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SOUTHEAST ASIA:

PROPOSALS AND PROSPECTS FOR ITS NEUTRALIZATION, 1968 - 1974:

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This thesis is my own original work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

Avila Kilmurray.

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INTRODUCTION

"When two Elephants fight, it is the Mousedeer in the middle who get hurt".

This Malaysian proverb has particular reference to its region of origin - Southeast Asia. The latter - the mousedeer - has for many decades been caught in an elephantine struggle between the Great Powers of the globe. Over the years these powers have changed, even the mousedeer has become nominally independent of them, but the results of the continuing conflict have remained basically the same - with all the heritage of bitterness and suffering that is the latter's inevitable reward. This proverb simplifies the issue, treating it on the level of the Great Powers' impact on the region. There is another level - the interactions of the mousedeer themselves - the ten states which are numbered in this region. As, however, it is proposed to examine the most recent neutralization proposal for Southeast Asia, and the prospects for its implementation, emphasis will be placed throughout this thesis on the level of the Great Power impact. This is due to the fact that the latter is considered to be more vital to the realization of the scheme, even if internal developments will play a central role in dictating its success thereafter. Hence, while three chapters deal with the elephant-mousedeer relations, and one with inter-elephantine situations, the internal workings of the mousedeer are related to two - one dealing with their 'dream' and the other their 'quandary'. A further chapter glances at 'Interested Neighbours' who encircle the arena.
Before proceeding to enlarge on my theme mention might be made of the time-frame within which this 'most recent' neutralization proposal was made. 1968 was the year in question, the issue being raised in the Malaysian House of Representatives during a Defence debate. In the following thesis I propose to trace the development of this neutralization proposal from 1968-1974. No particular significance need be attached to my concluding date - 1974 - nor do I deem it necessary as this study is not examining some historical event but rather - at the time of writing - an on-going development in International Relations. The latter can also be taken as my reason for writing in the present tense and I would remind readers that the described status quo and speculations below should be read as being applicable to December, 1974.

Returning to a consideration of the following chapters,
in the chapters on the elephants outlines are drawn of their respective foreign policy stances. This is not because it is considered that this alone explains their relations with each other, or with the states of Southeast Asia - foreign policy being not only initiatory but also reactive - but because these policies reflect certain attitudes and aspirations that are worth noting. Particularly as such attitudes and aspirations must be adapted, to a certain extent, with the realities of Southeast Asia. Furthermore, policy and ideology invariably have a certain bearing on each other that cannot be overlooked.

With regard to Southeast Asia, while not ignoring that what we call Southeast Asia is a diverse collection of very consciously independent states, composed of numerous peoples, ethnic minorities and dialects - with, in short, as much that is divergent as unifying - both for the purpose of convenience and being in line with recent developments, it will be regarded as a region. Arriving at an acceptable definition for a region would appear to be as profitable as providing a definition for the shape of a liquid, as Inis Claude pointed out:

"The world does not in fact break easily along neatly perforated lines. Rational regional divisions are difficult to establish, boundaries determined for one purpose are not necessarily appropriate for other purposes, and the most carefully chosen dividing lines have a perverse way of changing and coming to require change, and of overlapping". (1)

As illustrated by the taking to task of Bruce Russett's work - 'International Regions and the International System' - by Oran Young in his review of the same (2) it is far from easy to decide on even the criteria for designating what a region is. Professor Russett examined regions from the point of -


(a) Socially and culturally homogeneous groupings;
(b) Political attitudes and United Nations voting-
(c) International Organisations;
(d) Contiguous regions;
(e) Conflict and integration.

Claiming that -
"the task, in effect, is one of making the definition operational; at best the concept of region is but an analytical device for separating certain areal features thought relevant." (3)

However, having attempted to do so the conclusion is reached that there are no sharply identifiable regional systems - even less so in Asia, and particularly Southeast Asia, than in other areas. Duly mindful of Professor Russett's warning against the 'facile use' of regional labels so often employed in International Relations, it is nevertheless proposed that Oran Young's formula should be adopted -

"It is important to point out clearly in any given analysis that the concept 'region' will be defined in terms of X, Y, and Z, and to proceed with the construction of hypotheses involving the phenomenon of regionalism on this basis". (4)

My concept of region, therefore, will be defined in terms of geographical propinquity and regional identification - providing the following definition, 'a group of states linked by both a close geographical relationship and a similar regional identification of themselves, the latter being held in common'. Hence, Southeast Asia consists of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Laos, the Khmer Republic (Cambodia), North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Within this grouping the status of 'core' could be given to the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), due to their common bond of membership and their closer identification, these comprise - Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

(3) Extract from Russett - Op, Cit. - in Regional Politics and World Order, Falk & Mendlovitz, eds. (Freeman & Co. 1973).
(4) Oran Young - Op, Cit.
It is these 'core' nations that have in recent years been advocating neutralization for first their 'zone' - ASEAN - and ultimately the entire region. As this is the proposal - or proposals as it has now become - that is the focus of this thesis it is necessary to undertake a closer inspection of the concept of neutralization, and of related counterparts that it has tended to be confused with - neutrality, nonalignment and neutralism.

The best known, and arguably the greatest, of these is neutrality, whose position in power politics has been ably summarized in the early Indian treatise 'Arthasastra' -

"Whoever is inferior to another shall make peace with him- whoever is superior in power shall wage war; whoever thinks, 'No enemy can hurt me, nor am I strong enough to destroy my enemy', shall observe neutrality." (5)

The context of neutrality has remained basically unchanged despite the glosses imposed by the theoretical formulations of later ages. Neutrality is, and remains, a matter of national policy which is at all times subject to change. When adopted it does, however, carry with it a legal status with certain rights and duties generally established and recognized under international law - these being implemented upon the existence of a state of belligerancy. A policy of nonalignment on the other hand, is without legal implications of its own, and is rather a conscious refusal to add the potential of one state to that of another. George Liska has categorized the latter under three headings -

(a) An anti-alliance policy which rules out an alliance with a particular state while approving or condoning policies of alliance generally;

(b) Abstention from all alliances - the policy of traditional neutrals, while not objecting to alliances for others;

(c) The anti-alliance policies of neutralists which are opposed to all alliances including those amongst other powers. This view claims that competition for allies is a cause of tension and war. The fear of isolation is seen as the reductio ad absurdum of the rationale for alliances. In the absence of alliances all nations would be

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'isolated' and as such more amenable to universal laws and their sanctions. (6)

From this, and from the membership of the Nonaligned Movement, it can be seen that nonalignment is a far broader concept than the other three - neutrality, neutralization and neutralism.

Although 'neutralism' could be described as the doctrine of neutrality, and 'neutralists' as those that advocate it; it is a concept that has gained both global prominence and certain overtones in the last three decades. One general definition reads as follows -

"Neutralism is the determination of the majority of the new countries (states of the post-colonial era) to resist entanglement in either of the great power blocs in the Cold War". (7)

The moralistic implications that are so often adopted by neutralists were virtually inevitable given that neutralism was a concept forged in response to an ideological conflict and was itself often under attack from a different morality - hence President Eisenhower in 1956 as summarized by the Department of State:

"The President does believe that there are special conditions which justify political neutrality but that no nation has the right to be indifferent to the fate of another, or, as he put it, to be 'neutral as between right and wrong, or decency or indecency' " . (8)

However, the likelihood that new states freed from colonial control would be prepared to listen passively to speeches as to what one of the Great Powers identified as 'right and wrong or decency or indecency', was remote. Too many of them continued to regard the actions of the Great Powers as a sophisticated version of the old cliché - 'might is right'. Although the American position was to become - rhetorically at any rate - more liberal with respect to neutralism, both blocs limited their favour of a neutralist position to the cases which caused the loosening of links between the neutralist state and the rival bloc, such cases constituted a 'respectable'

(7) L. Martin - Op. Cit. p. XI.
neutralism. As with the above two concepts, neutralism is also a matter of policy; it is, however, quite distinct from neutrality, because whereas the latter means non-involvement in war, neutralism has come to mean non-involvement in the Cold War alone, whilst involvement in local 'hot' wars can be pursued with rigour. Finally, where the status of a neutralized state entails definite restrictions on the activities of that state, neutralists tend to emphasize that they will tolerate no limitations on their sovereignty. (9)

Unlike the others, neutralization is not a policy decision made solely by the state to be neutralized – it involves two sets of states: –

(a) Guarantors - who undertake certain specific obligations in relation to (b), and
(b) Guaranteed states - who, in turn, undertake certain complementary commitments about their own behaviour.

Proceeding on the basis of past practise, neutralization has usually required the neutralized state to:

(i) Refrain from all hostilities except self-defence;
(ii) Abstain from alliances involving the risk of hostilities;
(iii) Defend itself against attack even when calling on the guarantors for aid.

Moreover, 'to be effective, neutralization must be buttressed by the obligations of the guarantors to respect the obligations of the neutralized state and to come to its assistance if its neutrality is violated by outside aggression'. (10)

Hence, 'self-neutralization' – where a state makes an unilateral declaration of neutrality without guarantees by other states – is rather a misnomer.

However, as witnessed by the Austrian case the borderline between the declaration of a state of its 'permanent neutrality' and the international neutralization of that state can be very narrow. The latter case rewards consideration.

