time.

The big questions, as Southeast Asians see them, concern the behavior of the other three "great powers" in the new situation. They are different questions for each. Will China once again threaten pressure and subversion? Will Japan refrain from throwing its new economic weight about, and particularly from assuming a military role at some point? And will the United States remain engaged, in the new low security posture prescribed by the Nixon Doctrine, but with major activity in trade, investment and aid throughout the area?

Of course, the three questions are intertwined. In fact, they simply summarize the requirement of "equilibrium." For if the United States does remain substantially engaged, China is seen as much less likely to be tempted to interfere or Japan ever to assume anything resembling its former wartime image.

As Japan's economic interest in Southeast Asia grows, and its concern for maintaining free transit routes develops, it should become in these respects the leader there of the four great powers—by reason of geography and Japanese economic capacity. The Japanese undoubtedly do not want to see their constructive economic role lead on to excessive leverage in individual countries, political intervention or a significant Japanese military role or presence—and they know well that Southeast Asians fear such an evolution. Yet the pressures in these directions could become great if the United States pulls out and the Chinese threat remains.

Can China, with its deep historical and cultural ties to Southeast Asia, accept and live within the kind of blueprint here described? Any present answer must be uncertain so long as Mao's successor is not determined. One could find hope—or threat?—in the apparent return to quiet realism in Chinese foreign policy over the past year. Plainly, Peking is once again seriously concerned with Southeast Asia, as shown by active propaganda in Thailand and Malaysia, the building of new roads in northern Laos and the welcome given Prince Sihanouk as a guest. One is inclined to see in this a return simply to the old probing for weakness and readiness to act on opportunities rather than intentions to take initiatives. The real test will come over time and the answer will be known by a gradual trend in behavior rather than by any paper signed at a conference. Apart from internal

preoccupations and border concerns, one element affecting China's decision will be the true nonalignment or nonhostility of the Southeast Asian nations, and a realization that peaceful ties are possible. An even greater factor will be that the other three great powers should not appear to be ganging up against her. And the greatest factor of all will be that Southeast Asia does not present a picture of weakness that tempts Peking to action.

China will bulk large in any event. Given these basic elements, one can be hopeful that China would accept and live with a new Southeast Asia that was public park rather than private preserve.

V

The most important question today in Southeast Asian minds is whether the United States will play its part. It will be little comfort if the 1950-62 period of the cold war (United States versus China and the Soviet Union), and the ensuing period of Sino-American rivalry (involving much less ideology) were now to be replaced by acute conflict in the area among any combination of China, Japan and the Soviet Union.

From a purely American standpoint, the suggested blueprint is wholly compatible with our national interests. But how much does it mean to the United States to help it come about and then to preserve it? Is it "vital" (worth fighting about), of great importance (worth a high priority in effort and attention), or merely desirable (worth some modest effort)? We have asked ourselves this question too little over the last 20 years, and not merely in this area.

Free economic access is a part of our interest, somewhat greater than it has been but, as always, essentially secondary. We can find substitutes for all we now get from Southeast Asia.

Of greater importance is our indirect interest—that Japan should have strong and mutually beneficial ties in the area. Assuming that our partnership with Japan is the cornerstone of a realistic East Asian policy, anything that affects Japan seriously or drives her inward is of real concern to us as well. This applies as much to a Japan that is excluded as to a Japan that thrusts out.

Broader still, we have a national interest that any major area in the developing world should move ahead in accordance with its own capacities. What failure to help achieve this would mean might not become clear for a generation. Both in principle and

through years of association, we should care about Southeast Asians in the most basic sense, for their national independence and their progress.

All of these together would argue for a significant effort, though not for new commitments that carry any combat obligation. They certainly should warrant continuation of economic aid, mostly multilateral, and of the role we already play in meeting possible nuclear blackmail, under the U.N. resolution that followed the nonproliferation treaty.

But one must take the discussion a step further, if one is to derive any help from it on the importance of getting from here to there. Agree, to start with, that the word "vital" as used in the past (within the Executive Branch or in the Tonkin Gulf Resolution of the Congress) was in some part rhetoric, and for the rest represented a fear of Chinese domination over most of the area to such an extent that the whole balance of power in East Asia would be changed. Historians will argue how far that fear had foundation in 1965. As of 1970, it is surely less substantial, both because the area is stronger and because countervailing great-power weight is now present, albeit still weakly.

Is it "vital," still, to avoid any form of Chinese domination in Southeast Asia? Perhaps it may be nearly "vital" that the United States should not have to decide. It is hard to imagine a more damaging situation than one in which the United States had to choose between acting with force ("commitment" or no) in Southeast Asia, and seeing a major country there taken over by external communist power with Peking heavily involved. If the former were the choice, the extent of last spring's outburst in the United States over the action taken in Cambodia tells us what might happen. However, if we simply stood aside, at any time in the next three to five years, there might be an equally great outcry and sense of national failure in a very large part of the American public.

So it may be, it seems to me, that the United States has a very great national interest in seeing Southeast Asia move on to the new basis as rapidly and completely as possible. One could put this in the form of a paradox: the United States should be "vitaly" concerned to see that Southeast Asia now becomes an area where not the United States, nor China, nor any other great power, regards its interests there as "vital."

