Kansas State University - A Pacific Perspective

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A PACIFIC PERSPECTIVE

I

We have been an Atlantic-minded nation and understand-
ably so. Fourteen of the states border the Atlantic. The majority of our ancestors reached America via the Atlantic. Most of us follow religions of trans-Atlantic origin. The languages that are learned in our schools are primarily those of the nations across the Atlantic. Americans who travel abroad usually begin their journeys by crossing the Atlantic. Fashions, architecture, routines of living in this nation all show strong influences from the opposite side of the ocean. We are, in short, preponderantly "Atlantic" by heredity, tradition, and proclivity.
However, the authority as well as the territory of the United States stops at the western edges of the ocean. The Atlantic has been a kind of sea barrier for us in the sense that the Pacific has not been. In the Pacific, not only do five states reach the ocean, but one of them—Hawaii—literally emerges from it. In addition, we have territories of various sizes, shapes, and legal relationships spread through its distant reaches. The Aleutian Islands which project towards the Soviet Union and Japan are part of the State of Alaska. American Samoa, Guam, Wake, Johnston, Midway and the Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands are far-flung dependencies. The Canton and Enderbury Islands are an American-British condominium. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands has been administered by the United States since the end of the Second World War; it comprises over 2,000 islands and atolls which together total only 678 square miles of land but which are dispersed over three million square miles of ocean. World War II left a provisional American administration in Okinawa and the other Ryukyu Islands; there it has remained for a quarter of a
century, almost within sight of the Asian mainland. More than a frontier, more than an avenue of communication and trade, the Pacific is a vast *marine-arena* within which lie states, territories, and dependencies appertaining in large part to the United States.

I would like to make clear that in referring to the Pacific, I do not include the Asian mainland or the waters immediately adjacent. On that mainland, there are no American possessions but there are more American forces than anywhere else in the world outside the United States. Not only is there the immense consignment in Viet Nam but large American military contingents are also stationed in Thailand and South Korea. For the first time in history, we have deployed military power in mass along the whole arc of the Asian mainland.

In this manner, almost without realizing it, we have cast ourselves in the role of Asian power. We have extended the outposts of our Pacific power to China's borders. We have done so on the assumption that China is bent on military expansion.
and that it is essential for the United States to contain that expansion. That we have erred in the form of our response, even if the assumptions are accurate, is illustrated, in my judgment, by the war in Viet Nam. The war has not contained China in any sense. Nor has it even decreased Chinese influence in Viet Nam. If anything, it may be having the opposite effect.

What needs most to be learned from the tragic experience in Viet Nam is that there is no national interest of the United States which requires us to perform the functions of an Asian power. On the contrary, it is as self-damaging as it is futile to presume that that role can be exercised by an outside power anywhere on the Asian land-mass. The fact is that the nations of Asia are going to develop along economic and political lines which are determined by themselves. The development will spring from their history, philosophy, and tradition. It will be based on their human and material resources. It will reflect the political realities of their surroundings.
Nations outside the region, perhaps, can participate economically in limited ways in this process, but they cannot control the social evolution of Asia. What applies to other outside nations applies to us. We have never been a part of the Asian continent. We are not now. We will not be in the future.

However, we are a part of the Pacific, as I have already observed, and we will continue to be. Whether we will remain a Pacific power is not in question; we have no choice. What is at issue is our future role with respect to Asia. On that score, it seems to me, the character of our commitment is largely a matter of our choice. We were not forced, for example, into the present involvement in Viet Nam. Largely by a pyramiding of successive unilateral declarations and acts, the commitment was built to its great dimensions. The choice was ours.

By the same token, this nation, through the President, still retains, in my judgment, the capacity to increase, reduce, or even to dismantle that commitment by its own calculated decisions.
Whatever else may prove true of our future role in Asian affairs, I am persuaded that it will differ from the role we have played in the past. The postwar World War II era has ended, whether or not we recognize it. Whether or not we realize it, we are in a period of transition in our relations with the nations of the Western Pacific.

II

That such is the case is best illustrated by reference to Japan. Our relations with that nation have been relatively quiescent for many years. Time has brought changes in Japan which have now reached a point just short of crisis.