The Austrian saga was a lengthy one – sectioned and policed by Allied Forces since the end of the Second World War, the country became a pawn in a game of early political manoeuvre in the Cold War, with the Soviet Union seeking to use the Austrian question to prevent the re-armament of West Germany. Having failed in the latter, talks took place in Moscow in April 1955,


(10) Neutralization in South-east Asia, Problems and Prospects, Black, Falk Knorr & Young, eds. (U.S. Senate Study, 1966).
when an Austrian delegation was invited there, the talks pivoted on
Austrian neutrality. The Soviets emphasized the use of the word
'neutrality', rejecting 'freedom from alliances' and 'foreign policy
based on the principles of neutrality'. The Austrian Government was
to promise in an 'internationally binding form' to observe perpetual
neutrality after the Swiss model. After the Moscow talks, the Western
powers and the Soviet Union agreed to call an Ambassadors' Conference
in Vienna on May 2, 1955. On May 13 the State Treaty was signed –
providing for the evacuation of the Four Power forces from Austria. The
following October, the Austrian Parliament enacted a Constitutional
Federal Statute, in which:-

"Austria, of its own free will, declares herewith its permanent
neutrality....(and) will never in the future accede to any military
alliances nor permit the establishment of military bases of foreign
states on its territory".

The four Allied Powers delivered identical notes to the Austrian Government
on December 6th. They declared that they recognized the perpetual
neutrality of Austria in the form as set forth. In the course of the following
months Austrian neutrality was recognized by some sixty countries altogether.
Nevertheless, it may be noted that the recognition of the Constitutional
Federal Statute was not accompanied by a Four Power guarantee of Austrian
neutrality. (II)

Austria is an interesting derivation of neutralization. Certainly the
international pressures were present with the choice being between neutrality
and the status quo; the latter amounting to neutralization by occupation.
As stated in the constitutional law the status of neutrality is irrevocable.
By the notification of the enactment and implementation of the law, and
by the government application for recognition of its perpetual neutrality,
Austria has pledged itself - at least with regard to those countries which
have received and acknowledged the receipt of the notification - to maintain
forever its neutral status. In this manner, the Soviet demand that the
declaration of neutrality should be made in an internationally binding form
has been met.

(II) Russia and the Austrian State Treaty, S. Allard, (Pennsylvania State
The Austrian example did much to revive the concept of neutralization as a political solution. At the Geneva Conference on Laos in 1961, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia was recommending an "Austrian style neutrality" for Laos. (12) Despite this, it was the Cambodian representatives who had fought against the imposition of such a status on Cambodia at the Geneva Conference of 1954. In the Laotian case neutralization was proposed as a compromise solution for a complex international dispute, with a number of guaranteeing Powers having already been directly involved in the internal affairs of Laos. One writer on the Laotian issue claimed that while the Declaration and Protocol on the Neutrality of Laos was signed in Geneva on July 23, 1962, it was, nevertheless, for all the major Powers more of a face-saving device to freeze the status quo, than a foundation for stability in the area. (13) Furthermore, while the arrangement was viewed positively by North Vietnam and China (14), it was regarded negatively by the United States of America. Despite a total of thirteen signatories and the fact that the neutralization treaty for Laos was more detailed than any other treaty of this kind, the provisions proved to be full of loopholes in a relatively short period of time. Two major factors that were to ensure the breakdown of the Laotian framework were the internal instability of Laos itself, and the inability of some of the guarantors to refrain from interfering in internal Laotian affairs.

Before passing on a further short note is in order concerning the practice of neutralization. The initiative in imposing this policy is generally taken by the guarantors—whether implicitly or explicitly—hence as has been pointed out:-

'Neutralization definitely involves some form of international tutelage, and this is probably why states are more ready to recommend it for others than adopt it themselves'. (15)

(14) In this thesis China refers to the Peoples' Republic of China and Taiwan to the Republic of China.
In the 19th century neutralization was employed by European states as one of the means for maintaining the Balance of Power – in other words as an instrument for preserving the status quo. In this century the functions – or rather the hoped for functions – of neutralization have been:

(a) The reduction and regulation of overt hostilities;
(b) The reunification of divided states when such division is due to political and ideological alignments;
(c) To remove an area from competition.

In the post Second World War period this has meant attempts to separate 'national patterns of interfactional struggle from regional or global patterns of rivalry'; neutralization tending to be implemented as a compromise or stalemate at points of active encounter. (16) The major problems in seeking to successfully realize a neutralized condition are:

(i) Change of Internal or External circumstances;
(ii) Non-assent of a major actor;
(iii) Non-fulfillment of guarantees.

These, at any rate, from experience have presented themselves as the major problems.

This then is the concept the implementation of which, it has been suggested, would preserve Southeast Asia from the ravages wrought by Great Power disputes. It would undoubtedly be more difficult to neutralize a region than a single national entity; however, it is hoped that an united front can be presented on this issue when all the common benefit of the proposed situation compared with the suffering of the old, is taken into account. With regard to the guarantors, the new global balance of power – which is considered in Chapter Two – would appear to be changing the pattern of conflict somewhat, and may yet prove to be more suited to ending the subjection of this region to that pattern of conflict. However, it must at this point be admitted that despite all changes in the international scene, there are yet some fundamental truths:

"... I am not disposed to attach very much importance to such engagements (neutralization), for the history of the world shows that when a quarrel arises, and a nation makes war, and thinks it advantageous to transverse with its army such neutral territory, the declarations of neutrality are not apt to be very religiously respected". (17)

- Lord Palmerston, 1855.

(17) Hansard, CXXXVIII (June 8, 1855), 1748. Lord Palmerston, (Bell, 1935).

Although there is also truth in what Lord Curzon of Kedleston pointed out in his Romanes Lecture — Frontiers — delivered on 2 November, 1907, at Oxford. (Clarendon Press, 1907):

"Neutralization does not absolutely protect, and has in practice not protected, these countries (Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg) from violation: but it renders aggression less likely by making it an international issue. The desire to extend a frontier at the expense of a neutralized state can, therefore, only be gratified at a rather expensive price."

(10)
History has long made clear to Southeast Asia that activities in the region occur in a global context. History also shows that the extra-regional powers who have made their presence felt in the region have changed over time. It is, however, the misfortune of the past four decades that Southeast Asia has become a pivotal area in which the global dialectic has been playing itself out. As a result, whether Southeast Asian states have acted - or been forced to act - in the interests of the American thesis or the Russian or Chinese antithesis, it is now more than obvious that all would benefit from the evolution of an independent synthesis - be that what it may. In order to bring a - hopefully - peaceful synthesis to the region it is necessary for Southeast Asian political leaders to make choices as to what policy they will follow with regard to both their neighbours and to the external powers. If such choices are ignored then it is more than likely that the regional states will be merely carried along by Great Power interests, or else find themselves turned into a battlefield should such interests come into conflict.

What are the choices available? These include:

(a) Alignment with one particular Great Power - thus tending to be placed in a sphere of influence and possibly in a position of risk vis-a-vis the activities of a rival Great Power or its allies;
(b) Attempt to form a weak multiple alignment with all of the prominent powers;
(c) Retreat into a totally isolationist position;
(d) A position of neutrality or neutralization.
These alternatives - and the combinations and permutations thereof - can be adopted on two levels, that of the individual states and that of the region. For such policies to be implemented on the regional level a consensus would have to be reached on policy approach to external powers; hence, a certain community of interests would have to emerge. It is, however, true that the central aspects of such a community already exist - the desire for peaceful development - the aspiration of meaningful independence and the need to curtail external interference.

The realization that Great Power interests do not necessarily coincide with the interests of their smaller allies would appear sufficient to warrant the rejection of the hegemonic arrangement - choice (a) - by Southeast Asian states as a long-term solution to their difficulties. The second and third alternatives have been attempted by individual states - Cambodia and Burma respectively - but have not been accepted by many as realistic options for regional implementation; leaving the fourth choice as the one which has gained the most support - although the latter was by no means unanimous - since 1971.

Neutralization is no stranger on the Southeast Asian scene, although the more recent examples have not been very encouraging. As early as 1896 the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand) was subjected to an Anglo-French neutralization plan; and, in later years, the concept was mentioned during the Second World War, with particular reference to Thailand and the Philippines. In neither case was neutralization implemented, resulting in Thailand accepting a treaty of alliance with Japan and bringing the Philippines into the war as an American ally. The question of the neutralization of Indo-China was raised at the Geneva Conference of 1954; this was to be another abortive attempt, being replaced by an unsigned undertaking by Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, Laos and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs. Despite this failure the sixties was to see a reappearance of the concept with the Declaration and Protocol on the Neutrality of Laos being signed in Geneva on July 23, 1962. The latter was to be no more successful than its predecessors over the previous twenty years for reasons
All such proposals for neutralization were, however, to apply to individual states. A change in emphasis was to appear with President de Gaulle, who in 1963, 1964 and again in 1965, was to propose that the Geneva participants conclude "a neutrality treaty concerning the states of Southeast Asia". (1) It is true that the General was chiefly concerned with Indochina but the extension of his proposal to cover a wider area of the region was an interesting initiative which was not particularly welcomed at that time. The proposal was accused of being nebulous and a highly personal inspiration which 'had all the marks of a policy of despair' (2); while it was bitterly attacked by the Thai Government at the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) Council Meeting on April 13, 1964. On the other hand, different opinions on the matter were that the President's suggestion was rejected, not because it was unwise but because the expediency of politics demands its rejection. (3) In short, the die had been cast against the initiative when the United States rejected it.