VI

How does all this relate to the handling by the United States of the war in Indochina? Perhaps not very much, in view of other overriding domestic factors and the simple fact that our capacity to help militarily in South Vietnam is rapidly running its course. Over the past year, Hanoi has used its inner lines of communication to make gains in Laos. Having put pressures on Cambodia that, in fact though not in intent, contributed largely to Sihanouk's downfall, it has now established a strong position in Cambodia. The war has become more difficult and more indivisible. Both sides may be under strain, and it is just possible that Hanoi may be ready to negotiate seriously. Fundamentally, the United States is strategically on the defensive, and the outcome hinges on local strength and will in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

As they assess what the possible outcomes would mean for them, thoughtful Southeast Asians do not think or feel like "dominoes." They know that the United States has done a great deal, some would say too much. The real question for most is whether the United States, after Vietnam, will remain active in the area as a whole; those who sense the realities of American public opinion are aware that Americans could reach a point of disgust about Southeast Asia by staying too long in Vietnam.

This said, a precipitate withdrawal from Vietnam (or, in my own view, fixing unilaterally a date for withdrawal) would be regarded as a sure sign the United States was pulling out of the whole area. Southeast Asians would then act in ways likely to affect the American public and Congress so as to make that result even more likely. Once the fabric of reciprocal confidence, already strained, was really broken, there would almost certainly be a vicious downward spiral on both sides.

This can be avoided even under adverse outcomes in the countries of Indochina if the United States has played its hand reasonably well in the intervening period. The outcome in Indochina—which is Hanoi's show still—*can* be contained in terms of its effect in Southeast Asia, but not by pulling out regardless of consequences. If the independence of the countries of Indochina can be preserved, the sooner they are fitted into the new pattern for Southeast Asia the better. A wider Indochina conference must think in these terms, whoever attends.

In the meantime, steps such as Mr. Nixon's indication that a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam will indeed be "total" are in the right direction. Moreover, the intervention undertaken by predominantly Southeast Asian nations, under Indonesian leadership, through the Djakarta conference of last spring remains a highly significant move despite its limited results. The grouping itself may be fragile, since Japan, one of the participants, belongs to the category of "great" rather than "local" powers. But the conference marked a first step toward establishing participation by the area in the Indochina situation, and it should certainly be a major goal of the peacekeeping provisions of any settlement of the situation to provide a role for Southeast Asian nations—perhaps even the sole role. That would be a long step indeed toward meeting the requirement of a "common law of change."

Foreign policy in the American democracy tends to swing between extremes—to prefer the simplification of slogans, tug-of-war not cat's cradle. It prefers to reject, rather than amend, directions that have led to trouble; it finds it hard to qualify, or be selective, or to take account of timing and transition. So it will not be easy to move with the new tides in Southeast Asia, and to do our part in channeling them toward peace. It may not be a catchy slogan, but perhaps we can take comfort in the simple but neglected notion of doing what the area itself wants.

THE NIXON DOCTRINE AND OUR ASIAN COMMITMENTS

By Earl C. Ravenal

EIGHTEEN months after its enunciation at Guam the Nixon Doctrine remains obscure and contradictory in its intent and application. It is not simply that the wider pattern of war in Indochina challenges the Doctrine's promise of a lower posture in Asia. More than that, close analysis and the unfolding of events expose some basic flaws in the logic of the Administration's evolving security policy for the new decade. The Nixon Doctrine properly includes more than the declaratory policy orientation. It comprises also the revised worldwide security strategy of "1½ wars" and the new defense decision-making processes such as "fiscal guidance budgeting." These elements have received little comment, especially in their integral relation to our commitments in Asia. But the effects of this Administration's moves in these areas will shape and constrain the choices of the United States for a long time to come.

The President's foreign policy declaration of February 1970 promised that "our interests, our foreign policy objectives, our strategies and our defense budgets are being brought into balance—with each other and with our overall national priorities."¹ After a decade of burgeoning military spending and entanglement in foreign conflict, the nation has welcomed the vision of lower defense budgets balanced by a reduction in American involvement overseas, particularly in Asia. Actually, however, the Administration's new policies and decision processes do not bring about the proposed balance; in fact, they create a more serious imbalance. Essentially we are to support the same level of potential involvement with smaller conventional forces. The specter of intervention will remain, but the risk of defeat or stalemate will be greater; or the nuclear threshold will be lower. The fundamental issues of interests, commitments and alliances are not resolved.

II

The objectives of close-in military containment and the for-

¹ Richard Nixon, "U. S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's, A New Strategy for Peace" (Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, February 18, 1970).

ward defense of our Asian allies present us with a series of bleak choices:

With regard to deterrence: (1) perpetuation of a high level of active conventional forces, conspicuously deployed or deployable; (2) fundamental and obvious reliance on nuclear weapons; or (3) acknowledgment of the higher probability of an enemy initiative.

With regard to initial defense: (1) maintenance or rapid deployment of large armies in Asia; (2) early recourse to tactical nuclear weapons; or (3) acceptance of the greater risk of losing allied territory.