The cloud on the horizon is the U. S.-Japan security treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, beginning in 1970 either party may announce an intent to amend or terminate the agreement. As this date has drawn closer, the political debate in Japan over
the treaty has grown in intensity. It has centered on two specific points.

The first is the question of the American bases in Japan—number, location and use. Among the Japanese, there has been a growing resentment of these bases. They are not uniformly regarded as sources of a benevolent American protection. Often, they are seen as symbols of excessive foreign influence as well as hazardous nuisances. Furthermore, U. S. military airfields, on occasion, act to disturb the populace, not only because they occupy scarce land, but also because they pose dangers of accidental explosions and crashes. In the case of naval bases there is, in Hiroshima-conscious Japan, the additional concern with the assumed danger of radiation whenever nuclear-powered U. S. vessels call at these facilities.

The second specific issue around which the debate has centered in Japan is the question of the Ryukyu Islands (notably Okinawa), which were an integral part of Japan before World War II
At the end of that conflict, the United States occupied these islands and has since administered them through the Defense Department. The Japanese peace treaty of 1951, however, left dangling, so to speak, certain matters pertaining to their final disposition. While the United States retained administrative control, Japan was not required to relinquish sovereignty. Moreover, this nation has since stated on more than one occasion that there is no question that Japan possesses "residual" sovereignty over the Ryukyus.

Nevertheless, the United States has converted Okinawa into a great military depot. Bases on the island are specifically exempted from certain restrictions which are in effect on similar U. S. installations in Japan proper. In 1960 the United States agreed that bases on the Japanese main islands cannot be used for "military combat operations" without the agreement of the Japanese government but by contrast the same inhibition is not in effect in Okinawa which has served as a staging area for the
war in Viet Nam and for B-52 bomber operations. Finally, there
is a most fundamental difference: we have agreed not to store
nuclear weapons in Japan proper; there is no such agreement
respecting Okinawa.

The military bases relate to the larger issue of Japan's
future military role in the Pacific. What is involved in this
question is the continuance of a situation in which the primary
responsibility for defending Japan, and indeed the entire Western
Pacific, falls to the United States. Over the years, this state
of affairs has cost us untold billions of dollars. Its persist-
ence is now beginning to appear somewhat anachronistic a quarter
of a century after World War II and with a Japan that is the
third greatest industrial power in the world.

Many Japanese are restless under U. S. military sur-
veillance of their homeland and adjacent waters. On the other
hand, there is also a conflicting factor of Japanese anxiety
that American military protection may be withdrawn. Out of the
dichotomy has come a view that Japan should rearm beyond the modest "self defense" forces which it possesses and assume a part of the defense functions which are now being discharged by this nation. The view has adherents not only in Japan but in certain quarters in the United States.

All of the issues which I have discussed so far have a significant characteristic in common: they are military matters. There are, of course, also non-military matters in dispute between Japan and the United States as, for example, certain barriers to trade and investment. The fact remains, nevertheless, that the main source of friction in U. S.-Japanese relations, today, is to be found in disagreement over military questions. I emphasize this point because there has been some tendency to avoid public consideration of these matters in connection with foreign policy. Yet, the questions are fundamental. The future of the U. S.-Japanese relationship will be very shaky, indeed, if we proceed to try to base it preponderantly on our military convenience in
the Pacific, notwithstanding the irritation and hostility which may be caused thereby in Japan.

It seems to me there is a need for great alertness to changing Japanese attitudes respecting our military activities. While some sentiment already exists in Japan for the removal of all U. S. military bases, I do not think that that is the dominant view. There is, rather, a general desire to see a reduction in the number of U. S. bases in Japan. A prompt response to this desire, I believe, not only would meet Japanese wishes but would also correspond to the interests of this nation. Certainly, it would dovetail with our present effort to reduce federal expenditures and, in particular, expenditures abroad. In my judgment, it would also act, in timely fashion, to preserve an accommodating tone in U. S.-Japanese relations.

Indeed, I am persuaded that much of the growing controversy with Japan could be dispelled if it were simply stated that we are prepared to abide by Japanese desires respecting the
bases. The installations are maintained at great cost to this nation on the grounds of the contribution which they make to Japanese security and, hence, indirectly to the security of the United States. If the bases have now ceased to have that function in Japanese calculations, how can they possibly serve a useful purpose in ours? They become, in fact, a growing liability if they cause mounting friction between this nation and the Japanese populace.