The next general consideration of the neutralization of Southeast Asia came with the proposal of a Southeast Asian state itself - Malaysia. The Malaysians' enthusiastic acceptance of the idea can be attributed to a multiplicity of developments - each of which undoubtedly played its part - (a) growing disillusionment with existing alliances which were crumbling; (b) a fear of becoming too closely associated with one Great Power thereby inviting attack from another; (c) the lack of an external military threat and the realization that internal opposition must be dealt with by indigenous security forces; (d) a desire to avoid a repeat of the Vietnam experience; and (e) an increasing sense of self-reliance and hope in Southeast Asian regionalism. All in all there was a feeling that Great Power involvement served to escalate conflict to a point which was disadvantageous to the interests of the smaller states.

(2) The Manila Chronicle, 29 April, 1964. (Scotsman).
(3) The Manila Chronicle, 1 September, 1964. (Soliangco).
This proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia may be traced to a Defence debate in the Malaysian House of Representatives (the Dewan Ra'ayat) on 23 January, 1968. A debate which revolved around the proposed British withdrawal from the area and the defence vacuum that it was feared would follow. The former Minister of Home Affairs, Tun (Dr.) Ismail stated that while he was not opposed to the five-nation conference that was proposed, he did think that it would be a worthwhile idea to consider other alternatives in case the mutual defence arrangements did not materialize. The alternative that the Tun favoured was a three-point programme towards the neutralization of the region. The plan of action suggested was that:

(i) The countries in the region should declare collectively the neutralization of Southeast Asia;

(ii) This must be guaranteed by the big powers, including Communist China; and

(iii) The countries in the region should sign non-aggression treaties with one another. (5)

The alternatives to these steps were predicted by Tun Ismail as giving the Great Powers an open invitation to make the region a pawn in Great Power politics; to increase subversion in the area; while the alternative to the signing of internal non-aggression treaties would be a costly arms race in the region. Tun Ismail claimed that he had not discussed his proposal with the Prime Minister or with any of his former Cabinet colleagues. Nevertheless, Tun Abdul Razak - Deputy Prime Minister at this time - immediately adopted the idea, and as early as February 1968, was informing Merdeka, the official

(4) The Five-Nation Conference that was proposed (Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore) was due to the determination of the British Government to reduce its commitments 'East of Suez'. In fact the Conference did take place and the five powers agreed that in relation to the external defence of Malaysia and Singapore they would immediately consult together for the purposes of deciding what measures should be taken, jointly or separately, in relation to any attack or threat. Besides this the ANZUK forces were established by the three external powers. These were to be stationed in Malaysia and Singapore. The agreement came into force in November 1971, and has been steadily run down ever since.

(5) Straits Times, 24 January, 1968
publication of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), that 'As a long term measure in securing the security of the country, the Government would make every effort to have a neutral Southeast Asia'. (6) Later that same year Tun Razak raised the matter at the end of a visit to Moscow - 'I also suggested that in the interests of peace and stability in Southeast Asia, the big powers, including the Soviet Union, should guarantee the independence and neutrality of the countries of this region'. (7) Hence the official adoption of Tun Ismail's proposals with the seal being set when the Tun rejoined the Government.

There was little reaction from any of the Great Powers to these developments. The Chairman of the British Conservative Party, Mr. Anthony Barber, did lash out at the Labour Government's plans to withdraw from East of Suez, sharply criticizing the Malaysian neutralization plan in the process, adding that the latter was 'only for dreamers'. This, however, can largely be put down to internal political manoeuvrings and was not a criticism that was likely to cause serious concern to the Malaysian Government. (8)

Undeterred, Malaysia pressed ahead in its role as advocate for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, becoming, if anything, even more enthusiastic about the idea on Tun Abdul Razak's succession as Prime Minister. Even prior to this event, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, then Permanent Secretary in the Malaysian Foreign Ministry, had told a preparatory conference on non-aligned countries in Dar es Salaam on April 17, 1970, that Malaysia hoped they would endorse 'the neutralization not only of Indo China but of the entire region of Southeast Asia guaranteed by the three major powers (the Soviet Union, the United States and China) against any form of external interference, threat, or pressure'. This proposal was repeated at the meeting of the non-aligned conference in Lusaka in early September, when Tun Razak appealed to the non-aligned nations to take a 'positive stand' in endorsing the neutralization of the region.

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(6) Straits Times, 17 February, 1968
(8) Straits Times, 1 February, 1968
of the region. "I mention the need to extend the area of peace and neutralization to include all of Southeast Asia", he said "because it is obviously easier and wiser to strengthen the fabric of peace before it is ruptured rather than attempt to eliminate disorder and conflict once they have penetrated the regions". (9) Tun Razak was to raise the matter again in his first policy address as Prime Minister, September 22nd, when he spoke of a 'neutralized zone'.

It is not, however, sufficient for Malaysia to accept the value of the plan for its region, it was also necessary to convince regional neighbours and the relevant external powers. Making use of the world forum, Tun Dr. Ismail - then the new Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia - spoke at the United Nations General Assembly on October 15, 1970. He emphasized that the lessons of Vietnam had shown the need for neutralization to "eliminate the seeds of future conflict and.... ensure durable and lasting peace". He admitted that his government was conscious of the fact that "we are still a long way from attaining the desirable objective" and pinpointed three developments that were necessary before the region could ask the "three super-powers to guarantee their independence, integrity and neutrality."

There was the need for each Southeast Asian country to "set its own house in order"; to encourage "a greater sense of regional consciousness and solidarity" through bilateral and multilateral cooperation; and to "demonstrate that our activities and policies do not adversely affect the basic legitimate interests of the major powers". (10)

Discussion concerning the prospects for the neutralization of the region continued to take place largely in response to Malaysian initiatives. Tun Abdul Razak proved himself indefatigable in his ability to raise the issue on state visits, in international assemblies and during inter-regional meetings. The responses were varied, ranging from a lack of trust in Chinese intentions to differing interpretations as to what might be meant by neutralization of the region.

(9) Straits Times, 28 September, 1970
(10) Malaysian Digest, 31 October, 1970 (Published by the Malaysian Government).
1971 proved to be an important year in the Malaysian effort, with Tun Razak, himself, setting the scene when in a statement on Foreign Affairs in Parliament he pointed out changes that had to be adjusted to:-

(a) The British military withdrawal from the Malaysian-Singapore area;
(b) The gradual American disengagement from the Indo China area;
(c) The growing power of Japan and her increasing interest in Southeast Asia beyond questions of trade alone;
(d) Above all else, the new posture of Chinese foreign policy after the ending of the turmoil caused by the Cultural Revolution a couple of years previously.

In advocating neutralization the Tun said that he saw it "as the best permanent solution to ensure the security and stability of Southeast Asia" in the uncertain future. He, nevertheless, admitted that it was a "long term solution" and required acceptance "by the super-powers as well as by the countries of the region themselves". (II)

As the year progressed the concept of neutralization took on a firmer outline. In an article written by Malaysia's influential Minister with Special Functions and Information Minister - Tan Sri Ghazali bin Shafie - the proposal was expounded on as follows:-

**Level One:** Countries of Southeast Asia should get together, examine their present situations and agree that individual countries in the region must respect one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and not participate in activities likely to directly or indirectly threaten the security of another. It should be agreed that all foreign powers should be excluded from the region and that the region should not be allowed to be used as a theatre of conflict in international power struggles. Preferably a collective view should be held before the major powers on vital issues of security. Regional cooperation should be promoted and ways and means should be devised for ensuring peace amongst member states.

(II) Straits Times, 27 July, 1971
On the other hand, the major powers (U.S.A., China, and U.S.S.R.) must agree that Southeast Asia should be an area of neutrality. The powers should undertake to exclude countries in the region from the power struggle among themselves, and should devise supervisory means of guaranteeing the region’s neutrality in the international power struggle. Hence, just as the Southeast Asian countries will be responsible, under the neutralization plan, for maintaining peace among themselves, so will the guaranteeing powers be responsible for preventing externally inspired conflict in the region. The importance of having a supervisory body capable of enforcing the neutralization arrangements was emphasized. (12)

Added to this account Tun Ismail, in his opening address to the plenary session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in September, suggested that not alone must the initiative for neutralization come from the states in the region, but they must also have the capacity to resist the blandishments of the big powers, and must maintain non-aggression pacts among themselves. (13) While raising the matter once again in the U.N. General Assembly, Tun Razak outlined the prerequisites for the realization of neutralization:

(i) The recognition and accommodation of the legitimate interests of all powers concerned in the region - “both the guarantor powers as well as the countries within the area itself”.

(ii) The cultivation among Southeast Asian countries of a sense of regional cohesion and solidarity.

(iii) The existence of a dialogue among the major powers - this requiring China’s participation in the United Nations. (14)

Malaysian action, by now, focused on specific objectives - gaining a regional adherence to the idea of neutralization - furthering amiable relations with China (in 1971 Malaysia voted for the admission of China into the U.N.); and keeping the issue of neutralization constantly before the public eye of nations.

(13) Straits Times, 14 September, 1971
A significant step was taken in the realization of the first of these objectives with the emergence of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration at the end of the 26-27 November, 1971 meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN. In this it was agreed "that the neutralisation of Southeast Asia is a desirable objective and that we should explore ways and means of bringing about its realisation." In the interim, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand stated that they were:

"...determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for, Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers."