With regard to terminating a war: (1) large commitments of troops and heavy casualties; (2) use of nuclear weapons, either tactical or strategic; or (3) resignation to an indefinite and wasting stalemate, tantamount to defeat.

The only solution that transcends the triangle of unsatisfactory choices is to reevaluate our interests in Asia; restate those objectives that implicate us in the possibility of war on the Asian mainland and diminish our control over our actions; resist the grand and vapid formulas of our role in Asia—such as the existential platitude that “we are a Pacific power”—that perpetuate the illusion of paramountcy; retreat from the policy of military containment of China; and revise the alliances that have come to represent our commitment to containment.

But this course the President has consistently rejected: “. . . we will maintain our interests in Asia and the commitments that flow from them. . . . The United States will keep all its treaty commitments.” Thus the root problem of the Nixon Doctrine is its abiding commitment to the containment of China. In the furtherance of this policy our government hopes to maintain all our present Asian alliances and de facto commitments, profiting from their deterrent value but avoiding their implications. Yet it also intends to scale down our conventional military capability. The result is that the Nixon Doctrine neither reduces our potential involvement in Asian conflicts nor resolves the resulting dilemma by providing convincingly for a defense that will obviate reliance on nuclear weapons.

Let us examine the prospect of the Nixon Doctrine as a relief from involvement in Asian contingencies. The trauma that has resulted from our inability to win decisively in Vietnam has caused our policy-makers to suggest a limitation of future in-

volvement on the basis of a distinction between external or overt aggression on the one hand, and insurgency, political subversion and civil war on the other. The President attempts in this way to avoid the strategy dilemma by altering the criteria for intervention and thus understating the probability of involvement:

... we cannot expect U. S. military forces to cope with the entire spectrum of threats facing allies or potential allies throughout the world. This is particularly true of subversion and guerrilla warfare, or "wars of national liberation." Experience has shown that the best means of dealing with insurgencies is to preempt them through economic development and social reform and to control them with police, paramilitary and military action by the threatened government.

But this is nothing more than a postulation that the unwished contingency will not arise. The hard question remains: What if these "best means" are not successful? Under *those* conditions what kind of solutions does the Nixon Doctrine envisage? Might the United States be impelled to intervene with combat forces? The President states:

... a direct combat role for U. S. general purpose forces arises primarily when insurgency has shaded into external aggression or when there is an overt conventional attack. In such cases, we shall weigh our interests and our commitments, and we shall consider the efforts of our allies, in determining our response.

But this formula for discrimination and discretion seems both unclear and unrealistic. At what point does an insurgency become "external aggression"? A definition sometimes proposed is the introduction of enemy main-force units, rather than mere individual fillers. But, even apart from the difficult question of verification, this event might be well beyond the point where our intervention became critical to the situation. The paradox is that in critical cases we might not wish to define the situation to preclude intervention; in less than critical cases we would not need to invoke nice distinctions to justify it. In any case, relying on formulas and distinctions misses the point: it is simply not credible that we would sacrifice our still-held objectives to the vagaries of circumstance.

Indeed, as long as our policy remains the containment of China and the repression of Asian communism, we are inclined to view even largely indigenous revolutions as objective instances of the purposes of Peking or Hanoi or Pyongyang. Consequently, if an insurgency in an allied or even a neutral country began to

succeed, we would probably first increase logistical aid, then extend the role of advisers and provide air support. Since such moves might bring a countervailing response from the Asian communist sponsors of the insurgency, we might have to choose between sending ground forces and allowing an ally to lose by our default. In certain extremities we might be forced to the final choice among unlimited conventional escalation, defeat of our own forces, or "technological escalation" to the use of nuclear weapons.

Thus, with our formal or implied commitments and the President's open-ended prescription, the United States might yet be drawn into a land war on the Asian mainland or have to confront equally dire alternatives. In this respect the Nixon Doctrine does not improve on the policy that led to Vietnam. And, of course, our exposure to involvement in the case of more overt aggression, such as a Chinese-supported invasion in Korea or Southeast Asia, remains undiminished.

The only proposition that has become clear about the Nixon Doctrine is that its most advertised hope of resolving the strategy problem—both reducing the forces we maintain for Asian defense and avoiding involvement in conflict—is Asianization, *i.e.* the substitution of indigenous forces, equipped through enlarged U.S. military assistance, for American troops. The case for expanded military assistance has been stated with unprecedented urgency by Secretary Laird in preparation for vastly increased Military Assistance Program (MAP) budget requests for 1972 and succeeding fiscal years. Secretary Laird has characterized MAP as "the essential ingredient of our policy if we are to honor our obligations, support our allies, and yet reduce the likelihood of having to commit American ground combat units."²

But the Secretary recognizes the declining level of popular and Congressional support for military assistance. His solution, considered perennially within the Defense and State Departments but proposed for the first time in a Secretarial posture statement to the Congress, is that "military assistance should be integrated into the Defense Budget so that we can plan more rationally and present to the Congress more fully an integrated program." Military aid for certain "forward defense countries," including South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, and consisting of

² Melvin R. Laird, "Fiscal Year 1971 Defense Program and Budget" (Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, March 2, 1970).

about 80 percent of the total category "Support for Other Nations,"³ is already meshed into the Defense Budget. This legislative ploy has not yet been applied to Korea or Taiwan, though the reduction of our troops in Korea and the insurance of Taiwan against communist pressure depend, in the judgment of this Administration, on the freedom to substitute U.S. matériel for manpower.