Whatever the sentiments on the question of American bases in Japan, Okinawa is the looming issue in Japanese-American relations. It is the lightning rod, so to speak, which has attracted most of the arguments, most of the protests, and most of the attention.

There is strong and growing pressure within Japan and Okinawa for the immediate repossesson of full control over the Ryukyus. It seems to me that we have delayed a long time—perhaps too long—on this sensitive issue. Okinawa is Japanese; we have
never claimed otherwise. I see no just or rational alternative other than to try to arrive at a fixed time-schedule for the progressive and prompt return of administrative control over the Ryukyu Islands to Japan. In restoring Japanese administrative control over Okinawa, moreover, it seems to me that there are also strong arguments against insisting on a "deal" which will permit the use of the military bases in ways which are not acceptable to the Japanese people.

There will be, I am sure, cries of anguish in some quarters at any significant modification of our right to unrestricted use of Okinawa. Nevertheless, entrenched parochial interests cannot be permitted to prevail in this critical matter. Okinawa is undoubtedly a great military convenience but it is by no means indispensable. The fact is that there have been enormous technological developments in the military field since World War II. We now have missiles which can carry nuclear weapons into space. We have planes which can carry them in the atmosphere
over the ocean. We have ships which can carry them on the ocean, and submarines which can carry them under the ocean. We also have other bases in the Pacific--bases which are under unchallenged American sovereignty--where nuclear weapons can be stored and where Strategic Air Command planes with nuclear weapons may be based without question or complaint.

As I have already noted, the issues of the bases and Okinawa relate to the larger question of Japan's future military role. Here, too, it seems to me, that a greater sensitivity to Japanese popular sentiment is essential. It would appear particularly ill-advised for the United States to try to push the Japanese towards a new and expanded military role in the Western Pacific. To be sure, the Japanese may one day raise the present level of their self-defense forces. They may even, one day, amend their constitution in order to possess other than self-defense forces. Any such decisions, however, should result from Japanese political processes which reflect Japanese judgments
of Japanese needs--judgments for which the Japanese accept full responsibility. They should not result from American pressures reflecting American judgments of American needs and, for which, this nation in the end will have to bear responsibility.

III

If the Japanese do not assume the military burdens which the U. S. would relinquish when the bases in Japan are reduced in number and those on Okinawa are restricted in use, some will ask: who will defend the Pacific? Presumably, it is fear of China which gives rise to this question. It does not follow, however, if the Chinese are bound on expansion, that they are capable of trans-Pacific aggression. Indeed, President Nixon has made it clear that he does not buy the contention of some defense advisors that a "thin" anti-ballistics missiles system is needed because of the Chinese threat.
A thrust of military power across the Pacific is quite a different matter from expansion on the Asian continent. Even in the latter case there is a difference of view as to the nature of Chinese continental pressure and what constitutes the principal danger to orderly progress in Asia. Among the nations of Southeast Asia, for example, it is commonplace to find that the threat of Chinese military aggression is rated a more remote menace than the immediate problems of economic underdevelopment and political instability which, in some cases, stem from internal economic disparities and in others from conflicts between two or more countries within the region.

These latter problems can hardly be met by U. S. defense outposts in the Western Pacific. Rather, their solution requires cooperation for constructive purposes among the Southeast Asian nations and with other nations outside the region. In fact, such cooperation has begun and it is taking two forms. First, there are groups of states within the region, such as the newly formed
Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Second, there are regional organizations with outside members, such as the Asian Development Bank. The Bank includes European and North American subscribers whose modern resources can play an important, if peripheral, part in the progress of the Asian nations.

In this connection, there seems to me to be considerable merit in Japanese suggestions that the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan should form a "Pacific community to help developing countries. I should add, that in a grouping of this kind, Japan can play a most significant part. Indeed, in my judgment, it is in the sphere of economic development wherein lies Japan's principal potential for a contribution to the peace and progress of the Western Pacific.

IV

I have talked of several facets of the situation in an effort to place the needs of our Asian policies in clearer perspective; of the distinction between a Pacific power which we have
and no choice but to be an Asian power which we can and should choose not to be; of our military relations with Japan and the heat which is rising from the issues of the bases, Okinawa, and the over-all Japanese role in the security of the Western Pacific; and, finally, of economic development in the Asian countries and the possibilities of cooperative aid. There are several other related questions which need to be touched on to complete this discussion. One concerns our relations with mainland China.

