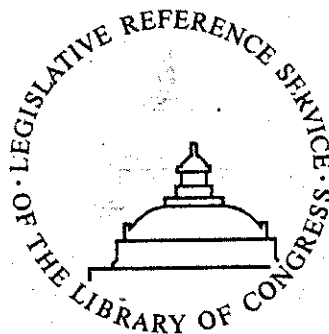


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THE NIXON DOCTRINE FOR ASIA

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THE NIXON DOCTRINE FOR ASIA

Summary

On the island of Guam in July 1969, President Nixon laid down guidelines for future United States policy in Asia. These guidelines have been referred to frequently by Administration officials since, notably in the President's November 3, 1969, speech on Vietnam and in his February 18, 1970, report to the Congress on "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's." This policy, which has become known as the Nixon Doctrine for Asia, ¹ / is essentially a restatement of past policy but with one major difference: the United States expects the nations of Asia to assume a greater role in their own defense, preferably in some form of regional mutual security pact, and with far less likelihood of commitment of U.S. ground combat troops on the mainland of Asia. Other principles of the doctrine are that the United States "will keep all of its" treaty commitments and will provide a nuclear shield to allies and also to other nations "whose survival we consider vital to our security." The doctrine is a response to a growing feeling in the United States that this country is overcommitted in Asia and that though the United States should assist allies in time of war it "should not fight the war for them."

¹ / The doctrine enunciated at Guam was concerned with U.S. policy toward Asia, but the Nixon Doctrine is now applied by the Administration to overall U.S. foreign policy. President Nixon in his foreign policy message to Congress on February 18 stated: "Its central thesis is that the U.S. will participate in the defense and development of allies and friends, but that America cannot -- and will not -- conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world." This paper, as indicated by its title, is limited to the doctrine as it applies to Asia.

On the whole, the United States has been consistent since 1950 in its security policy toward the island chain off East Asia -- including Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan and the Philippines -- in guaranteeing assistance in case of a Communist attack. The Nixon Doctrine does not appear to alter this. But evaluation of U.S. interests on the mainland has been more difficult, with some resultant shifting back and forth in American policy. This is partly because of differing analyses of U.S. military capabilities in relation to the geographic realities of the mainland and in relation to Communist strengths and weaknesses. One argument made by critics of past policy toward Asia is that the United States overextended itself after World War II, particularly in the Southeast Asia area, and that continued U.S. presence on the mainland only exacerbates tensions there.

Defending the island chain involves primarily the employment of air and seapower -- where the United States has a clear-cut superiority. But defending the non-Communist countries of the mainland has necessitated the use of U.S. ground combat forces in substantial numbers. In the cases of both Korea and Vietnam, the Communists have shown the ability to neutralize U.S. firepower, at least partially, through the employment of their vast manpower reserves. Geography has also been to the advantage of the Communists. Communist China and North Vietnam have had little difficulty supplying their troops in wars along their periphery, and North Vietnam has taken full advantage of the geography of Indochina to wage a kind of quasi-guerrilla, quasi-conventional struggle against the United States.

The United States has struggled with these realizations ever since the Chinese Civil War. Yet, in Korea and in Vietnam, the Truman and Kennedy-Johnson

Administrations felt that a Communist victory would have far-reaching effects in Asia and would elsewhere be detrimental to U.S. national interests. This led to the decisions to intervene with ground troops. The Eisenhower Administration was under considerable pressure to intervene in Indochina in 1954, but held back because of the specter of another prolonged involvement and because of domestic opposition. Part of the Eisenhower Administration's rationale for its policy of "massive retaliation" lay in the fear of becoming embroiled on the Asian mainland.

The Eisenhower Administration in its commitments in Southeast Asia stressed that United States contributions to military defense would be "primarily in terms of sea and airpower." Thus, Eisenhower modified President Truman's policy by shifting the emphasis from ground to air power. Secretary of State Dulles said in 1955, after the first meeting of the Council of SEATO, that "we shall rely largely upon mobile allied power which can strike an aggressor wherever the occasion may demand." ¹/ Dulles said there was no intention of building up a large local force which would include U.S. ground troops. He said that in the event of open armed attack "The most effective step would be to strike at the source of aggression rather than to try to rush American manpower into the area to try to fight a ground war."

¹ / Senator H. Alexander Smith, one of the senators who had been with the United States delegation in Manila when the SEATO Treaty was concluded in September 1954, said in February 1955: "We have no purpose of following any such policy as that of having our forces involved in a ground war."

The Nixon Doctrine is basically a policy aimed at limiting or ending the use of U.S. combat troops on the Southeast Asia mainland, especially on a unilateral basis. This would, in several respects, coincide with the Eisenhower-Dulles policy for the area in the 1950's. President Nixon has described the primary purpose of his doctrine as the avoidance of another Vietnam-type war. It calls on the nations of Southeast Asia to provide the manpower in combatting Communist guerrilla insurgencies; the United States will provide advice, arms, and supplies but not the manpower. The Nixon Doctrine takes a less clear-cut position with regard to a direct, Korea-style Communist attack in Southeast Asia, indicating that it will assess a number of factors before determining its response, including the efforts made by the local government, the response of other Asian nations, and U.S. capabilities and interests. This approach probably stems in part from the fear that an abrogation of U.S. commitments to countries on the Asian mainland could cause the Communist powers to adopt a more aggressive stance in the area. With regard to a nuclear threat or attack from a Communist power, the doctrine is clear: the United States will provide a "nuclear umbrella" to countries threatened or attacked.