To merge military assistance entirely into the regular functional appropriation categories of the Defense Budget would be to institutionalize the dual rationale for military assistance that has become traditional in debate within the Department of Defense. The first element in this rationale is the argument from "trade-off"—a calculus that compares the costs of equal units of effectiveness of U. S. and foreign troops. This is essentially an assertion of "absolute advantage" and is the basic and obvious sense of Secretary Laird's statement: "A MAP dollar is of far greater value than a dollar spent directly on U.S. forces."

The second element is the argument from "comparative advantage," borrowed from the economic theory of international trade: "Each nation must do its share and contribute what it can appropriately provide—manpower from many of our allies; technology, material, and specialized skills from the United States." The proponents of military comparative advantage assert, by analogy, that the cooperating and specializing defense community can "consume" security at a higher level. It may be, however, that they can only consume more of the tangible intermediate trappings of security, *i.e.* the forces and arms. The essence of security, especially for the United States as the senior partner, might depend more on certain qualitative factors. In fact, there are several difficulties in the Administration's ostensibly neutral and technical arguments for military assistance.

First, both trade-off and comparative advantage assume and confirm the inevitability and relevance of the shared mission—that is, the forward defense of the ally's territory. But only if we cannot avoid this mission is it proper to confine the debate to the optimal distribution of roles and costs.

Second, the argument from comparative advantage, like the economic theory at its origin, stresses specialization. But the concomitant of specialization is interdependence. Thus a policy of selective reliance on allies, in order to be effective, implies auto-

³ \$2.443 billion out of \$3.127 billion in the President's budget for fiscal year 1971.

matic involvement from the earliest moments of a conflict.⁴

Third, early experience indicates that U.S. ground forces cannot simply be traded off with precisely calculated increments of military assistance. They must be politically ransomed by disproportionate grants, more conspicuous deployments and more fervent and explicit confirmations of our commitment.⁵

Fourth, from the diplomatic standpoint the substitution of massive infusions of modern arms for U.S. troops is anything but neutral. To the North Koreans and their sponsors, for example, the one and one-half billion dollars of support and new equipment we now intend to give South Korea might look very provocative and destabilizing. A new phase of the peninsular arms race could be the result, with a net loss to regional and U.S. security.

Finally, the legislative tactic of integrating the Military Assistance Program into the Defense Budget would remove military assistance as an object of the broader concerns of foreign policy and assign it to the jurisdiction of more narrowly defense-oriented Congressional committees. The debate would be less political and more technical. The focus would shift from the question of involvement to the question of relative costs. Thus Asianization, which is the keystone of the Nixon Doctrine, would substitute some Asian forces and resources, but along the same perimeter of interest. It affords a pretext for reducing expense, but it does not enhance our security or relieve us from involvement.

III

The basic question is whether the Nixon Doctrine is an honest policy that will fully fund the worldwide and Asian commitments it proposes to maintain, or whether it conceals a drift toward nuclear defense or an acceptance of greater risk of local

⁴ After the decision to reduce the ceiling on U.S. troops in Korea from 63,000 to 43,000, our government moved to base permanently there a wing of F-4 fighter-bombers. An American official explained: "Our aim is to reassure the Koreans during this difficult period. Despite budgetary cuts, it shows we intend to maintain our relative air strength here. They know that the minute an air attack starts, we're involved." (*The New York Times*, August 17, 1970.)

⁵ The Administration proposes special budget requests of \$1 billion over a five-year period for Korean force modernization, in addition to about \$700 million likely to be provided in the regular military assistance budget. Even then, the Republic of Korea is demanding \$2-3 billion, plus public assurances of no further troop withdrawals until after five years and the actual completion of the promised modernization program.

defeat. The most obvious change in our military posture is that the new formula provides conventional forces to counter a major communist thrust in Asia or Europe, but not simultaneously. As the President has explained:

The stated basis of our conventional posture in the 1960's was the so-called "2½ war" principle. According to it, U.S. forces would be maintained for a three-month conventional forward defense of NATO, a defense of Korea or Southeast Asia against a full-scale Chinese attack, and a minor contingency—all simultaneously. These force levels were never reached.

In the effort to harmonize doctrine and capability, we chose what is best described as the "1½ war" strategy. Under it we will maintain in peacetime general purpose forces adequate for simultaneously meeting a major Communist attack in either Europe or Asia, assisting allies against non-Chinese threats in Asia, and contending with a contingency elsewhere.

What will be the ultimate force levels associated with the new 1½-war strategy, and how can we assess their implications for Asian defense? Peacetime forces are obviously entailed by the extent of our commitments, but in no precisely determined way. A most important intermediate term—which could account for wide differences in strategy and forces—is the probable simultaneity of contingencies.⁶ The Nixon strategy of 1½ wars is explicitly founded on the improbability of two simultaneous major contingencies. Thus demands on the planned general purpose forces are to be considered alternative rather than additive.