It was also agreed that the Southeast Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of cooperation which would contribute to their 'strength, solidarity and closer relationship'. In the joint communique that was issued after the meeting, the participants decided that:

(a) They would recommend that a Summit Meeting of the Heads of State or Governments of the members of ASEAN should be held in Manila at a later date;
(b) They would establish a Committee of Senior Officials to study the ways and means of implementing the proposals; and
(c) They would bring the contents of their Declaration to the attention of the other countries of Southeast Asia and would encourage them to associate themselves with the aspirations and objectives expressed in the Declaration.

On this point the region envisaged for neutralization consisted of all the ASEAN member states, Burma and the whole of Indochina. Indonesia agreed to approach North Vietnam, Thailand to sound out Cambodia and South Vietnam, while Malaysia undertook to discuss the proposal with Burma and Laos.

(15) ASEAN was established in August 1967. Its membership consists of Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The aim of the organization is to promote economic and cultural cooperation within the region.

(16) Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN member countries, Declaration and Joint Communique, 26-27 November, 1971, Kuala Lumpur. (Published by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with assistance of Federal Dept. of Information Malaysia).

A Cambodian observer at the meeting, Mr. Vim Sim, said that the idea of neutralizing the region was "most welcome" to Cambodia. However, he added that he hoped that the meeting would also come out with some effective measures to ensure the successful implementation of the neutrality of the region. (18) South Vietnam also had an observer at the Kuala Lumpur conference.

Mixed reactions have greeted the neutralization proposal from countries outside ASEAN. By February 1972, the Khmer Republic announced official support for the concept, while Laos had supported it as early as April, 1971. With regard to Burma, Tun Razak went on a three day visit there in February 1972 to discuss the issue with the Burmese Premier, General Ne Win, and returned in an optimistic mood. "Burma supported the idea", he said, "because she has always been neutral, but she will take part in a regional plan only if all the other countries are genuinely neutral." (19)

Both North and South Vietnam, on the other hand, have been more cautious about the scheme. The former has extended some conditional support, commenting that:

"The first thing to do to make Southeast Asia a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality is to put an end to U.S. interference and aggression, take all the troops of the U.S. and its allies away, dismantle all U.S. military bases and break up all the U.S. controlled military blocs in this region, and turn down with resolve the Nixon Doctrine." (20)

Nevertheless, in a post Vietnam War situation a neutralized Southeast Asia would appear to be in the interests of Hanoi as it would avert too strong a Soviet or a Chinese influence in the area. As for South Vietnam, given the hostile attitude of the Thieu Government towards neutralist movements within the country, and its dependence on American military and economic aid, it can hardly be considered favourable to the idea.

Since the November 1971 meeting work has been progressing in defining the meaning and implications of neutralization - or the establishment of a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality'. In January 1972, in an effort to emphasize that the neutralization proposals were made outside the formal auspices of ASEAN, it was decided not to establish a joint committee on

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(18) Straits Times, 27 November, 1971
(19) Straits Times, 21 February, 1972
(20) Japan Times, 2 December, 1971
Southeast Asian neutrality, but that each member country would instead set up its own study group to examine the details of the neutrality concept and how its implementation would affect. It was suggested that this was a necessary step "before we look into its effects on the region". (21)

By July it was reported that a meeting of ASEAN senior officials had taken place in Kuala Lumpur, followed later in the month by an informal meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Manila. The officials, comprising the first meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Neutralization, came to a common understanding of a "Zone of peace, freedom and neutrality" in the context of Southeast Asia. The definitions agreed upon at the meeting were as follows:

(a) **Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.** 'A zone of peace, freedom and neutrality exists where the national identity, independence and integrity of the individual States within such a zone can be preserved and maintained, so that they can achieve national development and well-being and promote regional cooperation and solidarity, in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers'.

(b) **Peace.** 'Peace is a condition where the prevalence of harmonious and orderly relations exists between and among States. No reference is hereby made to the internal state of affairs in each of the zonal States. A situation of ideological, political, economic, armed or other forms of conflict, either among the zonal States themselves, between one or more of the zonal States and outside powers or between outside powers affecting the region, is not a condition of peace'.

(c) **Freedom.** 'Freedom means the freedom of States from control, domination or interference by other States in the conduct of their national and external affairs. This means the right of zonal States to solve their domestic problems in terms of their own conditions and aspirations, to assume primary responsibility for the security and well-

(21) *Straits Times*, 13 January, 1972
being of the region and their regional and international relations on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual benefit.

Neutrality. 'Neutrali$\text{ty means the maintenance of a state of impartiality in any war between other States as understood in international law and in the light of the United Nations Charter. Taken in the context of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, however, it means that zonal States shall undertake to maintain their impartiality and shall refrain from involvement directly or indirectly in ideological, political, economic, armed or other forms of conflict, particularly between powers outside the zone, and that outside powers shall not interfere in the domestic or regional affairs of the zonal States'.

The Committee recognised that alternative means for achieving a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality' should be considered, and decided to continue their study at future meetings. The subsequent meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers:

'... noted with satisfaction that the Committee had reached a common understanding of the interpretation of a "zone of peace, freedom and neutrality" in the context of South-East Asia'. (22)

This was undoubtedly a step forward and further progress was made in working out guidelines by the Neutralization Committee at a meeting in December. This emphasized mutual respect for national sovereignty and noninterference in the internal affairs of the zonal states. Foreign military bases were to be banned and participants were to be restrained from inviting or giving consent to intervention by external powers in the domestic or regional affairs of the zonal states (23). A summit meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers in April 1973, confirmed that they would like to see foreign intervention excluded from the region, while balancing the interests of the Great Powers in a manner in which to prevent any country becoming a satellite of any such Power. Furthermore, with the withdrawal of foreign

forces from Southeast Asian bases the Foreign Ministers expressed the hope that they would be able to realize their proposed zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. The meeting also endorsed the report of the second meeting of the committee of senior officials outlined above; whilst - in order to expand its work in the region - an ASEAN Coordinating Committee for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Indo China was also established.

The third meeting of the Neutralization Committee, which took place in June 1973, agreed that there should be no foreign troops in the region to ensure its neutralization. A significant suggestion that was accepted was that instead of seeking iron-clad guarantees from outside powers on the proposed neutrality zone, that these powers could be allowed to recognize and respect the zone. According to one conference source:

'To do this, we have to be ready with a specific blueprint which we could show these big powers so that it would be also to their own interest to insure the neutrality of the region. Of course we cannot impose on the big powers although we can initiate dialogues with them.' (25)

It was further reported that one of the highlights of the meeting was the discussion on relations between the countries to be included in the zone of neutrality and the Great Powers outside the region. Another important issue that this meeting considered was the obvious necessity of creating a regional machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes among neighbouring Southeast Asian countries. It was agreed that certain measures could be undertaken by parties to a dispute to achieve a peaceful settlement prior to the establishment of the proposed zone. The relevance of this issue was re-inforced at the time by the tension existing between the Philippines and Malaysia; this was due to Philippine insistence that the Sabah Government was backing Moslem rebels in the Southern Philippines and Mindanao. (26) The Philippines itself, along with Singapore, took up the suggestion, with the Singaporean Foreign Minister, Mr. Rajaratnam, proposing an intra-ASEAN non-aggression pact which it was claimed would 'neutralize internally the potentialities for conflict within the group'. While Manila was not adverse to the idea it evidently won little

(26) Straits Times, 23 June 1973
Djakarta Times, 23 June, 1973
enthusiastic support from other members. However, on a Philippine proposal to establish effective procedures to settle conflicts among ASEAN members, the Foreign Ministers at the Seventh ASEAN Summit Meeting in May 1974, gave unanimous approval in principle and referred the question to the Neutralization Committee for further study. (27)

At the latter's previous meeting in March 1974, while 'Steady' progress towards the establishment of Southeast Asia as a zone of 'peace, freedom and neutrality' was reported, one delegate claimed that 'idealistic objectives' were discussed at length; Malaysian officials, on the other hand, said that the meeting helped to clarify some of the problems and doubts that a few ASEAN members had on the proposal. Indonesia's 'national resilience' concept - that there should be strong, self-reliant national defence forces to promote regional stability - was raised at this meeting but not accepted; however, after much argument it was replaced on the agenda for another meeting. (28) Further consideration of this issue and related ones would appear to be necessary.

Thenat Khoman - former Thai Foreign Minister, and now, Special Adviser to the Thai Government - wrote, for example, that:

"Armed neutrality seems to be the type most likely to succeed in the present international conditions. The neutral countries do not have to go nuclear, but if they are sufficiently well equipped to protect themselves at least for the initial period of a conventional armed attack, they may have a better chance of being left alone than if they are depleted of the means of defence". (29)

Dr. Khoman also recognized economic strength as being perhaps 'an even more effective guarantee for the preservation of neutrality'.