The Nixon Doctrine places greater emphasis on Communist-assisted "wars of national liberation" in Southeast Asia than it does on conventional Communist attack. Administration statements tend to downgrade the possibility that Communist China will launch an all-out invasion anywhere in Southeast Asia. The United States also seems to believe that North Vietnam will confine its direct military interventions to Indochina. Both countries, however, are expected to support Communist subversion and insurgencies. This type

of warfare is, in the Administration's view, the major challenge to U.S. policy in Southeast Asia; this explains the Nixon Doctrine's stress on the need for threatened countries to bear the primary responsibility to combat wars of national liberation. President Nixon has emphasized, with respect to the changes taking place in East Asia, the potential for a greater Asian role in security and development arrangements for the area. The emergence of Japan as the world's third-ranking industrial power is a central factor in the President's Asia doctrine; he states that U.S.-Japanese cooperation "will be crucial to our efforts to help other Asian nations develop in peace" and that Japan has a "unique and essential role to play in the development of the new Asia." Another factor is the potential for regional cooperation in the area; President Nixon has stressed the role of the Asian Development Bank, the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC), and the project to develop the Mekong River Basin.

I. Statement of the Doctrine

On the island of Guam on July 25, 1969, President Nixon enunciated what has become known as the Nixon Doctrine. While the general outlines of the Doctrine apply to Asia as a whole, important points focus particularly on the Southeast Asian mainland, where the danger of another U.S. military involvement similar to that of Vietnam appears greatest. The expressed reluctance to avoid the commitment of American ground troops to a war in Southeast Asia constitutes perhaps the major tenet of the Nixon Doctrine. This is especially true with regard to so-called "wars of national liberation." At Guam, the President declared that the Doctrine's objective was "to avoid another war like Vietnam" any place in the world. ^{1/} In his foreign policy message to Congress, he amplified upon this:

...Third, we cannot expect U.S. military forces to cope with the entire spectrum of threats facing allies or potential allies throughout the world. This is particularly true of subversion and guerrilla warfare, or 'wars of national liberation.' ^{2/}

In his Guam statement and during subsequent stops in Asia, the President emphasized the principle that the United States would materially assist countries faced with the internal Communist insurgencies but would not do the fighting for them. In Manila, he declared:

^{1/} New York Times, July 26, 1969. p. 8. At his request, President Nixon was not directly quoted at his Guam news conference. His statements were paraphrased by those reporters present.

^{2/} Congressional Record, February 18, 1970. p. H943.

I mean the independence that comes with economic strength, with political stability, and also with the means insofar as any threat internally that may occur in those countries -- the ability to handle those internal problems without outside assistance, except that kind of assistance which is limited to material support and which, of course, would therefore exclude the kind of support which would involve a commitment of manpower. 1/

Though President Nixon stressed that U.S. policy toward Asia aimed at avoiding another Vietnam-type war, he described on Guam and in his foreign policy message to Congress three key elements to the doctrine:

- (1) the United States would keep all its treaty commitments;
- (2) the United States would "provide a shield" if a nuclear power threatened an ally or country whose security the United States considered vital to its own security;
- (3) in cases involving "other types of aggression we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate." But here the nation threatened would "assume the responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense."

President Nixon has been clear on the nuclear issue but has been somewhat more flexible with regard to a conventional attack across borders and to Communist-supported insurgency. The President stated at Guam that, except for nuclear threats, the United States would encourage Asian countries to provide increasingly for their own security, and had a right to expect that they would do so. However, Administration aides subsequently pointed out that the United States would honor its commitments against external military aggression, whether conventional or nuclear. 2/

While in Thailand, the President struck a strong note by declaring that the United States "will honor our obligations" to Thailand under the SEATO

1 / State Department Bulletin, August 25, 1969. pp. 145-146.

2 / Washington Post and New York Times, August 3, 1969.

pact and that "the United States will stand proudly with Thailand against those who might threaten it from abroad or from within." He later appeared to qualify this by stating:

Our determination to honor our commitments is fully consistent with our conviction that the nations of Asia can and must increasingly shoulder the responsibility for achieving peace and progress in the area. The challenge to our wisdom is to support the Asian countries' efforts to defend and develop themselves without attempting to take from them the responsibilities which should be theirs. 1 /

In his Vietnam address of November 3, 1969, President Nixon reiterated his Guam theme:

...Third, in cases involving other [non-nuclear] types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense. 2 /

The President, in his foreign policy message to Congress, said, in effect, that in the case of either direct conventional attack or externally-supported subversion, the United States would judge each individual situation before determining its response. Discussing this, he asserted:

However, a direct combat role for U.S. general purpose forces arises primarily when insurgency has shaded into external aggression or when there is an overt conventional attack. In such cases, we shall weigh our interests and our commitments, and we shall consider the efforts of our allies, in determining our response. 3 /

1 / New York Times, July 29, 1969.

2 / U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. The Pursuit of Peace, An Address by President Nixon, November 3, 1969. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969.

3 / Congressional Record, February 18, 1970. p. H943.

Several reasons probably lie behind the Administration's imprecise, but carefully worded, statement here. During his years as a Senator and Vice President, the President was one of those who criticized Secretary of State Dean Acheson for his January 1950 speech in which he defined the area of direct American defense commitments in the Western Pacific, leaving out South Korea. Critics subsequently charged that this invited North Korea's attack. The Administration may feel that a direct statement of non-intervention might have a similar effect on Communist China and/or North Vietnam, especially in the context of Vietnam and Indochina. Moreover, it apparently foresees the need to judge other factors in weighing a response, such as the extent of external Communist aggression (particularly the extent of external support for indigenous insurgents), the efforts made by the local government to meet the threat, the response of other Asian nations, and U.S. military capabilities. Finally, the Nixon Doctrine is long-range in nature: to be implemented over a number of years during which the Administration expects (or hopes) that the non-Communist nations of Asia will attain the capacity to defend themselves against non-nuclear conventional aggression of either type listed above. The President emphasized in his Guam statement that he was attempting to define the U.S. role in Asia after the end of the Vietnam war. He described his Manila statement referred to above as a "goal -- a goal that we can achieve." Throughout his various pronouncements, the President has spoken of the Asian countries as "increasingly" shouldering the responsibility for defense.

