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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN A CHANGING PACIFIC AND ASIA

An Article
by
Mike Mansfield
Majority Leader
United States Senate
U. S. FOREIGN POLICY IN A CHANGING PACIFIC AND ASIA

1. The Nixon Visit to China--A Turning Point

The first half of this decade has witnessed a fundamental transformation in the foreign policy of the United States. Within the short span of five years, there has been an appreciable move away from the role of anti-Communist centurion in Asia, toward a more subtle and meaningful relationship with the peoples of that vast continent. Beyond any other single act, President Nixon’s visit to the People’s Republic of China symbolized this change. The euphoria of discussions, banquets and toasts in Peking enveloped the policy of boycott, isolation and ostracism of communist nations which had dominated U. S.-Asian relations for two long decades. Of course, the accumulation of suspicion and distrust did not disappear in a moment. Nevertheless, the President's visit marked the end of the Cold War. To be sure, there will be twists and turns in U. S. policy in the future which no one can now predict. The basic direction, however, is and will remain one of expanding contacts with China and on both the governmental and personal levels.

The ramifications of the turn in Sino-U. S. relations are seen elsewhere in Asia. There is a direct relationship, for example, between the new China policy and the reduction of the level of American military involvement in Southeast Asia. Troop withdrawal from Vietnam was a powerful signal to the Chinese leadership that U. S. policies, henceforth, would constitute no clear and present danger to China’s security. It is notable, too, that during the South Vietnamese incursion into southern Laos in February-March 1971, U. S. officials were at pains to assure Peking that the move would pose no threat to
China. Even before that trip, however, the United States had moved to reduce the presence of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits to an infrequent patrol. In 1971, too, this nation agreed to remove nuclear weapons from Okinawa. Shortly before the President's trip to China, the United States recalled two bombers from Taiwan which were especially equipped to carry nuclear weapons. Finally, by agreeing to the "five principles of peaceful co-existence," as proposed by the People's Republic, President Nixon made a gesture at the conclusion of his visit to China which was designed to lay at rest any lingering concerns over the U. S. presence in Asia.

2. Impact on Japan

Japan has been affected deeply by the new U. S. policy toward the People's Republic. The change came suddenly and on the heels of the earlier shock of revisions in U. S. trade and monetary policies. These two considerations brought a realization that the old relationship with the United States would no longer suffice. A new role in Asia was in order if Japan's interests were not to be lost in the rapidly changing scene. As seen from the United States, the transition in U. S. policies has had a counterpart in the emergence of a more independent Japanese foreign policy. It is a policy, as we see it, which holds the two nations together with the adhesive of the Defense Alliance but also opens the way to more vigorous Japanese initiatives in the economic and diplomatic field. Thus, for example, Japan leap-frogged the Nixon visit to China by moving directly into the establishment of full diplomatic relations with that nation while this nation remained in an ambiguous position with regard to Taiwan. Also to be noted in this connection is the
independent Japanese approach to the North Korean dispute, and the increasing indications that Japan is determined, with or without U. S. participation, to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on the joint development of energy and other resources in Soviet Asia.

3. Effect on Taiwan and South Korea

Insofar as Taiwan and South Korea are concerned, U. S. policies before the change had been cast in the severest terms of the Cold War and were supported by the most militant anti-communist governments in Asia. In Korea, the United States went so far as to fight a bloody war with Chinese troops for nearly three years in a manifestation of a determination to stop communism. Twice in the 1950's, confrontations in the Taiwan area almost produced additional Sino-U. S. hostilities.

The shift in U. S.-China policy has left Taiwan and South Korea in a kind of international limbo. Korea's position today and the special relationship which is maintained by the United States with that country can hardly be described, as in the past, in terms of the threat of Soviet or Chinese Communist aggression. Rather, there is in Seoul merely one Korean government controlling a segment of the peninsula and competing with another to the north for influence with the Korean people. The talk of "liberation," either way, is replaced by calls for reconciliation.