Nevertheless, despite having their own importance, such matters are the nuts and bolts of the scheme that has yet to gain a general acceptance from the external powers. It is clear that apart from playing the role that it has slipped into - of clearing up misconceptions and apprehensions about the whole concept - there is little more the Neutralization Committee can achieve until the realities of Great Power politics are brought to bear on the whole neutralization proposal: this again returns us to the sphere of extra-regional relations. With

(27) Far Eastern Economic Review - Asia 1975 Yearbook, p. 69
The Age, 8 May, 1974.
regard to the latter, four of the five ASEAN countries do not yet have formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Equally, four of the five have defense arrangements either with the United States, or with Britain, Australia and New Zealand; while a number of these countries still provide base facilities for external powers. The general attitude prevailing, however, is that rectification of this situation will come with time, and to hasten the realization of the zone of neutrality might only serve to wreck the proposal. In his closing address at the 1971 Kuala Lumpur meeting, the Malaysian Prime Minister said:

"We have no illusions about the long and difficult road ahead of us. ...... We shall proceed with caution as well as with imagination." (30)

It remains to examine whether the imagination and/or interests of the elephants will favour the realization of this dream of the mousedeer.

Interested and active in Southeast Asia are a number of external powers, each with its own favoured prescription for the future of the region and the role that it will play therein. Limiting the realization of such prescriptions, however, are the interactions of the powers themselves, and the leeway thus given to Southeast Asian countries to utilize such Great Power rivalries in furthering their own interests. Hence it can be seen that Great Power relations among themselves create a certain framework of policy options for the smaller powers - with particular reference to those policies which relate the small to the Great Powers.

Great Power relationships have long been conceived as a 'balance' - the balance of power - which serves to maintain a certain international equilibrium. Although many exponents of the concept have tended to present idealized versions of reality, history bears witness to small power sacrifices in the interests of maintaining, first a European, and later a global balance of power - examples of a partitioned Poland and later non-European colonial acquisitions come to mind. Hence the concept would appear to operate most satisfactorily on the basis of Great Power interests. Nevertheless, far from disqualifying it from use, it makes it more realistic.

It is true that the concept of the balance of power has lost some of its rigour since the days of its acclaim during the European Congress System - the restoration period after the Napoleonic Wars - when certain principles were accepted, in theory at any rate, by the major powers. The most important for the maintenance of a multiple balance of power was that each Great Power was prepared to go to war
to defend not only its own, but also other states' integrity. (1) In point of fact, however, this was generally a realistic gesture in terms of one's own interests, as the gains of an aggressor would increase its power in relation to one's own, thus presenting a long-term threat that might have to be dealt with. As the states-system expanded outwards from its original European core, accepted principles became undermined, although it was argued that a balance of power was still feasible. George Canning declared that:

"...While the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged. They became enlarged, in proportion to the increased number of considerable states — in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into the one or the other scale." (2)

In fact Canning's description — while fitting, of course, in his own time — fits the present international situation rather better than that of a decade or so ago when the means of adjusting the balance of power were concentrated in the nuclear armaments race.

There has been a certain shift in the Great Power balance from the bi-polarity of the Cold War years to the multi-polarity of the era of detente. It is true that the international system still has a central balance of two nuclear super-powers (3) of roughly similar standing. By enlarging the means of adjusting the balance, however, and bringing into consideration such factors as economic and strategic power, a broader balance of power has been achieved on a different level — with Japan, China and Western Europe each playing a role. Besides which a convincing case can be argued for the existence of regional balances.

(1) 'The Complex Triangle', C. Holbraad, Ch. 7 of an as yet unpublished work. (Dept. of International Relations, A.N.U. Canberra).


(3) The term 'super-power' has been explained as — "What the term super power essentially recognizes is the appearance since the end of World War II of a new class of power... alone capable of undertaking the central managerial role in international politics". "World Order and the Super Powers", H. Bull. Super Powers and World Order, C. Holbraad, ed. (A.N.U., 1971) p. 142. Hence 'super powerhood' should not be defined in terms of military nuclear capacity alone, although such a capacity is a necessary prerequisite of that status.
It has been suggested by the American Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, that:-

"Polycentrism does not reflect so much the emergence of new centres of actual power as the attempt by allies to establish new centres of decision. Polycentrism is virulent not because the world has ceased to be bipolar, but because it essentially remains so". (4)

While this is basically true, the interdependence of military and economic power gives these 'new centres of decision' the right to be considered 'centres of actual power' that play a role in the multilateral balance. It is open to one of these centres to change their allegiance as between nuclear super-powers. Furthermore, the new balance serves another purpose, for resort to nuclear weapons cannot be regarded as a desirable balancing technique in the present international system, one of whose prime objectives is to avoid such occurrences. Even given the careful calculation of 'acceptable losses', there is much to be said for what Stanley Hoffmann terms "the adjournment sine die of the moment of nuclear truth'. (5) That the multiple balance will, for some time, be largely subject to the acquiescence of the super-powers need not militate against its operation. It is clear that a nuclear confrontation does not figure in either of the latter's range of national interests.

The concept of a new multilateral balance of power was articulated by Richard Nixon as a conceptual basis for his foreign policy doctrine. He also acknowledged that the threat of nuclear war could no longer be allowed to act as balancer: hence, new factors must be brought into play:-

"...It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relation to its potential competitor that the danger of war arises. So, I believe in a world in which the United States is powerful. I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance." (6)


In this statement President Nixon would appear to interpret the operation of the balance of power in a similar manner to that which in an earlier work, Dr. Kissinger has ascribed to Castlereagh—'the equilibrium was a mechanical expression of the balance of forces'. This, however, is not the way that it appears to all, particularly to some small powers that may be sacrificed in its interests. The balance of power might be described by the latter as the balance of interests between those who have the power to fight for their interests. Sometimes, as in the case of Belgium for many years, this can involve the protection of small powers.

Turning to Asia, a distinct triangular power balance, between China, the United States and the Soviet Union, has emerged in recent years. The structure of this balance has been solidified by the season of detente which occurred at the turn of the decade. It is in China's interest to prevent U.S. isolationism, as it is equally in the interests of the Soviet Union to avert an over-close Sino-American collusion. With regard to the United States—who at present is in the enviable position of 'tertius gaudens' (7)—it must maintain its role as 'balancer' in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

**THE STATE OF RELATIONS:**

Detente between the United States and the Soviet Union predated the triangular balance as their fear of direct military confrontation with each other became increasingly obvious, and bilateral negotiations between the two intensified. A certain mutual understanding resulted from the common interests of avoiding nuclear war, and from the extensive network of negotiations which covered the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), Berlin, the Middle East and other contentious issues. The fact that they have more to fear from each other than anybody else does put a certain strain on the relationship—nevertheless, the latter has survived. Indeed, along with the initial SALT agreement reached in Moscow, in 1972, there has been a psychological easing of attitudes—with the Cold War outlook becoming increasingly unfashionable in the United States, and the Soviet Union busying itself in pursuing commercial benefits from America. In November,

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1974, the Siberian Summit, between President Ford and Leonid Brezhnev, restored momentum to SALT which after 1972 had run down somewhat.

The Soviet explanation for detente with Washington follows the logic that:-

"In today's world events are determined not by the arithmetic of the traditional political game of the Great Powers, but by the algebra of the complex sociopolitical struggle that has engulfed our planet. This is why, for all the complexities and contradictions of the historical process, the net balance has proved not at all to favour imperialism". (8)

To make this explanation realistic one might add the calculus of national interest - and it would appear to be in the Soviet interest to maintain good relations with the United States as long as the Sino-Soviet feud continues. Their response to the SinoAmerican rapprochement was, not surprisingly, cool; as, in fact, was their general acceptance of the emerging triangular system. It has been suggested that the recognition by the United States of the special status of the Soviet-American dialogues on certain mainstream issues was the promise that Moscow evoked from Washington in return for Soviet compliance in the 'Kissinger system'. (9) However, there were the inevitable warnings that the United States should not attempt to exploit Sino-Soviet difficulties, while the Soviet media played up the threat of Sino-American collusion in Southeast Asia. (10)

Similar accusations were prominent in the Chinese redefinition of the relations of the two super-powers, which followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent proclamation of the Brezhnev Doctrine (11):-

"While both colluding and struggling with each other, the U.S. imperialists and the Soviet revisionists are trying in vain to redivide the world. In their war of aggression against Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists enjoy the tacit consent and support of the Soviet revisionists, while in turn the Soviet revisionist renegade clique enjoys the tacit consent and support of the U.S. imperialists in openly despatching troops to occupy Czecho-

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(11) The Brezhnev Doctrine claimed for the Soviet Union the right to intervene in communist countries to preserve the "socialist system".
However, the fact that the super-powers were seen as 'colluding' and 'struggling' simultaneously, implied that a third party could exploit the differences.

On top of a decade of suspicion and antagonism, the combination of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Brezhnev Doctrine, intensified Soviet patrolling of the Sino-Soviet border and Peking's fear of a Soviet attack, sparked off border clashes in Spring 1969. Although the fighting was to die down all was not well and neither side indicated a willingness to compromise on any of the specific major points at issue between the two. Among the many contentious matters which perpetuate the antagonism, the growing Soviet interest in Southeast Asia, as articulated in their 'collective security' system, is not the least important.

Given the state of Sino-Soviet relations the receptiveness of China to American advances can be largely explained by the tactics set out by Mao Tse-tung himself:

"Oppose the strategy of striking with two 'fists' in two directions at the same time, and uphold the strategy of striking with one 'fist' in one direction at one time." (13)

If, as the Chinese feared, a Soviet preemptive attack was planned against Chinese nuclear facilities, then the Sino-American agreement was not only useful, but vital. Nonetheless, even without such a drastic threat the detente was undoubtedly of benefit to the Chinese who could use it to prevent over-close super-power collusion. Even if contention between the two super-powers was claimed to be inevitable, there would appear to be little reason why it should not be helped along.