The Cambodian crisis of April-May 1970 provided what many considered to be the first test of the Asian Doctrine. President Nixon announced on April 30 that U.S. troops had attacked Communist sanctuaries in that country, but he justified this action by claiming that it would strengthen the Vietnamization program in South Vietnam and protect the lives of American

troops there. He also disclosed that the United States would supply the Lon Nol Government with military assistance in the form of small arms. In a subsequent interview in U.S. News and World Report (May 11), Secretary of Defense Laird justified military aid to Cambodia as being in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine. He said that "Cambodia presents an opportunity for application of the Nixon Doctrine," which he said meant "a reduction not only in American involvement in Asian combat but an increase in military assistance to our Asian friends so they can defend themselves." Critics, however, charged that involvement of U.S. troops in Cambodia meant a widening of the Vietnam war and contradicted the basic tenets of the Nixon Doctrine (see page LRS-28).

President Nixon in a news conference on May 8 indicated that once U.S. troops were withdrawn from Cambodia by the end of June, they would not be sent back:

The United States is, of course, interested in the future of Cambodia, and the future of Laos, both of which, as you know, are neutral countries. However, the United States, as I indicated in what is called the Guam or Nixon Doctrine, cannot take the responsibility and should not take the responsibility in the future to send American men in to defend the neutrality of countries that are unable to defend themselves. 1 /

He added that the proper course to ensure the neutrality of countries like Cambodia and Laos was to guarantee by diplomacy the "neutrality of countries that are unable to defend themselves" without having foreign forces intervene. President Nixon said the United States was "exploring" this possibility with the Soviet Union, with Great Britain, with the Asian countries meeting in Djakarta and "through every possible channel."

1 / Congressional Record, May 11, 1970, p. S6917. Both Secretary of State Rogers and Secretary of Defense Laird have indicated that South Vietnamese troops, but not American, might conduct future operations in Cambodia. Rogers, for example, said on May 13 that "We don't intend to become involved militarily in the support of the Lon Nol Government or any other (Cambodian) government...I don't know that I'd want to make a commitment on behalf of the South Vietnamese." Washington Post, May 14, 1970.

II. Basic Elements of the Doctrine

Essentially, the Nixon Doctrine for Asia rests upon the assumption that new forces are emerging in Asia that will reduce the likelihood of American military intervention in the future. President Nixon stated in his February 18, 1970, foreign policy message to Congress that "the whole pattern of international politics was changing" and that America's challenge is "to understand that change, to define America's goals for the next period."^{1/} The President apparently foresees the U.S. task in East Asia in the 1970's as one of influencing these changes with the aim of accentuating the elements which correspond to the objective of reduced U.S. involvement.

A. Developments in East Asia

The growing strength and stability of the non-Communist nations of Asia and their increased regional consciousness constitute the fundamental underpinning of the Nixon Doctrine. The Administration believes, like its predecessor, that concern over the Vietnam war has overshadowed many encouraging developments elsewhere in Asia. The overthrow of Sukarno in Indonesia and his replacement by what the President has described as "constructive nationalism" has, in the Administration's view, contributed greatly to both Indonesia's internal stability and the strength of the region as a whole. The countries of East Asia made some impressive economic gains in the 1960's, particularly in the area of food production. To President

^{1/} Ibid., p. H925.

Nixon, such factors have resulted in a diminution of Communist appeal in these nations. 1/

In addition to greater internal strength, the emergence of regional identity and association has created new instruments of potential power which the President hopes will eventually supplement American power in the area, thus making it possible for the United States to reduce its overall role. On Guam, he spoke of the development of an Asian collective security system in the next five to ten years. In his article in the October 1967 issue of Foreign Affairs, he cited newly-created regional organizations such as the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC) as the potential framework for a system of this type. However, several members of ASPAC, such as Japan, have stated that ASPAC is not intended to be a military alliance. 2/

President Nixon has stated on a number of occasions that American policy in East Asia in the 1970's will have as a major objective the inducement of the nations of the area to move in the direction of collective self-defense. The United States' role in such arrangements would be to provide military, economic, and technical assistance. Statements by President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry Kissinger, also indicate a policy of pressure based upon an expressed unwillingness on the

1/ See Guam statement, New York Times, July 26, 1969.

2/ At the Fourth Ministerial Conference of ASPAC in Japan last June, Japanese Foreign Minister Aichi suggested that some day Communist China, North Korea, and North Vietnam might become members of ASPAC. He added that "in a realistic sense" Indochina, Burma and Singapore were the likeliest candidates for early membership.

part of the United States to embark on future unilateral military interventions in Asia while the countries of the region do little or nothing. Moreover, the United States will apparently undertake no new defense commitments in the Far East; Vice President Agnew indicated during his January 1970 Asian trip that the United States would not use U.S. ground combat troops to guarantee the defense of Singapore and Malaysia. ^{1/}

This approach stems from the belief, as expressed by both Nixon and Kissinger, that America's allies have become so conditioned to U.S. defense guarantees that they have no incentive to contribute appreciably to a collective defense effort. President Nixon has described this condition as "permanent welfarism." ^{2/}

In his article in the Brookings Institution's Agenda for the Nation, Dr. Kissinger listed as one of the four conditions for an effective alliance "a penalty for noncooperation -- that is, the possibility of being refused assistance must exist -- otherwise protection will be taken for granted and the mutuality of obligation will break down." ^{3/} President Nixon declared in his Foreign Affairs article that an Asian collective security system could be forged "if the need for a regional alliance is put in sufficiently compelling terms." ^{4/} In a 1968 campaign speech, he repeated this theme

^{1/} Washington Post, January 10, 1970.