At one time, the Taiwan government looked toward the day of the triumphant return of anti-communist forces to the Chinese mainland with the support of the United States. Today, Taiwan is a regime which administers a prosperous region with fifteen million inhabitants while still claiming to rule 300 million Chinese with whom it has had little contact since 1949. Over the
years, the People’s Republic and China have moved far apart and the reality is that the former, not the latter, is in the mainstream of Chinese history.

In the circumstances, U. S. relations with Korea and Taiwan, especially with regard to defense commitments, have lost much of their original rationale. The United States can no longer base its support of Taiwan on the legitimacy of the Nationalist Government. Indeed, it has already extended de facto diplomatic recognition to the People’s Republic of China through acceptance of the latter in the United Nations and by agreeing to the establishment of liaison offices in Washington and Peking. As for the commitment in Korea, it can scarcely be justified on the grounds of a threat of aggression by “monolithic international communism” in the Far East as it was twenty years ago. Even less can it be described as a support for the position of the United Nations which appears to have lost interest in the situation years ago.

The U. S. military position in Korea and Taiwan has already been altered in a substantial fashion. Twenty thousand American troops left Korea in 1971, and sentiment exists in Congress for further cutbacks. In the 1972 Shanghai Communique, President Nixon committed the United States to the eventual withdrawal of all U. S. military personnel from Taiwan while acknowledging

1/ The U. S.-Republic of China Mutual Defense Treaty states that "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the West Pacific Area directed against the territories of either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional process." The U. S.-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty contains similar language: "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as Lawfully brought under the administrative control of the other, would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."
Chinese claims to the island. These changes, combined with military reductions in Southeast Asia, alter drastically the U.S. position throughout Asia and the Western Pacific.

4. Changing Approaches in Aid, Trade and Diplomacy

The changing U.S. role is also reflected in aid-programs. For many years, Washington viewed assistance primarily through the eyes of the Cold War. It was regarded as a weapon in the struggle to preserve the independence of Asian countries from Chinese-inspired aggression and, thus, a source of security and stability. Assistance was provided predominantly on a bilateral basis and in many cases it was tied to counterinsurgency and other defense-related activities.

This type of aid is still a significant part of the U.S. aid program, notably in Southeast Asia. In the last few years, however, new concepts have emerged with a broader vision of the situation in Asia and the Western Pacific. International organizations such as the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia, in both of which the United States participates, are developing significant development programs for Asian countries and administering multilateral aid funds. With strong U.S. support, emphasis is being given to problems of agriculture, economic development, population, health, and education, and to other humanitarian and social questions by these organizations. As multilateral assistance programs grow, bilateral U.S. activities are declining.

New patterns of trade are also emerging in the Western Pacific and Asia. For years, bilateral commerce between Japan and the United States dominated the scene. Today, Japan has expanding commercial ties with the Asian mainland.
and the island nations to the south. It has replaced the United States as the
leading source of imports and capital from this region and is also the leading
consumer of its exported products. The energy crisis, as indicated previously,
has compelled an intense examination of the possibilities for Japanese trade
and investment with Soviet Asia. On the other side of the coin, U. S. trade
with the People's Republic of China has grown, from practically zero in
1971 to $753 million in 1973. It is also interesting to note the intention
of the Chinese to develop their petroleum resources which are reported to be
very extensive. It may well be that within the next decade China will emerge
as an oil exporting nation of the first rank in Asia.

Another area of change is to be found in the movement toward new
diplomatic and security arrangements. Among the ASEAN countries and in the
Kuala Lumpur Declaration of 1971, there is a call for a neutralization of
Southeast Asia which would be guaranteed by the major powers. Regionalism has
also developed an increased impetus, as non-Communist Asia has begun to realize
the need for a prompt normalization of relations with the Communist states.
Thus, the militant anti-Communist Southeast Asia Treaty Organization has de-
clined in importance. North Korea-South Korea are engaged in intermittent
negotiations on unity. South Korea is making efforts to establish contacts
with the Soviet Union and China. Diplomatic and commercial relations between
Japan and China have expanded. Philippine trade has begun with the People's
Republic of China and with the countries of eastern Europe and contacts are
growing between Thailand and Malaysia on the one hand and the People's Republic
of China on the other.