1969 inaugurated a decisive change in the scenario with the increased Sino-Soviet tension, the Guam Doctrine of the recently elected President

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Nixon and, in short, greater moderation being displayed by both sides. Although the American administration made it clear that the United States was not trying to capitalize on the Sino-Soviet dispute (14); in its position as 'tertius gaudens' it was difficult for it not to. A rapid train of events saw Dr. Kissinger in Peking in July 1971, and President Nixon making the trip the following February. The Nixon visit went well with the essence of the new understanding being summarized in the Shanghai communique, which was signed by President Nixon and Chou En-lai. Both sides agreed that:

"... It would be against the interests of the peoples of the world for any major country to collude with another against other countries, or for major countries to divide up the world into spheres of interest." 

Applied to the regional level it was stated that China and the United States would not 'seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region' and that they would oppose 'the efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony'. This clause came to be rather pointedly aimed at the Soviet Union as President Nixon undermined Chou En-lai's application of it to Japan by stating that:

"The United States placed the highest value on its friendly relations with Japan; it will continue to develop the existing close bonds". Accord was, however, within certain limits and such issues as that of Taiwan remained unsettled. (15)

With the succession of Gerald Ford to the Presidency, the American administration would appear to be content for the moment with the limited scope of Sino-U.S. relations. There have, in fact, been complaints that Dr. Kissinger is no longer sufficiently interested in China now that his attention has been distracted elsewhere. One ambassador remarked that Chou thinks that Kissinger's problem is that he has not understood that 'it is easy to destroy one louse with one finger, but very hard to get five lice under five fingers at the same time'. (16)


(15) Japan Times, 21 July, 1972

(16) Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 May, 1974
Siberian Summit in November 1974, Dr. Kissinger travelled to Peking to give the Chinese a post-summit briefing.

Although China continues to speak in terms of the colonialism, imperialism and, particularly, hegemonism of the two super-powers, and their temporary collusion, Soviet apprehensions about Sino-American collusion in Southeast Asia may well have been given good grounds for belief by the reports of Chinese suggestions that a continued American presence in the region would be far from unwelcome. Despite the fact that categorical denials of any such suggestions were made in July, 1972, (17) it was reported again, in December 1973, that in a private conversation with the Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, in Peking, Chou En-lai not only said that the United States should not withdraw its armed forces hurriedly from Southeast Asia and the West Pacific, but went so far as to warn that the United States would bear a heavy responsibility for the consequences of a precipitate disengagement. (18) It is obvious that China fears that an American withdrawal at present might cause a power vacuum that would be too inviting to the Soviet Union and to whatever designs the latter might have on the region.

THE BALANCE AND SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Hence the establishment of a triangular power balance, a development encouraged by Washington but frowned on by Moscow. According to one Russian commentator:

"Peking's key strategic concept is based on the idea of using all kinds of political combinations and bloc arrangements above all with the imperialist circles, to convert China into a special and independent centre of power and pole of attraction capable of exerting a considerable, if not a decisive, influence on the development of the international situation." (19)

Not only is this rather like the case of the pot calling the kettle black, but it is merely ascribing to Peking the pragmatism displayed by all major powers in


(18) The Age, 6 December, 1973

the pursuit of their national interests. Until it achieves full nuclear status China needs to counter Soviet superiority and antagonism by rapprochement with America. As the United States also needs a counter balance to the Soviet Union, there is at present a coincidence of interests between the two countries.

At the end of the decade the Asian balance may be further complicated by the emergence of Japan as a fourth Great Power. Even at the moment it is an economic power that cannot be discounted, and along with Western Europe, was mentioned as a participant in the proposed quintuple global balance. In early 1972, Prime Minister Sato of Japan reiterated President Nixon's suggestion:

"Japan, together with the United States, China, Russia and the European Community, make up the concept of a five power balance seeking to maintain world peace and order. As a member of this balance, Japan must play a considerable role". (20)

Despite the fact that other Japanese politicians have echoed this sentiment, Japan appears to be in two minds as to how it must play this role - and how it can play it with the least number of risks and commitments. Western Europe would appear to be in a similar position with regard to the global scene; whilst, it has been reduced to such a minimal role in the Asian region that it will not be considered at length.

Given the establishment of a multiple balance of power both on the global level - and even more effectively - on the regional Asian stage, the possible effect of the latter on Southeast Asia must now be calculated. From what has been observed of balance of power situations in the past, no large state is allowed to become an aggressor to the point where its expansionism becomes a threat to the other participants in the balance of power. In the relatively recent past, under the bipolar system, Southeast Asia was a convenient cockpit of Great Power rivalry, because it had no effectively strong neighbour to protest, and the United States gained a vested interest in preventing the development of such a power. Southeast Asia, successfully weakened by colonialism and internally politically fragmented, was open to intervention. A nominal interference by the major Communist Powers became more substantive - largely for prestige reasons, although not totally...

so – due to their mutual antagonism and to their support for national oppositions to American intervention. Interference by the latter was premised on the containment of the expansion of both communist power and ideology – the two being viewed as mutually supporting.

The sixties saw the Sino-Soviet dispute, and added to this, the waging by the United States of a far from successful war in Indo China. Among the consequences of the latter was the Nixon Doctrine and the recognition by the United States of the new international structure – the multiple balance of power. Nevertheless, the emergence of such a power structure had been developing long before American recognition. In evidence of this the growth of Chinese military force and Japanese economic power can be cited. Although fear of losing the nuclear initiative in a bipolar situation encouraged the United States to redefine power in a broader manner.

That a certain triangular balance of forces has been established in the vicinity of Southeast Asia does mean that there is a premium to be paid by anyone who disturbs this balance. Particularly as the two most important external Powers to the region – the United States and China – have a vested interest, for the present, in the maintenance of the existing balance of power. Although the Soviet Union has been articulating an interest in Southeast Asian affairs, this is not its prime area of concern. With regard to Japan, concentrating as it is on its economic strength, it is all in favour of maintaining stability in an area of trade and investment. Granted such a situation it is arguable that the Great Powers could support a scheme for mutual noninvolvement – militarily, at least – in Southeast Asia; or indeed, support the declaration of Southeast Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. It is in the interests of each of the Great Powers to preserve the region from the hegemony of either one of their rivals, or of a collusion of the latter. It is true, however, that much would depend on whether the Great Power could be convinced that a plan of neutrality is a feasible one.

Much time may pass and many changes may have to take place before the dream of the mousedeer may be realized with the blessings of the elephants – and it is not likely to be realized without such blessings. At least with the shift in the balance of power a first step has been taken, with the elephants'
attention being channelled into the less destructive area of inter-Power diplomacy. If the latter is successful, the mousedeer may yet be granted a breathing space.
CHAPTER THREE

THE FIRST ELEPHANT - THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Despite the fact that over the last few decades no external power has played a more prominent role in Southeast Asian affairs than the United States, American concern with the region has seen change in recent years. The factors leading to this change are similar to those that have encouraged the evolution of the Nixon Doctrine - internal unrest in the United States; failure to make decisive progress in Indo China; a reconsideration of the principles that led America into that quagmire and a general reassessment of American interests. With regard to the latter it has been pointed out that Southeast Asia is of little direct importance to the United States today; whilst the geopolitical argument - that the region 'dominates the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans' (1) - is open to dispute, given that the closing of the Suez Canal has shown that formerly 'vital' waterways are no longer quite so necessary in the day of the supertanker. (2)

A broader reassessment of American interests was registered in the Nixon Doctrine, the nub of which was contained in one brief paragraph of the 40,000 word 'State of the World Message', delivered to Congress on the 15th February, 1970:

"We are not involved in the world because we have commitments; we have commitments because we are involved. Our interests must shape


Three principles were laid down as guidelines for future American policy towards Asia:

(i) The United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

(ii) It will provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with it or of a nation whose survival it considers vital to its security.

(iii) In cases involving other types of aggression, it will furnish military and economic aid when requested in accordance with its treaty commitments. But it will look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defence.

These principles are still far from clear and as guidelines are extremely flexible, whilst the fundamental issues of interests and commitments are left open to diverse interpretations. The generality of the doctrine was underlined by President Nixon himself when he admitted that beyond the general guidelines 'the specific circumstances of each case require careful study'. It was, however, made clear that the United States was still a Pacific power and as such 'We have learned that peace for us is much less likely if there is no peace in Asia'.

To summarize these points derived from the Nixon Doctrine - militarily the cry goes out 'not much change'; deterrence (the maintenance of the nuclear 'shield'), collective security (the honouring of treaties) and flexible response (a readiness on the part of U.S. forces to take defensive military action as necessary, ranging from a show of force to a major conflict).

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Politically, the concept of the United States as the universal guardian of the 'free world' has given way to 'enlightened self-interest'. Where the political and military coincide there is the new emphasis on partnership and 'shared responsibilities'.

Translating theory into practice, American activity in Southeast Asia since the adoption of the Nixon Doctrine is worthy of consideration. A vital extension of the Doctrine dealt with the specific circumstances of the Vietnam situation which resulted in a dual approach being proposed for resolving the conflict - 'Negotiations and Vietnamization'. The latter consisted of two elements, support for the South Vietnamese forces in numbers, equipment, leadership and overall capacity, and the implementation of the pacification programme in South Vietnam. While it can be argued that successful Vietnamization may pave the way for a strategic American withdrawal from the area, there is the fear that in supporting the Thieu Government, not only does Vietnamization preserve an American foothold on the Asian mainland, but it presents the danger that by being applied elsewhere it might sustain, by economic and military aid - the continuation of 'regressive' regimes dominated by U.S.-oriented elites. Both alternatives remain open with much depending on the eventual fate of South Vietnam and the nature of the American administration.

