

THE ROLE OF THE MAJOR POWERS IN THE NEW ASIA

by :

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If proof were still needed that the 1970's are to be a period of profound change in the East Asia and Pacific region, it is amply provided by the sudden, though perhaps limited, improvement in the relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China that has taken place recently. This development comes as a sequel to China's diplomatic activities in Eastern and Western Europe, North America, Africa and the Middle East during the last year, signaling China's breaking out of its isolation.

These events, on top of the vast changes that have already occurred in the area, seem to foreshadow even greater changes in the years to come. There has been Japan's spectacular rise to world economic power, with its deep impact on the economic growth of the region and its traditional patterns of trade. The bitter war in Vietnam seems to be winding down. The prospect of a reduced military profile of the United States in Southeast Asia is juxtaposed with a somewhat increasing involvement of the Soviet Union in the area. At the same time there are visible signs of increased self-confidence and of growing cooperation among Southeast Asian countries.

⁺ The author wishes to make clear that the views presented here do not necessarily reflect those of the Indonesian Government. The perceptions, speculations and ideas in this paper are of a tentative character and are offered in response to the request of the conference organizers to get away from the old stereotypes and to try to break new ground.

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These changes have reinforced the increasingly widely held view that the bipolar division of world power which had characterized the 1950's has dissolved. In the West this is reflected by a greater pluralism within the Atlantic Alliance. In the East it reflected strong tendencies towards polycentrism, eventually leading to the fragmentation of the hitherto monolithic international communist movement and the emergence of ideologically hostile camps in the communist world. The old bipolar system is now in the process of being replaced by a new multipolarity.

In the Pacific, the pertinent constellation of forces consists of the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union and China. In attempting to meet one of the purposes of this conference, which is "to break away from dated patterns of dealing with problems of security in the changing environment of East and Southeast Asia", it might be useful to explore the implications of the new multipolarity, and especially to consider under what conditions this new constellation of forces can be made to work peacefully and effectively in coping with the rapid changes in the region. Before we look into the requirements for the establishment of such a dynamic but relatively stable equilibrium it will be necessary to make at least a cursory assessment of the basic interests that underlie the attitudes and policies of the four major powers.

Major Power Interests

China

China's emergence as a nuclear power has not altered her basic strategic interest. This is to reduce the threat of external aggression. This threat is perceived not only in terms of anxiety over the security of her borders with the Soviet Union, as evidenced by her denunciation of the Brezhnev

doctrine in the wake of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, and by the various military moves on the Sino-Soviet border, but also in terms of the threat of encirclement by American (and Japanese) power. Globally, China's security concerns may be interpreted as involving the effort to prevent the consolidation of a nuclear monopoly on the part of the two super powers in which the world would be divided into agreed spheres of influence. Her continued efforts in the field of nuclear weapons development, and her revived interest in re-establishing her presence in the Middle East, East Africa and Eastern Europe seem to be in at least some degree in support of this objective. The prevention of hostile encirclement is also bound to make her look with concern at Japan's expanding economic role in East and Southeast Asia and the Soviet Union's relationship with India.

But even if China's essential strategy requirements seem to show a basic consistency, the policies with which she is likely to pursue her goals are bound to remain unclear for some time. It remains to be seen whether she will pursue such aims as the reduction of American power in Asia, the prevention of the consolidation of Soviet influence in the wake of American and British withdrawals, and the establishment of herself as a leader of the Third World, through government-to-government relations of a neo-Bandung type, or through a continued alignment with local revolutionary movements and continued advocacy of wars of liberation, or through a judicious mix of these two strategies. China's entry into the United Nations is by itself unlikely to influence decisively the choice to be made, although of course the chances for a responsible choice in terms of the international community become more likely. A great deal will depend on the way in which the domestic power structure in China will be rebuilt, and on the continuously shifting balance of power between the purists-ideologists, the professional militarists, and the administrators-pragmatists.

U.S.S.R.

Even though it may be said that the Vietnam war has led to a permanent Soviet presence in Southeast Asia, there is still some doubt as to the level of importance the Krenlin really attaches to Southeast Asia and to its relations with Asia in general, apart from China. Some argue that these relations are only of marginal importance as compared to Soviet interests in Eastern and Western Europe and the Middle East, and that Soviet capabilities to sustain a military or aid operation of any significance would be very limited. In some ways Soviet policies towards Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific can be seen as responses to problems rather than an autonomous development. But there is little ground to doubt that Russia's assumption of super-power status has imposed on her a set of considerations, both impulses and restraints, that are alien to her traditional motivations as an ideological power, without however obliterating the latter. In this context it is understandable that the U.S.S.R. is aiming towards the kind of global presence appropriate to a full-fledged global power of equal status to the United States. This urge will inevitably impel Russia to establish her political, economic, and maritime presence beyond such traditional areas of interest as the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. At the same time it is possible to explain the increased naval interest of the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean as a response to the possibility and likelihood of its use by hostile nuclear submarines, as well as providing the necessary linkage between her Eastern fleet and those units operating around the Arabian peninsula. It also can be safely assumed that the Soviet Union has a continuous interest to counter any excessive American, Japanese, and Chinese presence in the East Asia and Pacific region.

Stability and an improvement in living standards in the region may also to some extent constitute factors in Soviet assessment

of her interests, if only because instability and revolutionary activity have until recently shown to benefit only China. Increased Soviet economic involvement in Southeast Asia is shown in her greater interest in the ECAPF, and in her enlarged commodity trade with Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. Indication of her interest in becoming a member of the Asian Development Bank should be seen in this context as well. The direction of the main thrust of Soviet policies in the region, however, beyond the establishment of her presence, will depend greatly on the state of her relationship with the United States and the People's Republic of China in global terms. The intensity of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the state of her relations with China and of China's relations with the United States will be important factors in this connection.