Can we then expect a force reduction equivalent to the requirement for defending against the lesser of the major contingencies? To support the previous strategy of 2½ wars, the Baseline (or peacetime) Force Structure was thought to provide seven active divisions for Southeast Asia, two for Korea, eight for NATO, and two and one-third for a minor contingency and a strategic reserve—a total of 19-1/3. Since the present 1½-war doctrine includes only one major contingency, in NATO *or* Asia, one might derive an active ground force as low as 10-1/3 divisions.

Such a literal expectation, however, is confused by the President's desire to insure "against greater than expected threats by maintaining more than the forces required to meet conventional threats in one theater—such as NATO Europe;" the fact that certain types of divisions are inherently specialized for certain geographical contingencies, so that all eight of our armored and

⁶ Other sources of uncertainty and wide variation are: the readiness of our reserve divisions, the amount of available airlift and seairlift, and the effectiveness of allied forces.

mechanized divisions will probably remain oriented to NATO and inapplicable to Asian defense; and finally, the judgments of both the President and Secretary Laird that the force levels necessary to implement the previous 2½-war policy "were never reached."

But it seems clear that the ultimate Baseline Force Structure under the Nixon Doctrine will contain even fewer divisions for the Asian requirement than the minimal proposals for a conventional defense.⁷ The reduced conventional force is most significant as a reflection of the altered concept of Asian defense embodied in the Nixon Doctrine. The constituent propositions of this concept are: (1) the most likely threats to our Asian allies do not involve Chinese invasion, and (2) with greatly expanded military assistance our allies can largely provide the ground forces to counter such threats.

There is a third proposition, strongly implied by the logic of the problem and markedly signaled in the President's foreign policy statement: in a future Asian conflict, particularly if it does involve China, United States intervention is likely to carry with it the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

—the nuclear capability of our strategic and theater nuclear forces serves as a deterrent to full-scale Soviet attack on NATO Europe or Chinese attack on our Asian allies;

—the prospects for a coordinated two-front attack on our allies by Russia and China are low both because of the risks of nuclear war and the improbability of Sino-Soviet cooperation. In any event, we do not believe that such a coordinated attack should be met primarily by U.S. conventional forces.

Though the "coördinated" attack described by the President is improbable, it should be noted that "theater nuclear forces" are prescribed as deterrents against the *single* contingency of a "Chinese attack on our Asian allies." Also, there are more plausible scenarios that would, in terms of their potential to immobilize U.S. forces, be the functional equivalent of a major attack: a Soviet military build-up and political pressure in central or southern Europe; or China's rendering massive logistical support to one of her Asian allies to the point where that ally could release overwhelming forces against a neighboring country; or

⁷ About five to seven divisions have been considered the minimum to blunt and delay an attack along the main access routes in Southeast Asia, then fall back to a defensible perimeter. Against a communist invasion of Korea it was thought that the South Korean army alone could hold initially north of Seoul until reinforced by Korean reserves or U.S. units to be mobilized or diverted from other requirements.

the imminent entry of China into a war where we or one of our allies might have provided the provocation. It is conceivable that two such lesser contingencies could arise, in Europe and Asia, and that one of them could develop to the point of a conflict. In that event we would be reluctant to consider our conventional forces for either theater available for the other. Motivated by illusions of decisive action and immunity from retaliation, we might be tempted to dispose of the Asian conflict by technological escalation.

Therefore, if we remain committed to the defense of interests in both theaters, but maintain conventional forces for only one large contingency, our strategy is biased toward the earlier use of nuclear weapons. Of course, there is no necessary continuum of escalation from conventional war to tactical nuclear war. But the 1½-war strategy provides the President with fewer alternatives and renders the resort to nuclear weapons a more compelling choice, as well as making nuclear threat a more obvious residual feature of our diplomacy.

And so the "balance" promised in the new security policy is achieved—but not by adjusting our commitments, restricting our objectives or modifying our conception of the interests of the United States. Rather, budgetary stringencies inspire a reduction in force levels; a "1½-war strategy" is tailored to fit the intractable realities; and a series of rationalizations is constructed to validate the new strategy—rationalizations that simply stipulate a reduced threat, count heavily on subsidized and coerced allied efforts at self-defense, and suggest an early nuclear reaction if our calculations prove insufficiently conservative.

Thus the Nixon Doctrine reveals an apparent contradiction between objectives and strategy. Are we seeing the beginning of a return to the defense posture of the 1950s, with unabated commitments to a collection of front-line client-states, but with limited options and a renewed flirtation with the fantasy of tactical nuclear warfare?

IV

The new security policy not only shifts substantively down to a 1½-war strategy but also changes the model for determining defense requirements. Instead of the classic progression from the definition of foreign policy interests to the formulation of objec-

tives, to the prescription of strategies, to the calculation of forces and their costs, we now see a constrained calculus that proceeds in reverse from limited budgets to trimmed forces to arbitrary strategies. The implications are not transmitted through the system to include a revision of objectives and interests. At best the system is balanced back from resources through strategies; the imbalance is shifted to a point between strategies and objectives.