^{2/} Congressional Record, April 1, 1968, p. E2512. Gordon, Kermit (ed.). Agenda for the Nation. Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1968, p. 594. Kissinger stated in his contribution to the book that: "Because the United States has often seemed more eager to engage in the defense of its SEATO and CENTO allies than they themselves, they have become convinced that noncooperation will have no cost. In fact, they have been able to give the impression that it would be worse for us than for them if they fell to communism. SEATO and CENTO have become, in effect, unilateral American guarantees."

^{3/} Gordon, op. cit., p. 593.

^{4/} Foreign Affairs, October 1967, p. 116.

and stated: "If the other nations in the free world want to remain free, they can no longer afford the luxury of relying on American power." 1/

Kissinger's condition for a successful alliance and the Nixon pronouncements strongly imply that the United States will weigh heavily the response of nations of the area before intervening militarily in an Asian country -- especially Southeast Asia -- once the Vietnam war ends. Mr. Nixon said in his Foreign Affairs article that a significant regional collective effort should first be made to halt aggression before the United States would step in:

But other nations must recognize that the role of the United States as world policeman is likely to be limited in the future. To ensure that a U.S. response will be forthcoming if needed, machinery must be created that is capable of meeting two conditions: (a) a collective effort by the nations of the region to contain the threat by themselves; and, if that effort fails, (b) a collective request to the United States for assistance. 2/

This would ensure, he said, that these countries would contribute to a collective effort if the United States had to intervene. 3/

Vice President Agnew's Asian trip in January 1970 showed signs that the Administration was attempting to implement this policy. Agnew's statement that the United States would not send ground troops to defend Malaysia may have been an attempt to spur the five-power talks 4/ on the defense of

1/ New York Times, October 20 1968.

2/ Foreign Affairs, October 1967, p. 114.

3/ Ibid.

4/ Great Britain, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand.

Malaysia-Singapore which have been going on with only marginal results since 1968. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's words of caution with regard to prospects for increased regional cooperation may have been prompted by American pressure in this regard. 1 /

In short, the Nixon Doctrine seems to envisage an evolution in the character of U.S. commitments to the defense of various Southeast Asian mainland countries from that of a unilateral guarantee to that of a conditional guarantee. It will expect and pressure Asian nations to develop instruments of collective defense as insurance that any future U.S. military involvement will not be a unilateral undertaking.

The urgent request from the Cambodian Government in April for military assistance confronted the United States with a difficult dilemma. Dispatch of troops would undercut President Nixon's goal of having Asian nations handle regional security problems. On the other hand, if North Vietnam's goal should take over Cambodia or install a friendly government in Phnom Penh, then this too could be seen as jeopardizing the Nixon Administration's policy of Vietnamization and of achieving a lower profile in Asia. The Administration has made some effort, in conformity with the overall thrust of the Nixon Doctrine, to influence Cambodia's neighbors to cooperate in an assistance program to get non-Cambodian military units and troops out of Cambodia. Indonesia has offered to host a conference whose aim would be to restore the neutrality of Cambodia by arranging the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces, but the effect this will have on the overall problem is unclear.

1 / Singapore AFP, January 10, 1970.

The President's idea of timing for the development of regional collective defense is an uncertain element of the Nixon Doctrine. He does not foresee a sharp and immediate swing in this direction. Yet, he apparently seeks positive movement toward Asian collective security during the 1970's, as evidenced by his Guam reference to a period of five to ten years.

B. Japan's Role in Asian Defense

Japan occupies a position of highest importance in the Administration's thinking with regard to Asian development and security. With a gross national product of approximately \$200 billion, Japan ranks behind only the United States and the Soviet Union in terms of economic strength. In his Foreign Affairs article, President Nixon asserted that "Japan will surely want to play a greater role both diplomatically and militarily in maintaining the balance in Asia." ^{1/} He again emphasized the key role of Japan in his foreign policy message to Congress, declaring that "Japan's partnership with us will be a key to the success of the Nixon Doctrine in Asia." ^{2/}

The President sees Japan as emerging from the post-war period with a growing realization that its actual and potential power entail a more forceful role in international affairs. Since 1945, Japan's foreign policy has felt heavily the effects of the country's defeat in World War II. Within the last few years, however, Japan has begun to shake off the intensive isolationist impulse emanating from the war. Under Liberal Democratic leadership, it has begun to take important foreign initiatives, including the

^{1/} Foreign Affairs, October 1967, p. 120.

^{2/} Congressional Record, February 18, 1970, p. H933.

beginning of economic aid programs in a number of Asian countries and the assumption of membership in the newly-formed Asia and Pacific Council. Moreover, the Government has slowly increased the size and strength of the Self-Defense Forces.

The communique issued following the visit of Premier Sato to the United States in November 1969 stated that both governments intended to "firmly maintain" the Mutual Security Treaty in force and that the terms of the Treaty, including the prior consultation clause, would be extended to the Ryukyus (including Okinawa). The communique noted basic agreement on the "vital role played by U.S. forces in Okinawa in the present situation in the Far East." ^{1/} The present treaty entered into force on June 23, 1960; on or after June 23, 1970, either side can give a one-year notice of intent to terminate.

The U.S. decision to return administrative control of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 was predicated largely on President Nixon's view of Japan's future role in Asia. As an immediate goal, the United States sought and apparently obtained Japan's consent to involve itself in the defense of South Korea and Taiwan, the potential trouble spots closest to Japan. Prime Minister Sato's statements in Washington last November that Japan considers the defense of South Korea and Taiwan vital to its own security indicated that the Tokyo Government may now become involved in planning with the United States to determine how American bases on the home islands and Okinawa will be employed

^{1/} Negotiations regarding specific arrangements for reversion of Okinawa are expected to continue well into 1971.

in the event of Communist attacks in these areas. ^{1/} The Administration gained a second objective when Sato promised President Nixon that Japan would increase its economic assistance in Asia and make a "substantial contribution" to postwar rehabilitation in Southeast Asia.