Other factors will be whether there will be detente or escalation with the United States in the strategic arms race; whether an ideological and political accommodation could be achieved with China, without loss to Soviet desires to retain the ideological leadership in the international communist movement; and thirdly, the evolving direction of internal Russian priorities, which seem to be undergoing a process of reevaluation. Finally, Soviet moves will also depend on the way in which the other major powers react to her enlarged presence in the area.

Japan

There are two particular aspects in Japan's present strategic outlook. First, the absence, both within the ruling elite as well as outside it, of any expectation of an immediate external threat to Japanese security. Second, the predominantly economic content of her strategic outlook.

As to the first aspect, the belief is widely shared that under

the protection of the United States nuclear umbrella and the stipulations of her own peace Constitution, no conceivable security threat is to be feared, either from China or the U.S.S.R. There is equally widespread realization, however, that this assumption remains valid only as long as Japan refrains from throwing her military weight around and from utilizing her nuclear option.

The second aspect, Japan's tremendous economic growth and her corresponding dependence on raw materials, trade and supply routes and export outlets, have made her relationship to the Southeast Asian and Pacific region one of great importance. Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia represent four of the ten largest raw material supplier countries to Japan. Considering that seventy per cent of all Japanese imports are industrial raw materials there is no doubt about the importance of the region to Japan's industry. Rubber, tin, lumber, ores and vegetable oils come from this region. The ninety per cent of her petroleum supply that comes from the Middle East has to pass through Southeast Asian waterways, and even a possible oil pipeline across the Isthmus of Kra will not reduce the importance to Japan of the security and stability of Southeast Asia. Japan's trade with the region has more than tripled in the last ten years, effecting in the process fundamental changes in preexisting trade patterns. Japanese aid and investment to the various countries of the region have shown corresponding increases.

Japan's basic interests in the region, therefore, can be seen to be:

- General stability and relative prosperity in the countries of the area;
- Open and secure waterways;
- Continued supply of raw materials and secure markets;
- Continued partnership with the U.S. and the avoidance of conflicts with China or the Soviet Union.

But there is still another dimension to Japan's security problem. Rapid economic growth has also given rise to a resurgence of national pride, a new national assertiveness towards a commensurate political status and role in world affairs. Although psychological resistance against revival of militarism of any sort is still prevalent, this new mood will undoubtedly result in a need for Japan to redefine her national purposes, at least towards a more "autonomous" and less dependent role in foreign policy and defense. An extreme swing of the pendulum, for internal as well as external reasons, however, might lead to an upsurge of a new radical xenophobic nationalism, inclined to abandon the "rationality" of earlier postwar leaders.

From the moment, however, that Japan assumes a more direct defense responsibility beyond her immediate surroundings, fear of Japan's military power and of Japan exercising her nuclear option will set into motion a series of reactions which are bound to alter the political and security environment in which Japan will have to operate. The political cost, to her as well as to other countries, of such an autonomous stance, whether within or without the American defense system, is bound to be under continuous scrutiny by Japan as well as those other countries, as she assumes a political role in the world commensurate with her economic power.

Obviously this question cannot be answered simply in terms of security options, but will have to be found within the context of Japan's conceptions of the kind of world it wants to live in and the role it wants to play to that end.

U.S.A.

Projections of U.S. policies towards the Asian-Pacific region have assumed particular significance since the inauguration of the Nixon doctrine. Although in essence still a tentative blueprint rather than a full-grown doctrine, designed in President Nixon's own words as "only the beginning of the adjustment of the American role to a new era in Asia," it nevertheless provides

us with a rather clear outline of American policy orientations towards the region.

I do not think I need to dwell on the doctrine's explicit policy elements. What the U.S. will or will not do has been authoritatively spelled out most recently in President Nixon's second State of the World address to Congress on February 25, 1971, and Secretary Laird's and Secretary Rogers' respective reports to Congress on defense and foreign policy. Of much more importance here is to consider some of its undercurrents.

The doctrine then seems to reflect the awareness of the need to redefine the forms and extent of U.S. involvement in Asia and especially in Southeast Asia. It suggests also the need for a critical re-evaluation of what constitutes America's vital security interests in the region. This will involve a redefinition of the United States defense posture and the manner in which it will meet its treaty commitments, although of course the final crystallization will only be possible after the resolution of the Vietnam war.

It seems reasonably certain that, beyond the explicit guarantee of a nuclear umbrella, the nations in the area are expected to increasingly assume responsibility to handle all threats, whether from external aggression or internal subversion, though the doctrine also assumes some limited responsibility towards enabling these countries to do so. The doctrine also seems to reflect a more limited reliance on armies and on a military approach to solution of the problems of security and to what is essentially a problem of poverty in the region. It seems to indicate a greater awareness of the many problems that require economic and political remedies rather than purely military ones. The Nixon doctrine postulates the United States as a Pacific power, though not necessarily as a land power in the Western Pacific. She would maintain a continuous presence and active participation in the area, but one adjusted to a new power equation in the world as well as in the region based

on nuclear parity and structured in a multipolar setting. Despite such adjustments regarding the forms and extent of America's involvement, the premises and content of America's basic interests seem to remain. These revolve around the prevention of dominance by a single power in the area; stability and relative prosperity in the region; open seas and continued access to raw materials and markets; continuing partnership with Japan; detente with the U.S.S.R.; and a normalization of relations with China.

In any discussion of the Nixon doctrine it may be well to realize however, that it is the public mood in the United States which will eventually set the limits within which the doctrine must develop its implementing policies. In the final analysis it is not the expressed elements of the doctrine that count, but how the gut reaction of the American people to the withdrawal from Indochina will affect the political will for continued international leadership and the current tendencies towards neo-isolationism. Whatever the case may be, the present discussion on the four power equilibrium in East Asia and the Pacific assumes continued American involvement as a Pacific power, America's continued acceptance of responsibility as a world power, as well as the continued credibility of her nuclear umbrella. If any one of these assumptions proves to be incorrect, it would automatically invalidate the main thrust of this paper.