Strictly speaking, China is not of the Pacific but of Asia. Yet, the very vastness of China projects its relevance not only over the Asian mainland and the Pacific but, in fact, throughout the entire world. It is not possible to talk about the future of international peace, let alone about our future in the Pacific, without reference to the great nation which lies on its farther shore.
China will not remain forever, as is now the case, in substantial isolation. Its proper role is as a leading nation in the councils of the world. Sooner or later China will assume that place. It seems to me the Japanese have long since come to recognize that prospect. And there are indications that they are seeking to bridge the gap with China. Even if we could, there is no cause for this nation to impose obstacles of any kind—either spoken or unspoken—to increasing Japanese contacts with China. On the contrary, such efforts—whether in the economic, cultural, or political fields—might well be encouraged. They can serve not only Japan's needs for trade, they can contribute to clearing up a whole range of enigmas involving China and the security of the Western Pacific. In that fashion, they can be helpful in bringing about an enlightened approach to the building of a stable peace in that region.

For our part, and for much the same reasons, I see no purpose in imposing any special restrictions on the travel of
Americans to China. Nor do I see any reason not to place trade with China in non-strategic goods on the same basis as trade with the Soviet Union, Poland, and other Communist countries. For a decade and a half we have sought to maintain a rigid primary and secondary boycott of Chinese goods. The effort is unique in our history and it finds no parallel among the present practices of other nations with respect to China. In my view, we would be well advised to abandon this antiquated pursuit of China's downfall by economic warfare and treat with the Chinese in matters of trade as we treat with European Communist countries—no better and no worse.

It seems to me, the Nixon Administration's announced intention to reopen previous offers to exchange journalists, scientists, and scholars with China is well founded. The cancellation of the meeting in Warsaw on February 20, at which these offers were to be reiterated, is regrettable. One can only hope that another opportunity will soon present itself and, hopefully, that the official offers will be made and accepted.
Trade, travel, and cultural and scientific exchanges are relatively tangible issues in our relationship with China. Hence, they seem to be more readily amenable to solution; perhaps, that is why current discussion of the relationship with China tends to concentrate on them. Similarly, the present debate is intensive on the questions of Chinese admission to the United Nations and U. S. diplomatic recognition of Peking. These issues, too, seem susceptible to clear solution. They are not, however, at the root of the difficulties. To try to resolve them at this point may be a useful intellectual exercise but it also tends to put the cart of the difficulty before the horse.

The fundamental problem of U. S.-Chinese relations is the status of Taiwan. It is a problem which is as complex as it is crucial. It is not an either-or issue. It is not really soluble, in an enduring sense, in terms of two Chinas as has been suggested in recent years because there are not two Chinas and the attempt to delineate them is synthetic. The fact is that
China is a part of Taiwan and Taiwan is a part of China. Both Chinese governments which are agreed on little else are agreed on that score. The question is not whether the twain shall meet but when and in what circumstances. While we are not aloof from this question, the decisions which appertain thereto involve primarily the Chinese themselves—the Chinese of the mainland and the Chinese of Taiwan. Sooner or later the decisions will have to begin to be made. Only then will the other part of the Chinese puzzle—such questions as U. S. recognition and U. N. admission—fall into a rational place in our policies.

V

While I have spoken today principally about the United States, Japan, and China, two other major nations are of immediate concern. I refer to the Republic of the Philippines and to Indonesia.
There are signs of difficulties in our relations with the Philippines, principally in the field of trade and investment and with respect to U. S. military bases. In my judgment, however, none of the problems which confront us is of a nature as to be beyond reasonable solution in the light of the general cooperation which we have long enjoyed with the Philippines. Yet it is precisely this basic cooperation which seems to me now to be in jeopardy. It is adversely affected by a vestigial tendency—a hang-over from pre-independence days—to continue to think almost automatically in terms of special economic privileges and concessions. Similarly in the field of foreign relations there is an inclination to expect that the policy of the Philippines government, inevitably, will mirror our own attitudes. Therefore, such departures as the recent Philippine initiation of contact with Communist countries seems somehow inimical to continued warm U. S.-Philippines relations. That is ironic inasmuch as we have long since had contact with most of these countries.
It is not a law of nature—it is an Aesopian fable—that familiarity must always breed contempt. A half century of familiarity which was crowned with the common sacrifices of World War II laid the basis not for a mutual contempt but for an enduring friendship between the Filipino and American people. It seems to me that we need to bestir ourselves now if this mutually valuable tie is not to be lost. Indeed, it would be my hope that the new Administration would give prompt attention to this matter.