But even the strategies and the forces may be out of balance. For the budget-constrained strategy revision is complemented by a fundamental change in the defense planning process. The previous system was requirements-oriented: there was, in theory, no prior budgetary restriction. Rather, planning began with the stated worldwide defense objective and resulted in forces and a budget which were recommended to the President and the Congress as systematically entailed by our defense objectives. Of course, the ideal system foundered on the institutional realities of weapons-systems and force creation. Indeed, the philosophy of unconstrained implementation of security objectives—"buy what you need"—encouraged inflated requirements within the framework of 2½ wars. And the attempts of the Secretary to limit forces only led the military to attempts to goldplate those prescribed forces, while keeping a ledger on the "shortfall" between the imposed strategy and the imposed force structure. But at least the direction and scope of the planning process compelled attention to the relevance and adequacy of the forces, and allowed the possibility of reasoning back from the rejection of excessive requirements to the questioning of overambitious strategies, extensive commitments and artificial interests.

By contrast, the new defense planning process begins simultaneously with "strategic guidance" and "fiscal guidance," established by the President and the National Security Council. The new procedure has attained certain efficiencies in managing the Pentagon budget cycle. But from the policy standpoint it is another matter: within the fiscal ceilings we will get the forces and weapons systems that the organization tends to produce—not the ones we might need. Of the two kinds of guidance, the fiscal is quantitative and unarguable; the strategic is verbal and elastic. If there is a coincidence of those forces and systems tailored to the fiscal guidance and those derived from the strategic guidance, it will be either accidental or contrived.

More likely, the Services will interpret the new guidance as a set of parameters within which they can promote self-serving programs. Under conditions of budgetary stringency they will skimp on manpower, supplies, war reserve stocks, maintenance and transport, while preserving headquarters, cadres of units, research and development of large new systems, and sophisticated technological overhead. In effect they will tend, as in the 1950s, to sacrifice those items that maintain balance, readiness and sustainability of effort, and to insist on those items that insure morale, careers and the competitive position of each Service.

Thus the Administration's defense planning procedure allows a second contradiction: between strategy and forces. This country may well end the 1970s with the worst of both worlds: on the one hand, a full panoply of commitments and a strategy that continues to serve an ambitious policy of containment; on the other, a worldwide sprinkling of token deployments and a force structure that is still expensive, but unbalanced, unready and irrelevant to our security.

v

The disabilities of the Nixon Doctrine follow from its insistence on the containment of China in face of budgetary pressures that arise not out of absolute scarcity of resources, but out of the nation's unwillingness to make large sacrifices for objectives that cannot be credibly invoked by its leadership. If the Administration is to be consistent in revising our defense posture and limiting defense budgets, it must consider a commensurate curtailment of our foreign policy objectives in Asia. Adjusting the intermediate-term strategies will not effect the reconciliation and will permit an honest implementation of the force and budget cuts.

But the Nixon Doctrine does not resolve the Asian defense problem in this fundamental way: rather, it appears as another formula for permanent confrontation with China. What are the issues that elude the perennial expressions of interest, by several administrations, in accommodating China? During the Johnson Administration the policy of containment ceded to a variant characterized as "containment without isolation." The shift, however, was accompanied by no tangible initiatives and induced no reciprocity from China. President Nixon entered office with a mandate—which he had created largely himself through his campaign emphasis—to bring about a reconciliation

with China. His Administration has relaxed certain restrictions on trade and travel and revived the Warsaw ambassadorial talks. But such moves, though impressive as indications of enlightenment, do not touch on the essential concerns of China. However we ultimately conceive our interests, we might as well be realistic about the eventual price of a real accommodation with China.

This price would include three kinds of consideration: (1) diplomatic recognition and admission without qualification to the United Nations and the permanent Security Council seat; (2) affirmation of a one-China policy, even allowing the eventual accession of Taiwan to the mainland; (3) removal of the U.S. military presence on the mainland of Asia, without substituting a naval cordon, a ring of nearby island bases, a host of Asian mercenary armies, or a nuclear tripwire. The components of such a withdrawal would be: liquidation of the Vietnam war and removal of all U.S. forces there; retraction of all U.S. troops from other mainland Asian countries and Taiwan and closure of all bases; termination of military assistance to mainland states and cessation of efforts to create proxy forces to continue our mission; and dissolution of our security alliances with the "forward-defense" countries of Thailand, Taiwan and Korea.

Such a program would amount to a major diplomatic revolution. It might take a quarter of a century to implement, even with the most sophisticated public and political support within the United States. It would alienate client régimes, unsettle for long intervals our relations with the Soviets, and tax the understanding of major allies such as Japan and Australia. It would signify the renunciation of our efforts to control events in Asia; henceforth we would control only our responses to events.

But it is fair to ask whether we will not arrive at this disposition of affairs in Asia at some point, whether we will it or not. Should this occur after a quarter of a century of tension and devastation, or political manœuvre and diplomatic search? It is also fair to speculate that a more neutral, or even positive, relationship with China might give us a new scope of advantages. We might benefit eventually from a commercial relationship with China, rather than conceding the economic penetration of the mainland by Japan and Western Europe while we remain frozen in our historic impasse. We might also, simply through the dissolution of predictable enmity with China, make it more difficult for the Soviets to challenge us in other areas of the world.