Major Power Interactions

A summary of major power interests towards the region may help identify certain basic objectives and attitudes. It does not suffice, however, for an understanding of the dynamics of the situation and should, therefore, be complemented by an attempt to assess the complex interactions between these interests as they relate to the fast-changing pattern of developments in the region itself.

It might perhaps be useful to discern three related levels at which these interactions can be seen to occur: the global level, affecting the power equilibrium in the world; the theater or regional level, affecting the region of East Asia and the Western Pacific, and the third or subregional level, encompassing interaction of all and each of the major powers with Southeast Asia and its continuing instabilities.

The uneasy triangle between the United States, the U.S.S.R. and China will undoubtedly continue to be the dominating factor in the global strategic situation of the 1970's. On the one hand, the strategic parity between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and domestic pressures in both countries against continued excessive military expenditures will slowly compel both super powers toward some kind of global accommodation, on the nuclear as well as on the conventional level—at least if both countries manage to contain those interest groups, within their borders, pushing for "superiority". On the other hand, the fear each has of seeing the other succeed in enticing China to its side will keep alive considerable uncertainty and instability within this triangular relationship. China, on her part, is bound to be on the alert for any sign of tacit U.S.-U.S.S.R. collusion to gang up on her, and wants to be ready to counter any such development. The point to be made here is that while most parts of the world would welcome a detente between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., such a rapprochement should not reach the point at which China's suspicions would be aroused, triggering her aggressive defense mechanisms.

The fear of a possible coalition of the two super powers is, of course, not only of concern to China but to many smaller nations in the world as well. Although there were also several other reasons, the thaw in the last few years did lead to a visible decrease in the interest of both super powers in giving economic aid. There is a palpable fear on the part of a number of poor

countries that such a condominium would constitute a "richman's club", treating the poor world around them with considerable indifference and at best with "benign neglect". China's efforts to prevent such a duopoly from crystallizing could therefore, under certain conditions, count on considerable interest from many countries in the Third World.

The interactions among the great powers are further complicated by the problem of Japan. It is, for instance, in China's interest to see Japan put some distance between herself and the U.S. However, this should not go so far as to induce Japan to strike out on her own and consequently to re-arm herself and go nuclear. The same calculation should inhibit any American desire simply to see Japan take over the security burden in the region. At the same time it should be realized that not only an American push towards a Japanese security role could lead to her going nuclear, but that Japanese doubts about the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella might have the same effect. In any case a nuclear Japan, capable of inflicting assured destruction on China, will also constitute a real threat to the Soviet Union and the U.S., and would fundamentally alter the global power structure.

Another aspect of major power interaction at the global level is brought out by U.S. and Soviet interest in finding an accommodation with China. The reason for the two super powers' interest in drawing China in is obvious: without her no sensible or viable scheme of nonproliferation or of nuclear arms reduction is possible. China, on the other hand, is intent on breaking the virtual nuclear monopoly of the two super powers and may not be in a hurry to comply with any limitation scheme until her attainment of a second strike capability will improve her bargaining position. Her leverage in this connection may, however, be limited by the likelihood that her continued

non-participation in an international arms control scheme might frighten Japan or India into going nuclear.

At the theater or regional level major power interactions may best be studied in the context of some crucial issues relevant to the region as a whole: Japan's trade surplus with the U.S. and its wider consequences; Japan's future economic relationships with China and the Soviet Union; the potential for cooperation and competition between China and Japan; the exploitation of oil on the Continental Shelf; the problem of the divided countries and specifically the Taiwan and the Korean problems. Most of these problems are on the sub-nuclear level and involve political and economic interests and conflicts.

For instance, Japan's decision to diversify her energy sources and resources in response to the rise in oil prices, resulting from the Teheran agreement a few months ago, is bound to breathe new life into her negotiations with the Soviet Union on the development and transportation of natural gas in Siberia. Also if undue suspicions and stresses in her relationship with China are to be avoided, Japan may be forced to simultaneously search for ways of improving her relations with that country. Her trade with China being limited by Chinese export capability to Japan, such a move may have to wait until China develops an interest in medium or long term external loans in order to speed up her own economic development. It is obvious then that Japan cannot afford to get caught in Sino - Soviet rivalries and suspicions. At the same time the Taiwan problem is bound to put a serious strain on the Japan-China relationship. Along with her investments in Taiwan, Japan's trade with Taiwan is greater and is capable of a faster rate of growth than her trade with China. While therefore the solution of the Taiwan problem will mainly depend on what China and the United States find

acceptable, Japan's economic and strategic stake in any solution is considerable.

Having shown the interrelatedness of Japan, the U.S.S.R. and China, a few words should be said about the impact of the global triangle of China, the United States, and the Soviet Union on the interrelationship at the theater level. It is not unlikely that improvement in the United States-China relationship may be a contributing factor in the ultimate resolution of the Vietnam war. Similarly, such a rapprochement would create a situation in which a solution of the Taiwan issue is no longer unthinkable. At the same time it would for the moment be impossible to say whether Soviet anxieties triggered by such a rapprochement would have a positive or negative effect on the U.S.-Soviet search for a detente. Going one step further, though, a triangular U.S.-Soviet-China detente may open the door for the building of bridges between North and South Korea, providing both sides can find the political self-confidence to do so. In fact, the "give" in the Korean problem may be a good barometer to gauge the pressures in this global triangle. Similarly, the exploitation of the oil on the Continental Shelf around the Senkaku islands may become possible through the multilateralization of the mechanism for the exploitation of these resources even before the issue of conflicting territorial claims is worked out.

It may be important to realize that these speculations only make sense as long as Japan is not considered a military factor. From the moment Japan becomes one, and especially from the moment Japan becomes a nuclear power, many of these problems will remain insoluble if they have not been resolved by then. Given Japan's security interest in South Korea for example, a rightly or wrongly perceived threat from North Korea is bound to accelerate Japan's emergence as a military power. This suggests that all countries in the

region have an interest in keeping Japan nonmilitaristic and nonnuclear. In a sense, though, the development of Japan's conventional military power is inevitable inasmuch as her military expenditure is pegged at 9 per cent of her GNP, which will give her a gradually increasing military striking power sufficient to deter most cases of limited aggression against her or her interest. But this is still quite a way from a militaristic or a nuclear Japan.