1/ U. S. Department of Commerce. U. S. Foreign Trade: Highlights of Exports
1974: 45,89.
The new era of renewed unity which began officially with President Nixon's visit follows a procession of shifts in U. S. policy on China. There was, first, the "special relationship" of close cooperation during the years of World War II and immediately thereafter. Then came the time of grim hostility after the creation of the People's Republic. That was followed, after the Moscow-Peking schism of the 60's, by a period of acquiescence in the Peking Government's existence.

These same years have seen a transformation in U. S. attitudes toward Japan. As viewed from the United States, the Japanese have evolved from a militant foe of World War II, to an occupied and devastated nation, to a quasi-dependent partner in resistance to communist aggression, to a great independent power. Japan is regarded today as both a principal trading partner and a major economic rival.\(^1\) As might be expected, the popular reactions are a mixture of enthusiasm and anxiety.

As for Southeast Asia, the region became the focal point for the U. S. anti-Communist crusade after the Korean War. It was to prove to be the last crusade in Asia but before it was over, a half-a-million men had been committed to the Vietnamese war at a cost of tens of thousands of casualties and hundreds of billions of dollars. This painful experience came to an end two decades later, with the final withdrawal of U. S. forces from Indochina in 1973. Actually, the emphasis in U. S. policy in Southeast Asia had begun to change as early as 1968

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with the shock of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam. Thereafter, in the United States, the dominant themes of policy were to get out of Vietnam, to leave the settlement of political problems to local parties, and to avoid similar involvements in the future.

Translated into diplomacy, this change of attitude made increasingly respectable the concept of neutralization of Indochina. That was a far cry from the position of John Foster Dulles in the first Geneva Conference of 1954. The Cold War rhetoric of "Massive Retaliation" of the 1950's and the doctrines of "flexible response" and "counterinsurgency" of the 1960's were replaced by the Nixon Doctrine of low profile. To be sure, U. S. military aid remains a factor in the situation and vestiges of earlier military deployment remain in Southeast Asia but these are of declining importance. The United States is no longer engaged in combat anywhere in Asia and a Congressional directive now forbids military reengagement in Indochina.

U. S. policies toward Korea and Taiwan still retain some characteristics of the Cold War. There are lingering emotional commitments which grew out of the alliance with Chiang Kai-shek during World War II and the direct involvement of the United States in the Korean War. However, the United States has extricated itself from direct participation in the politics of these places and is on the road to complete withdrawal from their internal affairs.1/

6. Prospects in the People's Republic of China

The new era in U. S. policy corresponds to major changes in the Western Pacific and Asia. If the prospects for the future depend, in part, on the

1/ President Nixon stated in the Shanghai Communique that "It is the United States reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves." The Administration's position on Korean reunification is that it should be negotiated by North and South Korea through the North-South talks.
United States, they depend even more on what happens inside the nations of the region and how it is reflected in their foreign policies.

The new China, it seems to me, is likely to remain largely inward-looking in its policies. The impressions of a visit to China in 1972 are those of a self-disciplined, efficiently organized, dynamic and energetic people. The worst aspects of pre-1949 China—starvation, pestilence, war-lordism, lack of education, the absence of shelter for millions, indifference to human suffering, inflation and callous economic exploitation—have long since been eliminated. In every aspect of society, the indications are that China is being rebuilt on the basis of a new egalitarianism as exemplified by Chairman Mao's dictum "serve the people." China is creating a modern society on the foundations of an ancient culture. It is a society which already offers a livable present and a decent hope for the future. The new China is preoccupied with peace and in particular peaceful purposes and with the massive problems of feeding, clothing and sheltering and educating 800 million people. Unless provoked, that is likely to remain the preoccupation of the People's Republic for a long time to come.