Premier Sato has stressed, both before and since the November meeting with President Nixon, that Japan's increasing role in Asia will be in the fields of economic and technical assistance, not as a military power. Sato said in February that Japan "is not a country to play a role in world affairs by military means." Japan has, however, indicated it intends gradually to increase its efforts for the defense of Okinawa and the home islands. Sato said in November that Japan's self-defense capabilities "are already filling an important role in securing the primary defense of Japan and it is our policy to continue to consolidate such capabilities." Sato has said that the December election victory (of his Liberal Democratic Party) fixed the nation's security policy, and on February 14 he said that the election was a mandate for stepped-up military spending at a pace determined "in accordance with our national power and circumstances." Some members of the cabinet, such as Yasuhiro Nakasone, the head of the self-defense forces, have been more explicit in outlining Japan's determination to become less reliant on the United States. Nakasone has said that in 1975 the United States-Japan defense relationship should undergo a basic reexamination and that by 1975 "it might be time" to end the security treaty.

^{1/} Japan at present does not appear ready to commit its own forces directly to the defense of South Korea or Taiwan. However, Prime Minister Sato's statements indicates that he will be flexible with regard to American use of bases in Japan and Okinawa in this connection. This will entail some Japanese participation in contingency planning.

Just how Japan's role in Asia evolves depends on a number of factors in addition to the stated positions of the United States and Japanese governments. Japan was for years reluctant to assume a larger role among Asian nations because of fears that wartime antagonisms would be revived. There is, in fact, some misgiving on the part of Southeast Asian countries about Japan's suitability to assume a major role in Asia. Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, has described Japan as potentially the main threat to Southeast Asia in the 1970's. Japan's evolving "Asia-Pacific Concept" of regional cooperation has resulted in some unfavorable comparison with the Japanese domination and military orientation of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" of the World War II period. On the other hand, some Southeast Asian countries ^{1/} have criticized Japan for "dragging its feet" in increasing investment and economic assistance to the area. Japan has also been criticized for the relatively high interest rates and short-term features of its loans and for the brusque ways in which it has handled some of its business dealings.

C. U.S. View of Communist Capabilities

The Nixon Doctrine also appears to be based on several broad assumptions regarding the sources and nature of the Asian Communist threat in the 1970's. Basically, these are: (1) Communist China is not likely to launch a direct conventional attack in Southeast Asia in the near future; (2) direct North Vietnamese aggression is not likely outside of Indochina; and, (3) the major threat to the non-Communist nations of Southeast Asia lies in Communist "wars of national liberation." The importance of these assumptions to the Nixon Doctrine apparently lies in the factor of time.

^{1/} Including Indonesia.

Guerrilla insurgencies usually take years to develop into formidable challenges to established governments. This fact, in the Administration's view, will allow the countries of Southeast Asia time to achieve internal stability and move toward regional self-help in defense. Moreover, the time factor is considered important in the enhancement of Japan's role in Southeast Asia. The burden on the United States is expected to become lessened as Japan and other nations assume more of a defense role.

1. Communist China

President Nixon stated on Guam that Communist China's internal problems had reduced its capability of supporting wars of national liberation in Southeast Asia. This, presumably, would also include a reduced capability to launch a direct conventional attack against the region, as many experts have recently pointed out. Several factors contribute to this assumption. The Cultural Revolution appears to have weakened China's internal cohesion and the authority of the central government. Both would probably have to be restored before Peking could undertake any large-scale military adventure in Southeast Asia. The nearly decade-long Soviet arms embargo on Communist China has substantially reduced the capabilities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). For example, the Institute for Strategic Studies in London, which publishes annual studies on the armed forces of various countries, has described the PLA as largely an infantry force with much outdated equipment. China's ability to carry on a full-scale war outside its own borders is believed to be limited. China's own arms industry is unable to supply the need for engineering equipment, and transport. ^{1/} Further, many academic

^{1/} Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, 1969-1970, pp. 38-39.

specialists in the United States argue that though Communist China intends to increase its influence in East Asia, there are no signs that Peking will use conventional military force to achieve this objective. Finally, the United States seems to believe that the Sino-Soviet split is now irreparable and that Communist China's concern over the security of its northern border will preclude a military thrust in the opposite direction against Southeast Asia.

Many China specialists in the United States argue that Peking has been, and is likely to continue to be, prudent and cautious in the conduct of its foreign policy. According to this line of thinking, the post-Mao leadership is likely to be more pragmatic and realistic than Mao himself and subject to even greater internal as well as external restraints. China, it is argued, is not committed to broad territorial expansion even though it encourages "liberation movements" abroad. China does apparently hope to regain some territories it considers Chinese, but only by long-term, low-risk policies. China has felt itself to be "encircled" by the United States and the Soviet Union and has had a major goal of deterring attack.

In his foreign policy message to Congress, President Nixon described the Soviet Union and Communist China as "bitter adversaries" and asserted that "the Marxist dream of international Communist unity has been shattered."^{1/} Secretary Laird was somewhat more specific in his annual posture statement:

^{1/} Congressional Record, February 18, 1970, p. H925.

The Chinese, however, seem to be careful to avoid direct combat involvement of their own personnel in military operations associated with the so-called 'liberation movements.' Moreover, their current difficulties with the Soviet Union may serve as a restraint to any major military operations outside their own borders. 1 /

While the President expressed concern over China's growing nuclear arsenal in his State of the World message, he voiced no similar worry over Communist China's conventional capabilities. He apparently feels that this will allow the United States to lower its non-nuclear military profile in Southeast Asia while granting a "nuclear umbrella" to Asian nations.