Inasmuch as Japan's role in the theater is a function of Japan-U.S. relations, one might say that the way in which the multipolar constellation of forces operates is in a crucial sense determined by that relationship. Shortsightedness and insensitivity to each other's interests or feelings, cultural ignorance, genuine misunderstandings or plain cussedness in the relationship between these two countries may therefore have far-reaching consequences on the distribution of power in the Western Pacific. A Japan which has moved out of the American defense system (for instance because for some reason the U.S. nuclear umbrella had ceased to be credible) and goes it alone as a nuclear power is bound to arouse hostilities of such intensity that these may well nullify her potential gains in becoming a nuclear power. It would certainly make it impossible for her to continue to play the comparatively inoffensive economic role she now has. The emergence of a nuclear Japan would undoubtedly also lead to intensified four power competition, thus raising the specter—assuming that a war can be avoided—of a breakdown of the world into spheres of economic influence, each building along a north-south axis, each dominated by one of the four major powers. This leads us to the conclusion that if the four-major-power constellation of forces in the Asia-Pacific region is to work at all, special care should be taken to avoid pushing Japan into a militaristic or nuclear stance. There is some degree of irony in Japan's present position. While the Japanese are now being condemned in various quarters as

"economic animals," it is perhaps the most moral position Japan can take. There is actually nothing wrong with being a successful homo economicus. The point at issue really is how responsibly the power resulting from it is going to be used.

It will also be impossible for Japan to play to its full potential, and in the most constructive way, the economic role she could and should play in the region unless she develops a sensitivity to other cultures and other nations and recognizes how the impact of her economic activity is affecting the lives of other nations. With such a sensitivity it will be easier to find the ways in which Japan's relations with other countries could be protected from undue political antagonism. And finally, it is important that Japan develops a new and coherent vision of the world she wants to see develop and the role she wants to play in the process. The understanding of such a vision on the part of the weaker nations in the region might allay many of the fears they now hold

The Major Powers and Southeast Asia

The third level of interactions encompasses those of all the major powers with the nations of Southeast Asia. As we have seen, the area of Southeast Asia is important to all major powers for a variety of reasons: as strategic waterways, as sources of raw materials, as export markets. All powers, with-until recently-the possible exception of China, have a stake in its stability. As for China, she seems to have operated for some time on the assumption that continued instability might lead to changes favorable to China's objectives in the area. At the same time it should be realized that while important to them, no "vital" security interests of the major powers are at stake here, except for China's concern with countries and areas contiguous to her. It is in each major power's interest that none of the others attain a dominant

influence over the area generally. The withdrawal therefore of U.S. military power from the Southeast Asian mainland and the opening of an opportunity for China to play a significant role in the future of the region may induce China to accept as a desirable goal the concept of mutual self-restraint on the part of the major powers in East and Southeast Asia within the context of a new global configuration of forces. It should be said in this connection that reflecting her traditional self-centeredness, China's foreign policy changes are most likely the result of her own internal evolution. China is of course bound to retain a deep ideological, as well as a relatively low-cost, low-risk, supporting interest in all manifestations of discontent and in all impulses for radical change in the area. But after the debacle of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965 - 66, it has become increasingly clear that China's direct leverage on the policies and politics of the countries in the region is rather limited. China's capacity for internal subversion seems to be effective mainly in the belt of hill tribes of Indochina and among the ethnic Chinese minorities in the broader Southeast Asia region. Moreover, the recent events in Ceylon, where Western and Soviet support, together with Chinese support, were thrown behind the legitimate government, seem to indicate that internal strife in Southeast Asia, quite apart from its causes and motivations, no longer automatically benefits China. The formulation of implicit understandings among the major external powers with a view to preventing major power conflict in Southeast Asia should therefore not be too difficult, but for the chronic instability of the region itself.

There are inherent elements of instability in Southeast Asia. Its causes are varied. There is the heritage of borderlines arbitrarily drawn by the former colonizing powers--the cause of a number of continuous border disputes. There is a long history of dynastic conflicts in some parts. There is also the

existence of unassimilated minority groups seeking their own communal destinies apart from, and sometimes in conflict with, the national goals and purposes of the new nation states. Colonial rule tended to aggravate these tensions, by favor or discrimination. The process of decolonization added new tensions and stresses; and subsequently political discontent has resulted from imbalances in the power structure between center and periphery, the slowness of economic growth, growing unemployment, the increasing inequality in distribution of wealth, and also urbanization and population pressure.

Irrespective of whether the label and language of discontent and insurrection are communist or radical nationalist, at the center of these problems lies the discrepancy between heightened expectations for greater prosperity and social justice, and the general inadequacy of the political system to keep pace in bringing desired changes. Stability at the present level of poverty, in most countries, is impossible because many of these problems remain insoluble at that level. They may become manageable at higher economic standards and with some progress in modernization. Continuous political and economic change, sometimes of a structural nature, is therefore both inevitable and desirable. Their capacity to bring about such changes may well be the most crucial area in which the viability of a number of Southeast Asia states will be tested in the 1970's. To be sure, progress in political and economic development may, at least for some time, add to the instabilities of the situation. But some degree of instability should not be seen as inherently unhealthy. It may signify progress. Such instability however should not become a tempting condition for the external powers to repeat the traditional pattern of big power rivalries in Southeast Asia at the expense of the region.