China's foreign policy has been structured, primarily, for defense and security. Since the Korean War, Chinese troops have fought only for what the Chinese have considered to be their own territory, as traditionally defined, not only by the government in Peking but by the Chinese leadership on Taiwan. To be sure, China's influence is expanding in Asia and elsewhere. It is doing so, however, not on the basis of bayonets but by the pursuit of low-cost and low-key policies and a growing international commerce. Chinese actions have been consistently cautious and restrained and have reflected an alertness to the realities of the present international situation.

1/ China's recent seizure of the Paracel Islands, for example, was a case of China acting to enforce a long-held claim to the islands based on substantial historical precedent.
The current attitude of the People's Republic of China toward the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union stems not only from the primary concern for security and defense but also from a prudent readiness to expand mutually beneficial contacts with the rest of the world. For over two decades, the People's Republic viewed U. S. commitments, troops, and nuclear weapons in Asia as the principal threat to its existence. That is no longer the case. A growing concern regarding the Soviet Union has diluted this fear.

Chinese wartime memories and ideological economic interpretations stir some concerns over a possible revival of Japanese militarism. Peking also has reservations about the implications of economic collaboration between the Soviet Union and Japan in Soviet Asia. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Chinese rapprochement with Japan is further advanced than with any other country and Sino-Japanese trade and exchange of persons is extensive and growing.

Overshadowing all other considerations, it is the Soviet Union that is seen as the major threat to China's security and defense at this time. Soviet divisions along the northern and western borders, a growing Soviet naval strength in the Western Pacific, Soviet efforts to establish a "collective security system" in Asia, all suggest to China, encirclement and isolation. Against the possibility of sudden attack, the cities of China have been catacombed with tunnels and China's military technology has been expanded to include nuclear missiles capable of reaching European Russia.

Current Sino-Soviet problems run contrary to the many encouraging trends towards a stable peace which have emerged in Asia and the Pacific. The dispute is deep-seated, with territorial claims, ideological differences, cultural conflicts, and a sense of being short-changed during the early period of Sino-
Soviet economic collaboration and cooperation with China continue to add to the tensions. Regrettably, an end to Sino-Soviet hostility does not appear to be in sight, at least, in the years immediately ahead.

7. Contemporary Japan

Japan has emerged as a modern, democratic state and the major economic power of Asia and the Western Pacific. The Japanese "economic miracle" was no miracle at all. It was the result of the high technological and educational levels of the Japanese people, their organizational skills, their determination to recover from the war, and the hard-work and cooperation with which they went about this task. To these basic factors was added a blend of effective Government planning, a vigorous entrepreneurial system and, in the early years, a major assist of aid from the United States. The present dynamic economy plus an enlightened press, free and spirited public debate, a viable political system and competition among the parties results in a democracy that seems to work about as effectively as any in the world.

As seen from the United States, Japanese foreign policy going through a period of soul-searching. Two events have been of particular importance in this connection: the "Nixon shocks" of 1971, as already noted, and the anti-Japanese riots during Prime Minister Tanaka's visit to Southeast Asia in January 1974. These developments suggest that it would be imprudent to assume that the final word has been registered on the U. S.-Japan Security Treaty or on the continuance of U. S. bases in Japan and Okinawa to support American military operations elsewhere. In a similar fashion, Japan can also be expected, it seems to me, to undertake, increasingly, major economic policies independent of the United States, as it has already done with regard to the
Middle East and China and "in the peace process in regard to Soviet Asia. Some of these initiatives may result in "shocks" for the United States but they need not weaken the ties between the two nations if they are seen against the background of Japan's essential needs and in the larger context of continuing common interests. On the fundamental issue of peace and security in the Western Pacific and a flourishing world trade, Japanese and American interests are not in conflict and should not be permitted to drift into conflict.