On a more general level the inevitable problems of the interpretation of the doctrine occurred on the diplomatic front. The U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Mansfield, hailed the new policy statement as meaning that 'The only way we would ever become involved again in an Asian war, would be when our security was at stake and a nuclear showdown appeared to be in the offing. In other words when there was no possible choice.' However, the then Thai Foreign Minister, Khoman, was able to say after his talks with the then American Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, that the latter had 'Strongly asserted that there would be no change in American policy and no lessening of United States commitments to Thailand and Southeast Asia'. These assurances to Southeast Asian statesmen jostled others such as that made by Secretary of State, William Rogers, when he told the Japanese Prime Minister, some six

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months later, that American troops would remain in Southeast Asia to keep
treaty commitments, but that the United States would not overly burden
itself as it did in South Vietnam. (8)

What was evidently considered burdensome was the continuation
of a large-scale loss of American lives in the Indo China conflict. The
acceptable consisted of some $76410 million being earmarked for Indo China
during the years of the first Nixon Administration (1969-72), and despite
the fact that American ground forces were withdrawn from Vietnam and reduced
in numbers in many areas, the maintenance of formidable military power in the
region. Furthermore, reductions in American military personnel in Asia
have been remedied by the substitution of indigenous forces, financed and
equipped through enlarged U.S. military assistance. The case for expanded
military aid was stated by Defence Secretary, Melvin Laird, in preparation for
vastly increased Military Assistance Program (MAP) budget requests for 1972
and succeeding financial years. Secretary Laird characterized MAP as:
"...The essential ingredient of our policy if we are to honour our
obligations, support our allies, and yet reduce the likelihood of having
to commit American ground combat units." (9)

This substitution of aid for American soldiers has been repeated in subsequent
Defence Department Reports. It is such a substitution that is one of the pillars
upon which the Nixon Doctrine rests, with present military aid programmes
being expected to maintain armed forces in South Vietnam at approximately
800,000 to 900,000 troops; Cambodia at 100,000 troops and
Thailand at 150,000 troops. (10)

Besides military aid a large portion of American economic aid in Southeast
Asia is administered on a bilateral basis for essentially military-related
purposes - although there have been efforts to distinguish the two. However,
the concentration of U.S. economic aid in South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia
and Thailand, illustrates the fact that the distinction has not been very successful.
There have also been more unorthodox methods for the Asianization of Southeast
Asian problems - such as the role played by the American C.I.A., particularly

(9) Defense Program and Budget FY 1971, M. Laird. (Washington D.C.,
their activities in Laos and Cambodia. In 1971, the Nixon Administration acknowledged that the C.I.A. was maintaining a 30,000 man 'irregular' force which was fighting throughout most of Laos; while, despite an amendment to the Dept. of Defence Authorization Bill for 1971 specifically forbidding the funding of foreign mercenaries in Laos, it was again admitted in 1973, that the United States was financing some 15,000 to 20,000 Thai 'irregular' troops in Laos. (11) With regard to Cambodia there was the alleged C.I.A. involvement in the overthrow of the Head of State, Prince Sihanouk, and the U.S. Administration's concealed bombing which the Pentagon had falsified by claiming that the bombing targets were located in South Vietnam. (12) It is little wonder that a certain degree of confusion exists among Southeast Asian statesmen as to what the United States' true intentions might be. If a fundamental premise of the Nixon Doctrine would appear to be a 'de-ideologization' of policies and diplomacy; when applied to Indo China, the former would appear to have been replaced by covert intervention, while diplomacy took very much second place - a fact that Averell Harriman, Johnson's chief negotiator at the Paris peace talks, was to complain about. (13)

THE UNITED STATES AND THE REGION:

1. Both the Nixon Doctrine and the underlying causes that gave rise to it have inevitably had an effect on Southeast Asian states. Even Thailand, whose position of diplomatic weathercock of the region was undermined for some time due to its over-close American associations, has been reflecting recent changes. Immediately after President Nixon's Address to Congress in February 1970, Thanat Khoman, then Thai Foreign Minister, said that the small nations of the area could no longer rely on the United States and other big powers for protection, that they must

The nations on the spot by joining together may present a worthwhile persuasive opportunity to Peking to alter its militant inclinations and follow a more peaceful course of co-existence with fellow Asian and Pacific nations. (14)

Aid from the United States being described in the process as maybe not only ineffective but (it) may even become a liability.

In the couple of years following this message was to be modified, but the rapidly turning wheel of Thai political fortune soon favoured the Government of Sanya Dharmasakti (October 1973), whose special adviser on Foreign Affairs is none other than Dr. Thanat Khoman himself. In an important policy statement, Foreign Minister, Charunphan Isarangkun said - 'Thailand's future relations with the United States will have to be modified and adapted to changing circumstances. During the past decade, (there) has been an over-emphasis on military cooperation. This needs to be adjusted in order to achieve a more truly balanced relationship and I am glad that both sides now realise this need'. (15)

Alongside this attitude of the new Government, there has been a swelling of public hostility toward the United States, particularly over the reported intrigues of the C.I.A. (16)

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(14) Bangkok World, 25 February, 1970
(15) Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 June, 1974

Not only did this mention the American bombing of Indo China from Thai bases, but the reports that American agents used Thailand for forays into Burma and China. The question of Thai troops being paid by the C.I.A. to fight in Laos was also raised. Concerning these reports that have been circulating for some years now, Mr. G. McMurtrie Godley, then U.S. Ambassador in Vientiane, was quoted as having maintained to a closed session of the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 22 July, 1971, that the C.I.A. action in Laos was consistent with the Nixon Doctrine. This view was seconded by the U.S. Under secretary of State for Political Affairs, Alexis Johnson. Asia Research Bulletin, Vol. 1/5, October, 1971, p. 350 C. The then Thai Government deplored the disclosure of such official secrets. New York Times, 13 July, 1971

American involvement in Thailand, however, is extensive and relations between the two are still close. Thailand has provided bases for the United States; some well paid troops to fight in Indo China - giving the United States the privilege of being able to tell the world that an Asian country is fighting with it - ; is still a member of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and has been the recipient of considerable economic and military aid from the United States. Besides which, the American Government was for quite some time, the largest single employer in Thailand - excluding the Thai Government itself. Over the last decade the two countries have worked closely together in devising strategies and programmes regarding the security of Thailand's Mekong frontier. While the total value of American military aid to Thailand has declined since 1969, it remains substantial, and Secretary Laird has reportedly assured Bangkok that it can continue to count on U.S. support for the next decade. (17) Military assistance for Thailand under the Nixon Administration entailed equipment grants and sales to modernize the 125,000-man Thai army, subsidization of Thai involvement in Laos and Cambodia, and support for the Thai counter-insurgency programme with both funds and advisers.

Along with an overall reduction in aid, the years since the Nixon Doctrine have seen, at first an increase, and then a reduction in the American presence in Thailand. In 1971 the figure stood at 32,000, but 1972-73 witnessed a restoration of U.S. force levels to some 45,000. Besides which the removal of the American headquarters from Saigon to Nakhon Phanom - 330 miles north-east of Bangkok - was realized by April, 1973. Toward the middle of 1973, the gradual withdrawal of American troops was announced - partly in an effort to mollify Thai public opinion which had become increasingly critical of the American military presence, and partly as a cost-effective economy move by the U.S. Air Force. The most recent agreement is that the United States has agreed to reduce its military strength in Thailand by almost a quarter, commencing

in May 1974, and in addition to despatch home a number of aircraft, including some B-52 strategic bombers - the first time that B-52's have been withdrawn - and reducing the U.S. troop level to some 27,000, the lowest since 1966. (18)

The reactions of successive Thai Governments to these American moves have been varied. Between 1968 and 1973 opinions have fluctuated with Thanat Khoman taking a strong line against American military presence in Thailand after the end of the Vietnam War; but the then Prime Minister, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, claiming that a continued American presence would act as a guarantee to ensure that there would be no violation of the Indo Chinese ceasefire by the communists. (19) This was a sentiment that was echoed by the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Leonard Unger. (20)

With the removal of the Thanom-Prapas military regime in October 1973, there were open calls for a reappraisal of the relationship between Thailand and the United States. Both these demands and the latest American withdrawals come at a time when the Thai Government is making an effort to improve relations with a number of communist countries, including North Vietnam. (21) The general reaction of the latter to Thai advances has been understandably cool due to the fact that American troops are still based in Thailand.