One of the most important lessons of the Indochinese war is that the process of transformation of old societies into

modern states has its own social dynamics which has little to do with the ideological preoccupation and strategic calculations of external major powers. These problems of social transformation are essentially autochthonous. The major challenges these nations have to meet are nation building and rapid economic development. The ideological question is of course an all important question to the nations concerned. It should also be realized however that whatever the ideological baseline from which these nations start, it is their capacity to mobilize the country for nation building and rapid economic development which will in the long run determine their shape, political structure and ideological orientation. In most cases intervention by external powers, by perpetuating social imbalances and rigidities and by creating patterns of exploitative dependency on outside power, only distorts this process of transformation, deflects the main thrust of the social dynamics to other internally less relevant goals and adds to instability. An implicit or explicit agreement on a low level of involvement on the part of the external power would therefore constitute the most likely condition in which the Southeast Asian nations can work out their own political destinies and overcome their problems of poverty and social stagnation. An international post-war reconstruction program supported by all the major powers for the whole of Indochina, including North and South Vietnam, would be consistent with this concept.

For such a consensus to be effective, it must be possible for each of the great powers to regard the inevitable conflicts in Southeast Asia as essentially internal to the region, so that they may be treated with a measure of detachment, even if for a period internal strife in Southeast Asia may seem to affect the external balance.

Interactions of the major powers with Southeast Asia are also affected by the new economic relationships in the whole theater. Japan's emergence as a first-class economic power has led to new patterns of trade within the region itself as well as outside it. Japan's growth has affected that of her immediate neighbors, South Korea and Taiwan, which along with Hong Kong have developed new export capabilities and trade relations with such outside markets as the United States. In contrast with this mainly East-West pattern stands Japan's highly intensive and expanding relationship

with the nations of southeast Asia and Australia. In addition, the Vietnam war and the U.S. war-related expenditures in the area--and their inevitable halt--as well as the large Japanese trade surplus with the U.S., are factors which have and will continue for some time to affect these interactions.

The development of these new patterns of trade has accelerated the economic growth of the region as a whole and, as such, has considerably strengthened the stability of a number of countries in the area. It should not be overlooked, however, that for some of the large Southeast Asian countries, where external trade constitutes a relatively small part of their total economic activities, the gains from increased trade by itself will not be enough to enable them to come to grips with the basic structural problems they face. Nor should one ignore the legitimate concern of most developing countries in this region of avoiding being locked in permanently in the position of raw materials producer, and at continuing worsening terms of trade at that. Ideas of a Pacific Free Trade Zone, as have occasionally been launched, are bound to hold very little attraction to these countries, until they have made more progress in their industrialization. Their fears of being frozen permanently into the existing pattern of international division of labor are very real indeed.

Here, the importance of the second type of economic relationship, the aid relationship, becomes relevant. The role of external aid in the development effort of Southeast Asia may prove crucial in more than one way. Not only is it important in that it provides for infrastructural development support and for the transfer of capital, skills and managerial know-how that are either nonexistent or in short supply in the Southeast Asian countries. Even more important, external aid to some of the new nations will help determine, perhaps in a crucial way, the degree of openness of those societies as they eventually crystallize. The reason for this is that aid can alleviate in some important degree the burden to be carried by the indigenous population, and thus reduce the need for coercion in the mobilization of resources for development.

External economic aid is also bound to have an important bearing on the security of these nations and of the region as a whole. The ability of the Southeast Asia nations to stabilize their societies at a higher economic level will in turn generate the related capacity to develop sufficient indigenous

strength and resilience to withstand external as well as internal security threats, thus obviating the need for external powers to play a direct role in the maintenance of security in the region. It offers perhaps the best hope for all of us to avoid a second Vietnam. Economic support and cooperation over and beyond the immediate, short-range interests of the external donor countries is a goal that serves the stability of the region as well as that of the multipolar system and should, therefore, be in the interest of all four major powers.

Private foreign investment too is bound to continue to have an important effect on the growth rate in the region. Generally speaking, however, a more consistent identification of investors with indigenous national development goals and a greater interest in the development of indigenous entrepreneurial capabilities, may be needed in a number of countries if a backlash in bilateral relationships is to be avoided. In the business field there is an increasing need for new types of multilateral structures. The multinational corporations for instance have been an important instrument in the transfer- mainly from the United States- of management skills and talents, capital and technology, to countries in the region. The time may now have come to consider the creation of multinational corporations in the fullest sense of the word, comprising elements from more than one of the industrial countries, from the individual host country as well as from the foreign where the host country is located.

The difficulties in managing international consortia thus far may not make such an idea look very attractive. Nevertheless new attempts to find the right formula will have to be made. Japan, like America before her, is also becoming aware of the need to develop new multilateral structures in the field of specific aid and business organizations. Equally obvious has become the need for an aid philosophy less directly linked to her interest in specific resource development or export promotion, but rather to the general growth requirements of the area. This could help reduce the fears of external economic domination. Such structures and arrangements could also help in reducing major power antagonisms, especially from China, resulting from the assumption of too dominant a role by one of them in the development of the subregion. Japan's geographic location, her economic needs and capabilities, and her trade surplus, make it almost impossible

for her not to play such a major economic role. In aid, as in trade and investment, some degree of balance—deliberately maintained—among the roles of the major powers will be desirable to **keep** these activities from exacerbating existing asymmetries and from upsetting the low involvement posture of **the external powers** in the military and political fields. In this way major power rivalries may be reduced to the advocacy and support of competing strategies of economic development, each with its own mix of distributive **justice** and freedom.

Regional cooperation among Southeast Asian nations, including the creation of mechanisms for regional development projects might be important, useful as a means of blurring if not entirely fusing the identities of investors, aid givers and beneficiaries, as well as specifically absorbing increased Japanese aid to the region without too great a political cost.

It is however not only with Japan, or for that matter with the United States—to some extent already engaged in such a search—that Southeast Asian **countries** must develop new institutions and policies of economic cooperation, capable of reducing as much as possible the growth of political antagonism. The same holds true for their relations with the Soviet Union, the Eastern European countries and China. Here too it is important to search for forms of cooperation that are economically efficient and could bridge or render harmless the differences in political systems and philosophy at the lowest political cost. Considerable ingenuity and more institutional flexibility will be required to make this possible.