President Nixon's recent diplomatic moves toward Communist China also bear a close relationship to the Nixon Doctrine. The removal of some of the restrictions on American travel and trade with the Chinese mainland plus the resumption of the Warsaw talks with Peking indicate a new U.S. effort to reduce the level of hostility between the two countries. The Administration may have either accepted or may be testing the argument often voiced by American critics of U.S. China policy that much of China's hostility toward the United States stems directly from the American policy of diplomatically isolating China and from Peking's concern about U.S. intentions in Asia. The President has referred to this factor in connection with his view that U.S. foreign policy has entered an era of negotiations with the Communist world:

Within such a structure, international disputes can be settled and clashes contained. The insecurity of nations, out of which so much conflict arises, will be eased, and the habits of moderation and compromise will be nurtured.

1 / Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird Before a Joint Session of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations on the Fiscal Year 1971 Defense Program and Budget, February 20, 1970, p. 55.

By seeking increased contacts and lowering the level of military containment (the return of Okinawa to Japan and reduction of the Seventh Fleet's presence in the Taiwan Straits), the Administration apparently hopes that Peking will eventually be led to moderate its belligerent stance toward the United States and its Asian allies. Such an eventuality would contribute to a reduced U.S. posture in Southeast Asia. President Nixon, however, has cautioned that: "United States policy is not likely soon to have much impact on China's behavior." ^{1/} Secretary Laird warned in his posture statement that, while Communist China had shown military restraint in Asia for a number of reasons:

Nevertheless, Chinese Communist ambitions for great power status and regional hegemony are recognized by the nations of Asia as well as ourselves, and China's geographical position and potential for realizing its ambitions pose a pervading psychological and actual threat to the peace and security of the Asian area. ^{2/}

These statements indicate that the United States still views Communist China as an unsettling force in the Far East: thus, the stress on regional collective security efforts and other measures designed to meet Chinese inspired and/or supported subversion.

President Nixon also stated in February that: "The principles underlying our relations with Communist China are similar to those governing our policies toward the USSR." ^{3/} This statement apparently means that Administration

^{1/} Congressional Record, February 18, 1970, p. H944.

^{2/} Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, op. cit.

^{3/} Congressional Record, February 18, 1970, p. H944.

diplomacy aims at ending the total hostility and isolation between the United States and China, limiting conflict between them, and seeking some elements of mutual understanding of one another's policies -- i.e., moving toward a relationship with Communist China similar to the current U.S.-Soviet relationship. The Administration thus appears to believe that a reduced American presence in East Asia might enhance Chinese understanding of U.S. policy, but it also feels that the uncertainty about intentions makes necessary regional security efforts by the non-Communist nations of Asia, with the United States limited to a supporting role.

2. North Vietnam

The Administration has reportedly concluded that a conventional attack by North Vietnam outside of Indochina, particularly against Thailand, is unlikely. ^{1/} Moreover, U.S. officials have stated that they do not expect North Vietnam to launch an all-out military effort to take over all of Laos. They have cited several explanations for North Vietnam's strategy in Laos, including a reluctance on its part to abrogate the 1962 Geneva Accords on Laos unilaterally, and the existence of more immediate objectives in Laos such as an end to U.S. bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

North Vietnamese objectives in Cambodia remain unclear. Hanoi probably hopes, at a minimum, to retain sanctuaries for North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops. Before the U.S.-South Vietnamese attack on the Communist sanctuary areas at the end of April, reports indicated wide-ranging operations east of the Mekong River in Cambodia by Communist troops. An Indochina summit

^{1/} Washington Post, August 24, 1969.

was held in southern China in late April with Prince Sihanouk and representatives of area Communist states and groups present to discuss strategy. The meeting was attended by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai, North Vietnam's Premier Pham Van Dong, Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong and Vietcong leader Nguyen Huu Tho. North Vietnam's news agency said they reached "unanimity" in their views. Both Hanoi and Peking have recognized Sihanouk's government in exile.

3. Communist-Assisted Wars of National Liberation

While the U.S. Government has indicated it does not expect direct North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist attacks in Southeast Asia outside of Indochina, it does expect both nations to support Communist wars of national liberation in Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, and other neighboring countries. However, as stated earlier, the Nixon Administration apparently believes that guerrilla insurgencies of this type will be slow to develop into real threats to established governments, ^{1/} thus giving these governments time to react positively. The Administration maintains that countries such as Thailand can contain Communist insurgencies if they apply proper policies. U.S. officials have pointed to Thailand's relative success in containing the Communist guerrillas in the Northeast since that movement began in the early 1960's. Moreover, Burma, Malaysia, and Indonesia have also dealt with

^{1/} Washington Star, January 11, 1970. In a lengthy assessment of Southeast Asia's future, Star Asian correspondent Donald Kirk described the views of "analysts" in Bangkok that even if North Vietnam established domination over all of Indochina the result elsewhere could be a lengthy guerrilla insurgency rather than a direct North Vietnamese attack against Thailand.

insurgencies of this type with varying degrees of success. U.S. officials have stated that threatened countries such as Thailand and Malaysia have shown substantial internal cohesiveness, economic progress, and a sense of positive nationalism -- all of which are roadblocks to Communist ambitions.