Understandably, Japanese policy toward the rest of Asia has aimed at gaining wide access to markets and raw materials. This will always be a critical consideration to a nation that depends so greatly on foreign trade. But the anti-Japanese riots of January 1975 in Southeast Asia demonstrated the necessity for Japan to rethink some of the policies and methods that have been employed in this connection. Robert McNamara of the World Bank and others have pointed out that most Japanese economic aid has consisted of export credits or direct investment closely tied to commercial interests and profits. The Government of Japan has been urged to grant more liberal repayment terms on aid-loans, and it has been suggested that Japanese investors be more conscious of their responsibilities to help provide employment and improve living standards in the country of investment. Whether or not this course is the answer to the January riots, the problem of maintaining a vigorous trade without alienating the poorer countries of Asia represents a major foreign policy challenge for Japan in the years ahead.

This particular question is not directly involved in Japan's trade with the People's Republic of China. While the latter identifies with the poorer countries, the fact is that the level of self-confidence and economic competence in China is already high and is rising rapidly. More to the point, therefore, is the potential for Japanese-Chinese economic rivalry in the years ahead. In
addition, there are potential problems in the areas around the islands of the East and South China Seas which are reported to be rich in petroleum. The difficulties of remaining neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute also pose a dilemma for Japan whose peace and long-range economic welfare depends on the maintenance of good relations with both great neighbors.

8. Taiwan and South Korea in Limbo

Taiwan and South Korea also face a future of uncertainties. It is doubtful that the status quo can be maintained for very long in Taiwan. In the end, only two paths are open, a drift towards separation or a move towards an accommodation with the mainland, possibly in the form of an autonomous arrangement. Whatever Taiwan's future, it will not be decided by the Government and people of the island alone. Insofar as the United States is concerned, present policy recognizes the island as Chinese but the question of reconciling that recognition with the maintenance of relations with two Chinese governments has yet to be faced. Sooner or later, the United States will confront the inevitable choice.

Korea, too, may not be able to remain indefinitely in the status quo of militant ideological division. Unlike Taiwan, however, some hesitant steps have been taken by the Koreans to deal with the anomalous situation. South Korea has tried to establish contact with the Soviet Union and China. There have also been North-South talks which, at least, keep alive the possibility of rapprochement. The problem is complicated by political difficulties within South Korea of the kind which were manifested in the Kim Dae Jung affair. Unless political pressures are mitigated within South Korea and progress can be made in the direction of reconciliation with the North, Korea will remain a dangerous focal point of potential conflict.
This much is certain, with regard to the future role of the United States in Asia and the Western Pacific. The incessant warfare, cold and hot, during the past twenty-five years has been progressively wearing on the people of the United States. In the early 1960's, millions of Americans still believed that the United States should shoulder any burden to resist totalitarianism everywhere and to bring freedom and social progress to the peoples of the world. Vietnam damaged these ideological beliefs and shifted the practical concerns of Americans inward to the severe domestic problems and conflicts which rose to the surface out of the churning of the war. Indeed, the Vietnamese conflict, with its devastating psychological, financial, and social effects, proved to be the catalyst for a severe disenchantment with all aspects of foreign policy.

Today, policies with regard to national defense and foreign aid reflect these new trends in American sentiment. Many members of Congress have come to support reductions in defense expenditures, especially with regard to U. S. troops and bases overseas. Congress gave a recent display of a much more critical attitude toward foreign aid when the House of Representatives voted down a new contribution to the International Development Association, the "soft loan" affiliate of the International Bank. The House also in April 1974 decisively an Administration request to raise the ceiling on military assistance to South Vietnam in Fiscal Year 1975.

In the present American mood, proposals for economic self-sufficiency and autarky have gained a better reception in the United States than at any time since the great depression of the 1930's. The Arab oil embargo, of course, heightened this tendency. Long range national policies now look to self-sufficiency in energy. Pressures are also present for restrictions on exports.
of basic commodities. Labor unions and the organizations are lobbying in Congress for severe limits on foreign imports that compete with American-made products.