Although this paper deals with the Asia-Pacific region and the pull it exerts on Southeast Asia, a brief reference **should** be made to two other regions which in the past used to exert a contrary pull on her: the Indian subcontinent and Western Europe.

First reflecting old colonial ties, Western Europe has historically been the main trading partner and foreign investor for most of Southeast **Asia**. In the last decade or more however she has ceased to be a power factor in the area. Still it is not inconceivable that when European integration has proceeded further, and providing that she does not turn into a self-seeking organization mainly looking after her African interests, there may well be a renewed manifestation of European economic interest in Southeast Asia. Such a development would add to the pluralistic character

of foreign power interests in the area, of such importance to the stability of the external equilibrium in Southeast Asia. Second, throughout a large part of its early history Southeast Asia has also felt the pull of the Indian subcontinent. At present India's influence on Southeast Asia is negligible. Still, given her problems with China as well as her long range economic interests, in the long run India can ill afford not to develop a real stake in the Southeast Asia region. This however may only be possible after the Indo-Pakistan conflict, with all its debilitating effects, has been resolved and after further growth of India's capacity as an exporter of manufactured goods.

Any speculation about the future of Southeast Asia should take into account these two elements as well.

The important and constructive role all the major powers could and should play in this region's efforts to overcome its chronic instability and turmoil is quite obvious. There is, of course, a strongly competitive edge in their relations to the region and conflicts of interests are bound to crop up. What we should seek to avoid, however, is that such competition precipitates the kind of major power interference that has characterized the history of Southeast Asia in past decades. The peaceful operation of the four power constellation of forces can be assured only if involvement of the big powers, at levels and in modalities that are mutually tolerable, is continuously adjusted to the real measure of needs and interests of the region. Of course, the context within which these adjustments must be made is not a static one. On the contrary, in looking at the future it is not sufficient to look simply at projections of present economic and political trends. We must expect structural changes in the power relationships within the area, including those which stem from the desire of the less developed countries in the region to develop their own trade and industrial capabilities and those occurring in response to their desire to reduce the discrepancy in power which makes in part the rich country-poor country dichotomy so intolerable. If these changes can be expected and regarded as normal, they will be easier for all parties concerned to live with.

Structures, Arrangements and Processes

After this description of some of the problems and challenges that will have to be faced in the wake of the vast changes that have taken place and are taking place in East Asia and the Western Pacific, it should now be possible to identify some of the conditions that will make the new equilibrium of power workable. This equilibrium becomes a necessity, but also becomes possible because in the global triangle relationship between the U.S.S.R., China and the United States, the threat to one member of the triangle by another member constitutes a threat to the third member as well.

The first condition is that it should be possible for Japan to safeguard her legitimate interests without having to project her military strength far outside her borders and without going nuclear. This will require some consensus within the U.S.S.R.-China-U.S. global triangle regarding a common non-proliferation and arms control position, and this in turn will require an implicit understanding regarding the world distribution of power. Such a consensus is an important external key to the four power equilibrium. Keeping Japan non-nuclear will also require a willingness to recognize and accommodate Japan's legitimate interests, shown not only by the other major powers, but also by the countries in Southeast Asia.

Japan's decision not to go nuclear may make possible, if not solutions, then at least modus vivendi among the major powers on a number of issues on the theater level. If China can be made to accept, within certain limits, a U.S. - Soviet detente, a sufficiently fluid atmosphere may be developed in which a number of trade-offs and concessions can be worked out among the interested parties without endangering the sense of security on the part of the nations involved.

As has been stated before, China's interests in preventing a Russian-American duopoly is qualified by her interest in preventing nuclear proliferation elsewhere and specifically in seeing that Japan

and India not go nuclear. China's entry into the United Nations may provide her with a suitable platform for the pursuit of these objectives through the world system. At some later date this might even lead to the attainment of a basic understanding among the members of the global triangle, if not regarding the terms of the global distribution of power, then at least on the limits of their disagreements on this issue while vigorous competition is continued.

The achievement of such understanding may have to go through a number of phases. Breaking through toward each successive phase in problems such as the SALT talks may well require personal interventions at the level of heads of states. Given the natural preoccupation of strategic analysts with "worst case" analysis and with their continuing nightmare about a technological breakthrough on the other side, it may be almost impossible to break the arms race spiral at the specialists' level.

Actually, for some time now, security has ceased to be a matter of unilateral definition. Even for the super powers, security has become a condition of interdependence and mutuality. Also, having an enemy may for the greater part of human history have fulfilled some biological function, may have constituted a condition needed to bring out the vitality and creativity of human groups. However, with nuclear parity the super powers—and with them mankind — have reached the point where looking at problems in terms of "us" and "them" has become dysfunctional and ultimately self-defeating. A host of new problems on a global scale, the solution of which may well determine mankind's survival, have now inserted themselves into man's consciousness, and for these as well as for the problem of international security man must learn to develop solutions based on the acceptance of the ultimately total interdependence of all nations.

In this connection we should also be aware of the rapidly changing values of people the world over. The great social and cultural changes which are taking place with increasing rapidity in almost all of the major powers are creating great tensions in their societies, which

are bound to affect in a rather unpredictable way the foreign policies of, and hence the manner of interaction between the major powers. The changed conceptions in these fields, particularly manifest among the younger generations will undoubtedly lead to important changes on the scale of national and international priorities. These are bound to have a bearing on such questions as the acceptable level of military expenditure, as well as on concepts of international conflict and security.

As the foregoing discussion also makes clear, the fourpower system in the Asia-Pacific region, if it is to work at all, will require much more effective ways for these powers to communicate to each other their respective interests and concerns. It will also be necessary to develop the common language and signals in which to do so, first, among the major powers themselves but also with the other nations in the region. For the system to be workable it is of the greatest importance that the fundamental perceptions of national interest and the basic assumptions and calculations governing the foreign policy decisions of both the major powers and the smaller nations are made explicit and are taken into account by all sides in their own decisions.