To allow barriers of estrangement to be raised, by negligence or nonsense, is to admit a serious disability in our capacity to order our relations with other countries, notably those which have gained independence since World War II. After all, if we cannot hold the confidence, the friendship, and the respect of a people with whom we have been intimately associated for half-a-century, what can be expected with regard to other nations in Asia with which we have had little or no historic connection?
Indonesia is one such nation. Formerly the Dutch East Indies, this immense island chain was largely unknown to Americans during the colonial era. In the post-independence period, there has been a considerable contact but it has been uneven and unpredictable. In recent years, there has been a deterioration which, at times, has reached almost the point of outright mutual hostility. The pendulum apparently is now swinging and hope exists once again for a more agreeable situation.

It will take time, however, for us to form a balanced view of this enormous island-nation which in terms of population is the sixth largest in the world. It will take time, too, for Indonesia to emerge from its accumulated political and economic ills. The burden of the past is heavy and pervasive.

The United States can do little to speed up the development of a better association with Indonesia. Indeed in present circumstances the best policy is to accept our own limitations in this regard. To be sure, there are the gestures of goodwill
which can be made in the form of technical, scientific, and educational cooperation. Moreover, through regional aid channels, such as I have already discussed, some assistance can be provided to Indonesia for economic development. That is a far cry, however, from self-delusive assumptions that by sending Americans to fight in Viet Nam we have somehow saved Indonesia from Communism or that the astute efforts of U. S. agencies and enough money in some miraculous fashion can act to delineate the emerging structure of the Indonesian nation.

VII

Having described the problems which confront the United States in the Pacific, I feel that I have an obligation to close with a few general words of prescription. Almost fifty years of association with the Pacific—as a student, Marine, teacher, and frequent visitor—prompt me to do so. A quarter of a century of political experience, on the other hand, impel me in the other
direction. In these years of specializing in foreign relations both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate I have come to recognize the general absence of finality in the disposition of major international problems.

Nevertheless, I did remark at the outset that whatever our future in the Pacific, that future will be unlike the past. I am now under some compulsion to fill in details which sustain the general observation. The most fundamental new factor in the situation, as I see it, is the appearance of at least one new generation since my generation began to grapple with the post-World War II Asian situation and, in particular and with a singular lack of effectiveness, with the monumental upheaval of the Chinese revolution. This new generation is a source of hope for the future. It is a hope which derives largely from the interest young people now take in the affairs of the other side of the Pacific. That interest is more profound and far better informed than was the case two decades or more ago.
It used to be that in an "Atlantic-minded" nation the consideration of Asian questions was left largely to a relative handful of Americans, to "old Asian" or "old China hands," whose attitudes were churned out of a mixture of 19th century religious altruism, political idealism, cold-cash imperialism, and unscrupulous adventurism. World War II altered this mixture; the Korean War modified it further; and now Viet Nam has changed it greatly. The attitudes which once held sway in this nation with respect to our relations with Asia and the Pacific have lost most of their relevance and much of their potency.

If there is to be a worthwhile future in the Pacific, it seems to me that U. S. policies for the problems of the Asian littoral will not be left in "old Asian hands." Rather they will take on the sense and sensitivity of "young American hands." The problems will be dealt with in a new spirit of cooperation and collaboration, free of attitudes of dominance or condescension. The keynote of a new policy for contemporary Asia, as I see it,
is mutuality. Its characteristics will be mutual respect, mutual appreciation, and mutual forebearance.

For us there is no choice. We must make the effort to put our policies into that perspective. We will not only continue to live in the Pacific, we will also have to learn to live with the Pacific and the nations of its western reaches, basing our relations with its peoples--with the Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Indonesians, and others--henceforth, on a profound respect for the equal dignity and worth of all.
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