And we might find it useful to have a counterpoise to Japan, which is still our principal Pacific competitor, economic and potentially military, and a possible future partner of the U.S.S.R. in such common interests as counterbalancing China and developing eastern Siberia.

The tangible expression of containment is our security alliances and the other strong, though less formal, military commitments around the periphery of China. These commitments, it can be argued, create the threat to us by transforming otherwise neutral events into situations of relevance to our interests; perpetuate the confrontation with China that gives substance to the threat, by frustrating the essential motives of China; lock us into a posture of forward defense on the mainland of Asia; and dictate the requirement for large general purpose forces or equivalent means of deterrence and defense.

Our alliances in Asia do not form a coherent and comprehensive system such as NATO. Rather they are a collection of bilateral agreements, plus the multilateral SEATO pact, contracted separately from 1951 through 1962. Even the purposes served by these alliances, as seen at the time of their negotiation, were diverse. Containment of China might have been a concurrent motive, but it did not uniformly inspire the creation of the pacts. Quite apart from containing our enemies, several of the treaties exhibit motives of containing our allies as well.

The ANZUS and Philippine treaties of 1951, though signed against the backdrop of the Korean War, related more to the fear of Japan which these allies derived from World War II. The 1953 agreement with the Republic of Korea was, among other things, a price for Syngman Rhee's restraint from attempting to reunify the peninsula by force. Similarly the treaty with the Republic of China in 1955 was in part a quid pro quo for Chiang's acceptance of "re-leashing" during the Straits crisis of that year. The SEATO alliance of 1954, which extended protection to South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, arose less from the vision of true collective defense than the desire of the United States to have a legal basis for discretionary intervention under the nominal coloration of "united action." The bilateral U.S.-Thai adjunct to SEATO, negotiated by Rusk and Thanat in 1962, reassured the Thais, during the events that led to the Laos neutralization accords, that the U.S. would respond to a threat to Thai security, regardless of the reaction of other SEATO

signatories; this agreement, too, was a price to secure the acquiescence of an ally in an arrangement that suited the interest of the United States. The 1960 Security Treaty with Japan, revising the original treaty of 1951, reaffirmed U.S. administration of Okinawa and perpetuated our use of bases in the Japanese home islands, subject to prior consultation for nuclear or direct combat deployments. (The Nixon-Sato communiqué of October 1969 pledged reversion of Okinawa to Japan by 1972, a status that implies removal of nuclear weapons and submission to the "homeland formula" for consultation on the use of bases.)

Though deterrence has always been the primary function of our alliances, their military content has changed profoundly from the time they were contracted. The Dulles policy, in the pacts of 1953-55, did not emphasize the actual defense of allied territory or contemplate the dispatch of U.S. ground forces to any point where the communist powers chose to apply military force. Rather, it aimed at nuclear deterrence of overt aggression. In this concept the alliances served to establish a territorial definition. The implied countermeasure was the discretionary application of American nuclear force against communist airfields, supply centers, ports and perhaps industries and cities. The concept was not clearly resolved: it was semi-strategic and semi-tactical, partially punitive and partially for direct military effect. Also, cases short of obvious aggression, such as subversion and support for internal revolutionary struggles, were acknowledged to be imprecise and difficult. In Indochina in 1954 the Eisenhower Administration could not identify an appropriate enemy or target to fit the massive nuclear response and narrowly declined to intervene. Of course, it also sensed the lack of formal alliance protection over Southeast Asia as an impediment to intervention and moved to create SEATO within two months of the partition of Vietnam.

The refinement of tactical battlefield nuclear weapons in the middle and later 1950s made conceivable the notion of actual nuclear defense confined to the theater of conflict. The Kennedy-McNamara policy of flexible response, including counter-insurgency techniques and large balanced conventional forces, provided the practical means of containing a wider spectrum of Chinese or Chinese-supported initiatives. Thus the policy of close-in containment of China—involving the actual forward defense of allied territory—acquired its content.

There is a set of propositions that qualifies military deterrence: the more explicit and obvious our commitment, the more effective in preventing war, but the less effective in preventing our involvement in war; conversely, the more attenuated our commitment, the less certain our involvement, but the more probable a hostile initiative.

An administration with a more relaxed view of Asia might take the risk of the second proposition and look more neutrally on a communist probe. But this Administration appears likely to maintain its deterrent stance and take its chances on involvement in conflict. This would mean that it will not overtly diminish any commitment; indeed it is likely to reaffirm and reinforce any commitment that is beset by doubt. But to maintain the deterrent effect of our commitments in the face of reductions in budgets, forces and deployments, the Administration must replace deleted capabilities with some equivalent, such as increased rapid deployment ability or nuclear threat. This Administration could not count entirely on the mobility of our forces, which can be evidenced only by massive exercises and adequate lift resources, which are far from certain to be appropriated. Residually, it is forced to rely on nuclear deterrence, which need only be hinted. The point is that our mode of deterrence and our provisions for defense will now progressively diverge from the preferences of our treaty partners. Our proposed substitution of technology and threat for our manpower and presence might be equivalent from our point of view, but not from that of our allies.