This will require two things. First, a massive increase both in the flow of information and in the breadth and intensity of the intellectual relationship between all the parties involved. This flow of information should be continuous and should not be limited to official exchanges. On the contrary, unless the political public in the various countries obtain a much clearer idea--beyond the usual phraseology--of what the basic views and interests of the other powers are, they will be incapable of supporting rational decisions and of

bringing about the measure of self-restraint indispensable to make the equilibrium work. For example, what has facilitated the Middle East conflict from leading precipitously to a great-power confrontation has been the general awareness, not only among the big powers involved but also among the smaller allies and the general public, of the implications of each possible step. This is born out of bitter experience, but also results from intensive communications on all sides, affording an implicit awareness of the "rules of the game" which each party can of course try to stretch as much as possible, but which cannot be ignored entirely.

It is this kind of understanding of costs and risks implicit in each option contemplated, which must be developed among the countries in the East Asia-Pacific region. The elimination of arms as a mode of interest expression may force the nations in the region to develop the capacity to mutually accommodate conflicting interests, and to co-exist despite ideological, ethnic and cultural differences, on the basis of rational interest calculation. In this connection cultural policies designed to increase cross cultural understanding and sensitivity and to inculcate an awareness of the new problems that will have to be faced together, become important in developing the capacity of the region to live and work together. Cultural exchanges of greater depth and breadth may eventually have a profound effect on the formation of new patterns of affinity and cooperation.

Secondly, the shift from a bipolar structure to a multipolar setting raises the question of the adequacy of the various structures such as alignments and military and non-military pacts, established in the East Asia-Pacific region during the period of the cold war. The acceptance of multipolarity implies the abandonment of the idea of containment of any of the elements within the constellation of forces, in this particular case, of China. The need then is for a structure in which all the major powers concerned can

communicate adequately their concerns and interests and discuss with all parties concerned the necessary adjustments.

For a dynamic equilibrium to evolve in the Asia-Pacific region, an effective international forum then is indispensable. The United Nations, after China's entry, could serve as such a forum, but conceivably one might also think in terms of a specific arrangement for the East Asia and Pacific region as envisaged by article 52 of the U.N. Charter. This article states:

1. Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.
2. The members of the United Nations entering into such arrangements or constituting such agencies shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council.
3. The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council.
4. This Article in no way impairs the application of Article 34 and 35.

Such an arrangement could in this case encompass all major powers concerned in the area, and this would include China, the U.S.S.R., Japan and the U.S., and all East Asia, and Western Pacific nations including the divided countries.

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At the present juncture, it is indeed difficult to envisage how such an arrangement could come into being. It might come through an admittedly unprecedented act of collective wisdom. But not inconceivably, it might also arise out of the need to confirm and to internationally stabilize an eventual solution to the Indochina war. Such an arrangement would differ from the earlier Brezhnev proposal for an Asian security pact in two respects. Forgetting for a moment that the proposal was probably not more than a trial balloon, it seemed to be aimed both at the containment of China and at creating the environment that would accelerate the reduction of American power in the Pacific. Failing the achievement of such a formal organization, however, intensive and continuous exchanges of information and diplomatic activities within and without the U.N.- through as wide a variety of regional organization and instrumentalities as possible - will have to do.

The second arrangement which would be required to make the functioning of the four power equilibrium a relatively stable one concerns the major-power relationships with Southeast Asia. In order to make possible a low, nonmilitary, nonpolitical involvement on the part of the major powers while enabling them to play a supporting role in the economic development and modernization of the Southeast Asian nations, there should be at least an implicit agreement among all major powers to proceed in their relations with Southeast Asia at a low level of intensity and specificity. Such an implicit consensus should be based on the realization that over-involvement of one major power is bound to lead to escalation by others, without assurance that the political objectives of such over-involvement would be attained, considering the character of the social dynamics in that region. Such a consensus could also be based on the awareness that major power interrelationship

in the final analysis is going to be determined more by events outside Southeast Asia than within.

Such a concept of low level intensity and specificity would require a multiplicity of international organizations operating in the region, increased multilateralization of aid and business relationships, and non-exclusivity in the relations between the countries of Southeast Asia and any of the major powers. The most explicit form which such an undertaking could take would perhaps be an agreement by the major powers to recognize and to guarantee the eventual neutralization of the whole of Southeast Asia. Such an agreement might among other things stipulate noninvolvement of major powers in internal conflict in Southeast Asia; no new bases of any major power and the gradual removal of existing ones; no patron-client relationship, thus making possible the emergence of governments reflecting domestic balances and drives; and the abandonment of any containment policy of the major powers with regard to Southeast Asia. This may at present still be an unattainable goal and quite possibly at this stage not an absolutely essential one, providing the various action-response patterns, their political or economic costs as well as the appropriate system of "signals", are made explicit to all powers concerned. It might therefore be more realistic for the Southeast Asian countries, while moving in the direction of neutralization, to work out along the way the implicit or explicit understandings needed towards this end.

A necessary corollary to the move towards neutralization and distinct from the structure set up under article 52 of the United Nations Charter would be the development of effective regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. What should be aimed at is a regional organization encompassing all Southeast Asian nations irrespective of their political system, including therefore the participation of North and South

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Vietnam and the whole of Indochina, with the purpose of accelerating the economic development of each Southeast Asian nation through country projects, increased intraregional trade and at some point, through sectoral plan-harmonization, through regional projects as well as through the establishment of a regional capacity to utilize a significantly larger amount of external resources. The non-military and nonantagonistic character of ASEAN as a potential nucleus for such a regional organization would be significant in this respect.