These trends in public opinion which are reflected in the Congress have helped to bring about some desirable curtailments in the over-extensions of U.S. policy, but they also present new dangers. There is, for example, a danger of going from the extreme of a tragic military intervention in Indochina to the extreme of indifference and a disinterest in what transpires in Asia. The fact is that the United States has a permanent concern in the Western Pacific, not to speak of a vital interest in international peace. Both demand a continuing awareness of what takes place in Asia and appropriate responses to developments. An excessive economic nationalism, for example, could threaten the very foundation of the link with Japan. The denial of U.S. markets to Japan or the suspension of agricultural sales could result in a complete re-shaping of the relationship between Japan and the United States to the detriment of both nations.

A valid U.S. policy must adjust to the changing conditions in Asia as well as to pressures from within the United States. It should remain and, I believe it can remain, however, a positive policy. The alternative to military containment and military pre-eminence need not be non-involvement and disinterest. A contraction of U.S. military forces, for example, can be accompanied by a creative diplomacy designed to build a new structure of peace based on conciliation, negotiation and a growing volume of multilateral economic interchange.

In this connection, the United States can make every effort to keep open its markets to the whole range of exports of the nations of the Western Pacific within the context of its own needs. While it is proper for the United
States to continue to urge upon the other countries barriers to U. S. exports and for Japan to seek to open hidden markets in the United States, this should not be done in either case under threat of economic retaliation or political reprisal.

As for the less developed countries of East Asia, more emphasis can be given to multilateral aid arrangements along the lines of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia and the Asian Development Bank, and possibly through United Nations organizations. The Soviet Union and China can be invited to participate in constructive programs of this kind.

At one time, it was the policy of the United States to stimulate the flow of private foreign investment in a random fashion. Various guarantees and incentives were offered for this purpose. It seems to me that in present circumstances, this policy must be reexamined. Excessively stimulated investment abroad is not only distortive of the flow of capital, it does not correspond to current problems and needs within the United States. Moreover, when capital is stimulated to move into Southeast Asia or Taiwan or Korea, it tends to contribute to the perpetuation of military commitments when such commitments are no longer essential or even desirable in terms of the security of the region or of the United States. This problem is actively under examination in the U. S. Senate at the present time.

In military matters, the continued contraction of deployments in Asia seems to me to be a very proper course for the United States in present circumstances. These forces are, in large part, a luxurious anachronism of Cold War policies. They can be substantially reduced and, in some cases, removed entirely. Many of the U. S. military installations in Japan, for example, serve a marginal military purpose at best, and sometimes their presence seems
only to stimulate anti-U. attitude among the populace. The whole complex should be reexamined and, by mutual agreement, sharply curtailed.

Expensive military assistance programs, involving hundreds of millions of dollars, are in the same category. All too often arms and equipment have been given to countries under a Cold War policy which has ceased to be relevant to the current situation. Nor should any U. S. defense treaty escape reexamination to determine whether or not it is still relevant to the needs of the 1970's. The defense treaty with the Republic of China on Taiwan, with Korea and with SEATO, in particular, may well have to be examined in connection with the contraction of the American military involvement in Asia and the Western Pacific and the normalization of relations in the region.

A new diplomacy for Asia and the Western Pacific must be based on the realization that "local" problems, more often than not, are also international in their ramifications, affecting not only the immediate parties but also, as in Indochina, at least four major powers: the United States, Japan, China, and the Soviet Union. Without the participation of these nations, it is doubtful that there can be a satisfactory resolution of the problems which are confronted in Vietnam and also in Korea.

To deal not only with specific questions of this kind, but with the security problems which will emerge with the reduction of U. S. military power in Asia and the Western Pacific will require new negotiating forums. It seems to me that a quadripartite group in the Western Pacific, consisting of China, the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States, buttressed by the other states of the region, would be appropriate for the examination of such concepts as non-aggression pacts, mutually agreed upon military withdrawals, limitation of naval armaments in Asian waters, and nuclear testing and stockpiling in Asia.
It might also facilitate a prompt acceptance of proposals for a neutralized Southeast Asia and, perhaps, a neutralized Korea. In my judgment, there are possibilities of progress on matters of this kind, provided the United States, Japan, China, and the Soviet Union, will work together and with other nations in pursuit of a stable peace and the well-being of the peoples of the region.