D. Vietnamization and Counterinsurgency

Testifying before a House Subcommittee in October 1969, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird described Vietnamization of the Vietnam war as the "first step" in the Nixon Doctrine for Asia. He said: "I do not believe that the Nixon Doctrine would be a credible doctrine if we fail in Vietnam in this new program." ^{1/} Laird asserted, in effect, that the central thesis of Vietnamization applied to the Administration's thinking regarding other Communist wars of national liberation: namely that a threatened nation, by implementing proper policies, can effectively deal with such a situation with its own manpower rather than by relying on U.S. manpower. The Vietnamization program indicates that the Administration's idea of appropriate policies coincides with the theories and concepts of counterinsurgency which emerged in the early 1960's. Thus, the President publicly referred late in 1969 to the analysis of the Vietnam situation made by the British counterinsurgency expert, Sir Robert Thompson. Thompson, who visited Vietnam at President Nixon's request, had been a key figure in developing the counterinsurgency strategy applied in Vietnam before 1965. ^{2/} Administration

^{1/} U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Briefing on Vietnam. Hearings. 91st Congress, 1st Session. Secretary of State Rogers and Secretary of Defense Laird. November 18-19, 1969. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969. pp. 63, 105, 109.

^{2/} He was Head of the British Advisory Mission to the Government of South Vietnam from 1961 to 1965.

officials, including the President and Dr. Kissinger, have strongly suggested that these principles were poorly applied during that period and that they remain valid. Thompson has endorsed Vietnamization as a sound counterinsurgency strategy.

Vietnamization involves the effective application of these principles as well as the gradual withdrawal of American troops. The United States seeks to upgrade South Vietnamese forces so that they can eventually provide total security for the population through adequate defense of each hamlet and village and with a fully functioning government presence in the hamlets and villages. The emphasis on security in the populated cities and countryside has as its basic aim to deprive North Vietnamese regular forces and the Vietcong main force guerrillas of the support from the villages and hamlets upon which they have relied in the past for food, money, manpower, and intelligence. The Vietnamization program has emphasized greater efforts to wipe out the Vietcong political infrastructure within the hamlets, for the infrastructure constitutes the chief link between the population and the guerrillas and North Vietnamese regulars. If the Government of Vietnam, with American assistance, can isolate the North Vietnamese/Vietcong elements from the people in this way, then, according to this strategy, the enemy must openly challenge Allied control of the cities and populated countryside and thus risk heavy losses and defeat, or they will have to withdraw to the border areas closer to North Vietnamese supply lines.

United States and South Vietnamese forces moved in force into the Cambodian sanctuary areas at the end of April 1970 to destroy training and rest camps and logistics facilities, including weapon and ammunition supplies. President Nixon on April 30 described this action as a move "to protect our

men who are in Vietnam and to guarantee the continued success of our withdrawal and Vietnamization program." There probably were other factors in the decision to extend operations into Cambodia -- primarily the Communist threat to the Lon Nol Government. President Nixon said the United States action was not taken to expand the war into Cambodia but to move more rapidly to end the war. There was mixed reaction in the Congress to the Cambodian operations, with critics claiming that United States action did widen the war and was in direct contradiction to the Nixon Doctrine and to the overall Vietnamization program.

In outlining his views on ending the Vietnam war, President Nixon told the Republican National Convention in August 1968 that this "new kind of war" was "primarily a political struggle" which did not need escalation on the military front but a "dramatic escalation" on the economic, political and psychological fronts with a phasing out of American troops. He added that "this kind of war can actually be waged more effectively with fewer men and at less cost." ^{1/} Sir Robert Thompson has described it as a "long-haul, low-cost strategy" which seeks "to reduce the tempo of the war and to achieve an economy of effort." ^{2/} Herein presumably lies the key to Vietnamization's relationship to the remainder of Southeast Asia. While the Administration asserts that the North Vietnamese presence in South Vietnam necessitates the retention -- if gradual reduction -- of U.S. troops, it apparently believes that guerrilla insurgencies in the other countries of the area can be contained

^{1/} New York Times, August 2, 1968.

^{2/} Ibid., December 20, 1969.

and eliminated if local governments apply a political strategy effectively. ^{1/}
That is, major efforts should be directed at destroying the political infrastructure of the insurgents and establishing security for the people. Under this type of program, the United States will furnish "military and economic assistance" when requested in accordance with treaty commitments but the threatened nation would "assume primary responsibility" to provide manpower.

Thailand, today, represents the primary test of this concept. The government's counterinsurgency effort in the Northeast has gone on for more than five years now; most observers have concluded that since 1968 the Government has checked the insurgency there but has not eliminated it. ^{2/}
Thai Government policies in the Northeast bear a marked resemblance to major elements of the Vietnamization program in South Vietnam. The Government has emphasized road building to open up access to the villages, formation of local defense forces in the villages (to be nearly 10,000 strong by the end of 1970), and building up a police network in the area.

The Administration also hopes that growing regional cooperation among the Southeast Asian countries will lead to combined efforts against Communist insurgencies. These have already begun in some instances -- in Thailand and Malaysia, against the remnants of the Malayan guerrillas, and in Malaysia and Indonesia, against Communist terrorists in Sarawak -- and the Administration

^{1/} Washington Star, July 30, 1969.

^{2/} New York Times, February 2, 1968; May 2, 1968; August 11, 1968. Washington Post, February 6, 1969. Washington Star, June 22, 1969; January 11, 1970; March 29, 1970. The number of Communist terrorists in the Northeast has remained between 1,000 and 1,500 since the early stages of insurgency.

would like to see other countries brought into this kind of activity, possibly through regional organizations or, in the case of Japan, through increased economic aid.