A Southeast Asian organization would only be workable in the absence of military entanglement by external major powers in the area and in the absence of violent intraregional conflicts. This also means that Southeast Asian nations should have the wisdom and fortitude to refrain from inviting the intervention of external forces in cases of intraregional or internal conflict. It is also important for them to keep intraregional conflict within bounds so as not to entice external interference. It is equally important for them to realize the other side of the coin, i.e., that the major power-Southeast Asia relationships are going to be influenced just as much by them as by the major powers, and to an important extent major power interaction among themselves is going to be shaped by decisions made by Southeast Asian nations.

Except for the deep major-power involvement in the Vietnam and Indochina war and for the special case of the Philippines, actual major-power involvement in the rest of Southeast Asia is at a relatively low level. In the coming years there is going to be a considerable latitude in the various choices these nations can make in terms of their economic, political and defense strategies that will affect the role of the major powers with regard to the region and the extent of their involvement. While it will be necessary for each of the Southeast Asian nations to develop a defense capability in

order to be able to cope with local aggression and domestic subversion, regional cooperation should very early aim at the prevention of a mini-arms race among Southeast Asian countries themselves, diverting precious resources needed for economic development. At the same time, the Southeast Asian nations cannot afford to be entirely at the mercy of the whims, insensitivities and low risk probing actions of major powers. This calls for a judicious mix in what one might call a diplomatic-military weapons system that would be within the economic capability of such a nation to maintain. Fortunately, as one of the lessons of the Vietnam war seems to indicate, the political pay-off for a major power of having a naval presence close by in terms of its leverage on a weak Asian nation, is much more limited than it used to be. The "good old days" of gunboat diplomacy seem to be definitely over, at least given sufficiently strong nerves on the part of the weak nation concerned.

In any case, if such arrangements and structures can be worked out, there is a good chance Southeast Asia can develop the regional cohesion for a kind of Southeast Asian reassertion. The dynamics of the multipolar constellation of forces in East Asia and the Pacific region may therefore well open the door to a new period in Southeast Asia history -- a period in which finally, for the first time after so many centuries, Southeast Asia will be free to deal with its problems in terms of its own history and its own aspirations for the future, and capable of dealing with the major powers with increasing autonomy. It will mean the real end of the colonial period and the beginning of a Southeast Asia that is finally coming into its own, dealing with its problems in its own terms rather than in the distorting terms of the old external power bipolarity--and the concomitant exploitation of the ideological Pavlovian reflexes built into it.

It would of course be an illusion to think that all pieces in this picture will automatically fall into place. There will

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most likely be a period in which some of the major powers, and possibly some Southeast Asian states, will want to do some probing, with various degrees of risk-taking, in order to test the strength and the will of others, and in this way to determine at which point accommodation might be called for.

In the face of such a possibility, a great deal of toughness, dexterity, perseverance, and above all coolheadedness will be required on the part of the nations so tested. Still it may be an inevitable learning period in which, through rational discussion and negotiations, and perhaps through the bitter experience of conflict, the "rules of the game" inherent in the new dynamic balance will become explicit and acceptable. The period of adjustment which is in the offing may therefore be a dangerous one, and full of uncertainties and tensions. The danger may be especially acute if out of desperation with seemingly insoluble internal problems, some Southeast Asian countries experience a revival of virulent communism of local vintage or of extreme xenophobic nationalism, both reflecting deepseated primitive yearnings for immediate salvation and requiring aggressive actions to sustain themselves. Still with some understanding of the nature of the problems and stakes involved, this period of adjustment should not be an entirely unmanageable one.

Recapitulating, we may then say that the new four power constellation of forces has a chance to develop a workable equilibrium 1) if within the U.S.A.-China-U.S.S.R. triangle armed confrontation can be avoided, 2) if Japan does not find herself compelled to go nuclear, 3) if some sort of Asia-Pacific concert of nations can be established, 4) if Southeast Asia's neutralization becomes an acceptable goal, 5) if effective Southeast Asia regional cooperation can be worked out, 6) if economic development in Southeast Asia could be accelerated in cooperation with the major powers. In this way traditional major power contradictions would to a considerable extent be reduced to competition between

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alternative strategies of economic development with different mixes of social justice and freedom. This would also make it possible for Southeast Asia gradually to become an autonomous factor in the constellation of forces in the Asia-Pacific region. The four power constellation should then be seen as a transitory phenomenon until Southeast Asia, and at some point the Indian subcontinent, can take its rightful place in a new equilibrium. Needless to say, all these conditions assume that nuclear weapons impose upon the powers possessing them a rationality which they could otherwise afford not to have. They also assume that there is nothing inevitable in Japan's going nuclear. Of course, making a constellation of forces work in which one member, unlike the others, is relatively unarmed is an unprecedented experience in man's history. The lesson which may be drawn from such an experience however may have a wider application in our search for a general system of security which can be maintained at a lower financial and political cost a system which will not impede the political and social changes needed to overcome the problems of international poverty and inequality, and which will enable us to come to grips with the problem of population increase and the protection of the globe's life supporting systems.

Looked at in another way, the development in East Asia and the Pacific region of such an equilibrium will be a measure of the vision, the imaginativeness and the political will and capacity of man to face up creatively to the great new challenges of the remaining part of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. This essay was written in the spring of 1971. Since then the unexpected visit of U.S. presidential adviser Henry Kissinger to Peking the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, and the announcement of President Nixon's visit to Moscow

have furnished further evidence of the uneasy triangle that ties the USA, China and the USSR together in a stately minuet of shifting positions. Japan's reactions to America's move towards China, and to America's new economic policies have brought into even sharper focus than has been presented in this essay, the existence of another triangle at the theater-level, i.e. the triangle between Japan, China and the USA, interlinked with the USSR-China-USA triangle at the nuclear and global level.

The dissolution of the bipolar world and its gradual replacement by a multipolar constellation of forces has been pointed up in the economic field by the unpegging of the US dollar in relation to gold.

These events have not reduced but rather strengthened the main thrust of the argument in this essay. No attempt has therefore been made to relate the analysis to them,