None of our Asian defense arrangements is specific about the tangible support that might be evoked by an act of aggression. No joint defense force with agreed war plans and command structures exists. Our military concept could become, rather than the forward defense of all territory, a mobile defense, an enclave strategy, or even a nuclear tripwire. In another dimension, our commitment might be satisfied by various types of support, such as logistical, tactical air or nuclear fire. U.S. contingency plans are essentially unilateral and subject to uncommunicated change. And implementation of all treaties refers to our constitutional procedures, which are themselves in a phase of more stringent interpretation.

Because of this scope for manoeuvre or evasion, our Asian allies will be correspondingly more sensitive to interpretive com-

mentary by U.S. officials and to shifts in our military posture. Already they sense that the substantive content of our alliances is affected by the President's choice of worldwide strategy. The selected strategy is described as defending both Europe and Asia—though alternatively. But it is clear that Europe holds priority and claims virtually as many resources as previously; the major war case associated with the reduction in active forces is Asia. Although no alliances are formally disturbed, our Asian allies, as they count our divisions and analyze our posture statements and policy declarations, have cause for concern that behind the façade of ritualistic reiteration we might have altered our capability and specific intent to fulfill our treaty commitments.

Thus we can devalue the diplomatic and deterrent effect of our alliances without even gaining immunity from involvement, simply by shifting strategies, debating criteria for intervention and making arbitrary adjustments in force levels. In view of the liabilities of this course—which is the course of the present Administration—we might as well face the problem more directly and begin to consider the broader alternatives to containment, with their full implications for our alliances in Asia.

VII

As long as we assert interests in Asia that (1) entail defending territory, (2) could plausibly be threatened by hostile actions and (3) are evidenced by alliances that dispose us to a military response, we are exposed to the contingency of involvement. If we maintain this exposure through insistence on our present Asian commitments, while adopting budget-constrained strategies, we risk a future defeat or stalemate, or we allow ourselves to be moved toward reliance on nuclear weapons.

To avoid these alternatives, two courses are available. One is heavy dependence on allied forces to fulfill defense requirements. This is the hope of Asianization, offered prominently by the Nixon Doctrine. But this policy binds us closely to the fate of our Asian clients and diminishes our control over our involvement; and there is still the liability that U.S. forces might be required to rescue the efforts of our allies.

The other course is a process of military readjustment and political accommodation that would make it far less likely that we would become involved every time there is some slippage in the extensive diplomatic "fault" that runs along the rim of Asia.

This course is arduous and complex, and as little under our unilateral and absolute control as a course of military deterrence. But the consequences of not budging from our present set of ambitions and illusions—or of trifling with the unalterable purposes of China by limiting ourselves to insubstantial diplomatic initiatives—are far bleaker.

The situation calls not for a symbolic shift in strategy—such as the 1½-war doctrine—which is founded on the hope that the contingencies that would test it, to which we are still liable, might not occur. The situation is not amenable to purely instrumental solutions, such as the calculated equippage of allied armies or the reliance on technological escalation. The situation requires a fundamental questioning and revision of the containment of China.

The confusion that surrounds the Nixon Doctrine is appropriate to its conflicting message and incomplete intent. While pledging to honor all of our existing commitments, the President has placed them all in considerable doubt. While offering promise of avoiding involvement in future Asian conflicts, he has biased the nature of our participation. Thus, in the attempt to perpetuate our control of the destiny of Asia, the Nixon Doctrine may forfeit control of our own destiny in Asia.

HAZARDOUS COURSES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

By George F. Kennan

STRETCHING southward from the two great river systems of the Congo and the Zambesi to the confluence of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and thus comprising roughly the southern third of the African continent, there lies a vast area, about two-thirds the size of the United States, which constitutes in its entirety one of the principal problem-children of the world community. Consisting largely of an arid central plateau, with lower coastal strips only partially suitable for human habitation, this region harbors a population of some 41,000,000, of whom, in approximate terms, 34,000,000 might be of black African origin, 4,500,000 of European, and the remainder of mixed or other blood. It is made up of a number of highly disparate political entities: the great Portuguese dependencies of Angola and Mozambique, the highly controversial territories of Rhodesia and South West Africa, the Republic of South Africa, and the three former British High Commission territories, now independent: Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.

With the exception of these last-named entities, which make up only a small portion of the whole, there is no part of this area which has not been in recent years the subject of violent discontent, debate, protest and conflict in the United Nations and in world opinion generally. Controversy has centered, of course, on the political relations existing there between people of European origin and the black Africans who constitute everywhere the majority. This is scarcely surprising. The area contains at least 90 percent of the entire white population of Africa, as against 11 percent of its Blacks. Of the white inhabitants, furthermore, a considerable proportion have been settled in Africa for many generations, having even in some instances come no later than did the Blacks to the settlement of the regions in which they are now residing. In these circumstances racial problems were bound to be of a different order—greater in scale, emotionally more acute—than elsewhere in Africa. It could scarcely have been otherwise. This distinction notwithstanding, the demands of the international community, particularly as formulated by the senior bodies of the United Nations, have tended to be no