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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TREATY

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty signed in Manila on September 8, 1954 has been submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee and reported to the Senate for its approval. This treaty will be another milestone in the evolution of our policy to try and create a solid collective-security system in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia areas.

It was my distinct pleasure, along with my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from New Jersey, Mr. Smith, to represent the Senate at this conference. Before I turn to the various sections and provisions of the Treaty itself, I wish to make note of the outstanding job that Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, and his party did at Manila, carrying out the policies of our nation on a bipartisan, statesmanlike basis. The Secretary of State and Senator Smith are to be highly commended for the work they did there.

The Southeast Asian treaty is another part in the total pattern of strength which we have been trying to create throughout the free world. The armistice agreements at Geneva did not end the need for a pact in the Southeast Pacific area; rather it emphasized it. The need for the collective security pact becomes more apparent each day as the aggressive tendencies on the part of the Communists become more evident. The nations at the Manila Conference have recognized this fact and have endeavored to form a bulwark against the aggressive intentions on the part of the Chinese Communists.
The members of the treaty organization are: the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Eight member nations, and only three of them Asian, may seem to be an insignificant number for a Southeastern Asia treaty, but it is sufficient to start a very substantial defense build-up against the Communist menace in Asia. Admittedly, we would have been glad if there were more Asian members, but the door is not closed to them. Whenever these nations, within the confines of the treaty area, wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to join, they may do so, the only prerequisite being the concurrence of the present members. As a clarifying note, I will say that the name of any future members will be submitted to the Senate for approval.

When the delegations met in Manila, prior to the signing of this momentous document, the delegates had three major areas in which to find solutions: the definition of the treaty area, how much emphasis to place on the problem of subversion, and the economic clause, if there was to be one.

The treaty area is defined in the treaty itself and also in a protocol to the treaty which brings in Laos, Cambodia, and the free portion of Vietnam as treaty territory which, if attacked, would be under the protection of the treaty. Those nations themselves are not members of the Manila Pact. The reason is that the armistice provisions at Geneva at least raised a question in the minds of some of the parties to those agreements as to whether the Associated States could actually join such a pact. Nevertheless, those states
welcomed the fact that the mantle of protection of the Treaty was thrown around this area.

Broadly speaking, the treaty area includes the territory of the parties and the Pacific Ocean area which is south of 21 degrees and 30 minutes; that is a line which runs north of the Philippines. The area therefore is Pakistan, Thailand and by protocol, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, Malaya, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. This treaty does not cover the Hong Kong area, Formosa, Japan or Korea.

The major difference in this treaty from any other security treaty is that it places more emphasis on the danger of subversion. It deals of course, as other treaties have, with an open armed attack and it is hoped that what is said in this respect will constitute a deterrent against such an act of aggression.

The problem of subversion is dealt with more specifically than in any other treaty. Subversion in this area is very strong and it has been recognized as such. The signatories are planning a meeting in Bangkok later this month at which time they can begin to think of ways and means to meet the subversive threat which is recognized by the treaty as being a particular danger in this area.

The proposal before the Senate is a significant new undertaking providing for mutual aid to prevent and counter subversive activity directed from the outside against the territorial integrity and political stability of the member states. The situation, in Indochina in particular, is by no means satisfactory at the present time although it is improving, and it is hoped that something fruitful will come from the Bangkok meeting.
The treaty has a brief economic clause which says that the parties will cooperate together in economic matters. Secretary Dulles made it clear, when he appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in November, as he did in Manila, that this is not meant to and does not bind the United States to any particular program of vast economic and military aid.

The situation in Europe after World War II was quite different than the one which exists in Asia today. In Europe our aid programs helped to recreate something that had been destroyed. We were working with people who were well versed in industrial life and they needed a big boost to get on their feet again.

In Asia the problem is to create something that is totally new. Our first problem under this clause is to find a proper means to help before sums of money are requested. There are a number of economic problems of acute necessity in Southeast Asia, particularly in free Vietnam. It is my understanding that a report will be forthcoming from the Administration when a definite plan of approach has been formulated. This proposal merely recognizes the economic problem and lays the ground work.

The treaty ends with a declaration that the armed aggression which is referred to and which the United States declares would be dangerous to its own peace and security would be Communist aggression. There was a great deal of discussion at the Conference as to whether the treaty, as a whole, should be exclusively directed against Communist aggression or whether it should deal with any form of aggression. The United States does not have any
territory in the treaty area and therefore we are not interested in internal quarrels as such. Our interests would be involved only if there should be Communist aggression. The other countries were unwilling to limit the treaty to Communist aggression, so the issue was resolved by the United States including in the treaty a declaration that as far as it was concerned the open aggression which we would regard as dangerous to our peace and security would be Communist aggression. As a compensation the United States has agreed that if there should be local controversies in the area, we would join with others in consultation to see what should or could be done to alleviate them. This treaty is aimed primarily at Communist aggression, not at difficulties that might arise between friendly states.

At the conclusion of the Manila Conference the Pacific Charter was issued. It is in the nature of a declaration which is very important in that it expresses by joint action of so-called western colonial powers and the Asian powers, a common position with reference to self-determination and self-government by the peoples of Asia. This document was suggested by President Magsaysay, an outstanding statesman and leader, who exerted a great deal of influence during the entire conference. He thought that it would be useful for the Conference to draw up what he called a Pacific Charter declaration, affirming the intention of all the parties to this treaty to work for self-determination and self-government among the Asian peoples who wanted self-government and were capable of exercising its responsibilities.
This Charter is a notable achievement in bringing together the divergent viewpoints of those concerned. This document should have a great deal of impact.

Mr. President, as my colleagues here know, it is not necessary for the Pacific Charter to be submitted to the Senate for action.

One of the first questions to arise out of any discussion of this new treaty is: what is the major difference between the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and NATO?

First of all, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was built up as a defensive force on the continent of Europe, a force strong enough to resist attack by the armies of the Soviet Union. That is not the purpose of the Southeast Asia Treaty. This new treaty does not dedicate any major elements of the United States Military Establishment to form any army of defense in this area. According to the Secretary of State's testimony, in this area "we rely primarily upon the deterrent of our mobile striking power." A NATO type organization in the Far East would be an overextension of our military power as things stand today.

This new treaty follows a formula similar to that used in the Philippine Treaty, the Anzus Treaties and the Korean Treaty. This avoids the dispute which arose during the debate over the NATO treaty relative to the powers of the President and the Congress.

The less controversial language declares that an intrusion in the treaty area would be dangerous to our peace and security and that we would, in that event, act to meet the common danger in accordance with our constitutional
processes. The NATO treaty says that "an attack on one is an attack on all." The former may not be as automatic, depending on the circumstances, but it avoids any constitutional controversy and it stems from one of our oldest foreign policies, the Monroe Doctrine.

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty is consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. This treaty would come under the provisions of article 51, providing that nothing contained in the UN Charter shall deprive any of the states from the individual or collective right of self-defense. Under article 51, regional enforcement measures do not need prior approval of the Security Council, where the Soviet Union has a veto.

One of the most fruitful things to come out of this conference was the initiative shown by the Asians themselves. The Filipinos, our long-time friends, were hosts and the Asian delegates contributed immensely in working out the form that the treaty was to take.

In conclusion I wish to stress again the importance of this Treaty and the Pacific Charter. They are needed steps in building security for freedom in the Pacific area. I sincerely hope that the Senate will give its prompt approval and ratification.
Speech of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

For release on delivery

February 1, 1955

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