The Cambodian crisis of April-May 1970 apparently has led the United States to broaden the goals of Vietnamization. Statements by U.S. and South Vietnamese officials now indicate that South Vietnam will help in the defense of Cambodia in addition to eventually assuming the whole burden of defending itself. President Nixon asserted at a news conference of May 8 that if it became necessary to undertake future attacks against Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, South Vietnamese forces would handle the assignment alone. President Thieu told reporters on May 8 that the Cambodian Government had asked South Vietnam to assist in the defense of its territory east of the Mekong. Saigon has already taken specific steps to help Cambodia. President Thieu has dispatched some 4,000 ethnic Cambodian troops to Phnom Penh and has offered more. A South Vietnamese flotilla, supported part of the way by American patrol boats, sailed up the Mekong to Phnom Penh between May 9 and May 11, opening up the river and depositing troops ashore at various points to clear the river area of Communist troops.

E. U.S. Capabilities and Interests

President Nixon has indicated he does not believe that the United States can politically afford to become embroiled in another Vietnam-like war in Asia. This is part of the rationale for Vietnamization, and would also apply for any future conflict in Southeast Asia, particularly in Communist-backed revolutionary wars. In his Foreign Affairs article, Mr. Nixon referred to the domestic political costs of a new Vietnam-style intervention as a

major reason for altering U.S. policy in East Asia:

One of the legacies of Viet Nam almost certainly will be a deep reluctance on the part of the United States to become involved once again in a similar intervention on a similar basis. The war has imposed severe strains on the United States, not only militarily and economically but socially and politically as well. Bitter dissension has torn the fabric of American intellectual life, and whatever the outcome of the war the tear may be a long time mending. If another friendly country should be faced with an externally supported Communist insurrection -- whether in Asia, or in Africa or even Latin America -- there is serious question whether the American public or the American Congress would now support a unilateral American intervention, even at the request of the host government. This makes it vitally in their own interest that the nations in the path of China's ambitions move quickly to establish an indigenous Asian framework for their own future security. 1/

President Nixon repeated this theme in his February 18 message to Congress: that the United States would consider the nature of the threat to a particular country or area plus the U.S. capacity to deal with such a threat "at an acceptable risk and cost" in determining the extent of its interests and commitments.

A related domestic source of the Nixon Doctrine centers upon the overall defense posture of the United States. Disillusionment with the Vietnam war, the impact of the war on the economy, and the increasingly complex problems of the environment, the cities and poverty have all produced pressures on the Administration to reduce defense spending. In doing so, the Administration has decided to give the highest defense priority to maintaining and expanding strategic (nuclear) capabilities while cutting back on general purpose or conventional forces. President Nixon has stated that since the United States possesses nearly all of the non-Communist world's nuclear power, it has to

1 / Foreign Affairs, October 1967, p. 114.

preserve its capability of deterring both a Soviet nuclear threat in Europe and a Chinese nuclear threat in Asia. On the other hand, the President asserted, America's allies can provide for much of their own military manpower needs. Consequently, he pointed out, the United States should not be expected to cope with the entire spectrum of military threats facing allies and friends throughout the world, particularly revolutionary wars backed by Asian Communists. The President described the strategy for U.S. general-purpose forces as a "one-and-a-half-war strategy" under which the United States would maintain conventional forces "adequate for simultaneously meeting a major Communist attack in either Europe or Asia, assisting allies against non-Chinese threats in Asia, and contending with a contingency elsewhere." This, in essence, links the Administration's new defense posture with the Nixon Doctrine's call for the nations of Asia to assume the primary burden of their own defense.

III. The Nixon Doctrine in Relation to the Island Chain and Korea

The Nixon Doctrine is aimed primarily at reducing the possibility of the use of U.S. ground combat troops on the mainland of Asia. It has less direct applicability to our island allies off the Asian mainland. The United States has a clear-cut superiority in sea and air power in the area. America's allies in Asia, with the exception of Japan, have a low potential for developing and supporting air and sea power. Moreover, defending the island chain from the Communist mainland is not likely to involve U.S. ground forces in a guerrilla war.

The U.S. defense commitment to the island chain has remained constant since 1950. The expected continuation of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty in 1970 and Vice President Agnew's firm assurances to President Chiang Kai-shek that the United States will honor its obligation to defend Taiwan indicate that the Nixon Doctrine has not significantly altered this element of U.S. policy. Secretary Laird strongly implied this in his posture statement, citing the lack of air and naval capabilities among U.S. allies in Asia:

In Asia, we seek to help our allies develop the capability to defend themselves with the United States providing material and logistic support. However, most of these countries lack adequate air and sea-power. Consequently, time and resources will be required to solve this problem. 1 /

U.S. policy toward Korea also appears to be only partially affected by the Nixon Doctrine. The American commitment to South Korea is probably the most extensive in Asia, being rooted in the United Nations' resolutions and declarations dating from the Korean War, the 1954 U.S.-South Korean Mutual

1 / State of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, op. cit., p. 54.

Security Treaty, and other related military and economic agreements. The United States may envisage in the long run some reduction in the 55,000-man American military presence in South Korea, as evidenced by President Nixon's remarks during his August 1969 San Francisco meeting with South Korean President Park stressing South Korea's ability "to assume the major share of the responsibility for defending Korea against the threat from the North."^{1/} However, both Presidents reaffirmed their determination "to meet armed attack" in accordance with the Mutual Security Treaty. President Nixon also warned North Korea that "we will not be intimidated" by attempts to heighten tensions in the area.^{2/} These pronouncements, plus the historical and treaty ties between the two countries, suggest that the United States, at least for the immediate future, would intervene militarily in case of a North Korean attack. The fact that the U.S. forces in Korea have tactical nuclear weapons is a further indication of American intentions.^{3/} Moreover, as stated earlier, President Sato's declaration during his Washington visit of November 1969 that Japan regards South Korea's security as vital to its own security may relate to joint U.S.-Japanese contingency planning in regard to the employment of U.S. troops on Okinawa in the defense of South Korea.

^{1/} Washington Post, August 22, 1969.

^{2/} Ibid., August 22 and August 23, 1969.

^{3/} Ibid., March 5, 1970.