The more realistic objections to a total American withdrawal from Thailand include the point that even if the U.S. Air Force decided to use Clark Air base (Philippines) as its forward base in Southeast Asia, it would still be eager to retain landing rights in Thailand - this because without such rights there is no place between the Philippines and Iran where the United States could land a military plane. However, General John Meyer, head of the Strategic Air Command, has been quoted as saying that it would take only 72 hours to return the B-52's, now stationed at U Tapac, if it was finally decided to withdraw them all. (22) Furthermore, it can be argued

(18) Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 April, 1973
Canberra Times, 30 March, 1974


(20) Australian Financial Review, 9 May, 1973


that there is little need for the presence of 27,000 troops to maintain such landing rights. Another sensitive, and possibly the most important 'residual interest' the United States would seek to retain in Thailand is one that is rarely mentioned - a key electronic intelligence station in Ramasun (N.E. Thailand) - about five miles south of a major air base at Udon Thani. A four sentence statement made available by a military spokesman said that Ramasun is involved in 'electronic research projects' and 'communications research and development', and that it provides 'rapid radio relay and service communications for the defence of the United States and the free world'. (23) This may be translated as attributing a dual function to the base - (a) electronic intelligence and communications with regard to China, North Vietnam and the U.S.S.R. Broadcasts and military orders being intercepted; and (b) the other function is that of microbarographs - the attainment of seismic data which can track nuclear testing, etc. As location is a vital factor in both these functions, Ramasun is not a base that could easily be dispensed with. (24)

No written agreement assures the American tenancy at Ramasun or any of the other air bases; nevertheless, there is some truth in the American claim that Thailand has been well paid for the use of these facilities through the $640 million in military aid over the last decade. This assistance has been justified to Congress as support to the Thais to enable them to resist communist insurgency in the north-east - a rather far-fetched justification given the relatively limited nature of this insurgency. However, such involvement is being scaled down, for the first time in thirteen years there are no American special forces units in Thailand - the last Green Berets left in March 1974. By the end of 1974 the last U.S. officer serving as an adviser to the Thai army had also have departed. Moreover, in 1969 the U.S. Embassy in

(23) Ibid.
(24) Information courtesy of Dr. D. Ball, Strategic Studies & Defence Centre A.N.U., October, 1974. The U.S. Embassy in Canberra refused to comment on this matter, because 'as a matter of policy (it) does not discuss the details of the equipment positioned at U.S. and allied defense facilities, nor the operating characteristics of this equipment'. January 31, 1975.
Bangkok had more than thirty officials who were studying the insurgency problem, but the number is said to be down to three. As in the Philippines, American officials tend to explain military assistance to Thailand as a form of payment for base facilities. Nevertheless, Congress has been cutting military aid grants at every opportunity, and those to Thailand are clearly on the decline. To compensate for the cuts the Thais have been offered credits for military sales, but have yet to accept any. (25)

With some sections complaining that American withdrawal from Thailand is too rapid, such moves do not seem to have impressed the pro-Peking 'Voice of the People of Thailand' Radio, which has commented that:

"The fictitious pull-out of American troops can't fool Thais but will only but will only aggravate them to protest more violently..... A long as a reactionary government, representing imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism, rules... no matter what changes of leadership take place - nation-selling policies will always be employed." (26)

However, changes have taken place, and not least is the noticeable change in the attitude of the Thai Government. There is a growing nationalistic flavour in foreign policy and an increasing exasperation at the unpredictability and clumsiness of American diplomacy. There are also the costs of the American presence to be reckoned - certain costs that one might argue could not be covered by monetary compensation - such as the toll exacted from Thai society and the curtailment of her diplomatic options. As a master of the diplomatic art of manoeuvring, the Thai Government has increasingly expanded these options within recent months, at the same time making its independence from the United States politely plain. Following U.S. Defence Secretary, James Schlesinger's statement that B-52's based in Thailand might be employed to patrol the Indian Ocean, the Thai Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that any activities over the Indian Ocean by U.S. air power based on Thai soil must first receive approval from the Thai Government. Some three months later it was announced that the Thai Government had informed the United States that it would not grant such approval, thus causing a set back to American plans to monitor the movements of Russian vessels in the Ocean. (27)

(25) Australian Financial Review, 10 July, 1974
(26) Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 June, 1974
(27) Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 April, 1974
Despite such assertions of independence Thai diplomacy is limited by both domestic restraints and a not very extensive range of external options. Its proclaimed contingency plan of regionalism is as yet somewhat embryonic and is overshadowed by a multiplicity of question marks. However, pending a clarification of the attitudes and relationships of the Great Powers, Thailand is seeking to position itself so that it will be free to use all its diplomatic arts in the furtherance of its national interests. For the moment that diplomatic posture is on the borderline of conservatism — a position historically suited to Thailand.

2. Of all Southeast Asian countries the Philippines has had the closest association with the United States, the latter acquiring the archipelago in 1898, which marked the end of the Spanish-American War. Even after independence had been granted to the Philippines, some four decades later, close relations continued with American bases being sited there and a Mutual Defence Treaty being concluded in 1951. Neither this Treaty nor subsequent membership of SEATO apparently satisfied the Philippine fear of abandonment — a fear derived from the Second World War — and successive Heads of State have demanded repeated reassurances from American Presidents and Secretaries-of-State. In 1968, it was clear that the matter was far from settled as the Malaysian Philippine dispute once again raised the question of whether the United States would be obliged to aid the Philippines if an attack did involve an attack on American installations in the Philippines. It was suggested during the U.S. Foreign Relations hearings on American commitments in the Philippines, in 1969, that such obligations did not exist. (28)

Despite the pressure for American reassurances, the U.S. bases in the Philippines have been a frequent source of friction. Much of the trouble would appear to stem from the fact that the 1947 agreement gave the U.S. Government virtual extra-territorial jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel — with the Philippine Government only exercising

jurisdiction in cases involving crimes against Filipinos by U.S. servicemen who were off base and off duty. (29) Arising out of the latter discontent has been shown through the columns of at least two Filipino newspapers recently - 'Bulletin Today' and 'Orient News' - complaints were registered about the cavalier attitude of American authorities towards this country; and the 'Orient News' editorialized that 'In any future treaty on U.S. bases here, we must make sure that the rules and laws of the land will be observed by the U.S. military brass'. (30) The fact that one of the newspapers is owned by President Marcos' former security chief, General Hans Menzi, would suggest that such U.S.-baiting is Government inspired - not an unlikely hypothesis in a situation where the Philippines is trying to improve its standing with Peking, and is also in the process of re-negotiating the bases agreement.

The continued use of base facilities at Clark Air base and Subic Bay Naval base is considered important by Washington. At Subic the naval magazine occupies an area of 18 sq. miles, containing some 95,000 tons of munitions - in 1964, 15,000 tons being deemed ample. The base also has important repair facilities. The Clark Air Base in Central Luzon, is the Air Force's largest base on foreign soil and the second largest in the world (only Vandenberg Air Force base in California is bigger). Between these two key bases it has been calculated that there are some 14,000 - 16,000 military personnel plus their families. Under existing agreements, U.S. forces can continue to use what military planners like to call their pied-à-terre in the Philippines on a rent-free basis until 1991. (31)

It might be noted also that the Philippines houses American radar systems, while there is a Satellite Ground Station at Clark Field. Furthermore, it is reported that a similar station to the Ramasun base (Thailand) is located in the Philippines; however, this has not been confirmed. (32)

(29) Ibid. pp. 39/40
(30) Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 November, 1974
Existing base installations in the Philippines are reckoned to be worth more than $1 billion. Considering this President Marcos claims that the American aid provided in compensation is far too small. While he places its annual value at some $12 million, the United States calculates that it comes to some $20 million. Even accepting the latter figure, the Philippines receives less military aid than Indonesia. (33) This is now being felt in the Philippines as the latter has one of the smallest military establishments in Asia in proportion to population, although it has been rapidly increased within the last couple of years. It is now being confronted with not only endemic rural insurgency, but also with the rather more serious threat of Muslim guerrillas in the South. Manila would be grateful for more mortars, helicopters and recoilless rifles - according to President Marcos:-

"We feel the United States hasn't given us the support of an ally which promised assistance, especially in time of crisis. We could understand a shortage during the Vietnam war. But we certainly would like access now to what has been declared surplus material." (34)

There is only so much that President Marcos can do in endeavouring to prise more aid out of the United States, as he himself does not wish to provoke too great an anti-American reaction as this would both discourage American investment and annoy the Philippine military establishment. Besides which, as one who has in the past been accused of being anti-American by the Liberal Party, he does not wish to be stereotyped as such, when he and his country are still in a position of considerable dependence on the United States.

Besides being tied militarily to the United States, the Philippines is also attached (although more loosely) economically. This chiefly through the terms of the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1956. (35)

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(33) Australian Financial Review, 13 April, 1973
(34) Australian Financial Review, 13 April, 1973
(35) The Laurel-Langley Agreement gave the Philippines unfettered control of its currency; the 'parity rights' clause of a 1946 Act (which had contained provisions granting parity rights to Americans in the exploitation of Philippine natural resources) was made reciprocal; tariff preferences for U.S. goods entering the Philippines were increased; and it was agreed that customs duties were to be applied gradually over the period 1956 - 1974.
Since that date the American share of Philippine total trade, although declining, has remained high - however, whereas the Philippines used to be dependent on the United States to take 70% of its exports, some twenty years ago, this market now accounts for only just over 30%.

Similarly with imports, Japan has now become the Philippines' main supplier, only some 30% of its needs being imported from America. The Laurel-Langley Agreement was officially terminated on 3 July, 1974, and the situation is now open for another agreement to be concluded.

It is interesting to note that even before the Nixon Doctrine, President Marcos was already envisaging a Nixon Doctrine type situation. As early as November 1968, in an address to the Manila Overseas Press Club, Marcos pointed out that:

"The possible shift of American intentions from Asia to Europe and the Middle East acquired a sudden new force when, recently, the logic of Asian self-reliance was voiced in recent statements of the newly elected U.S. President." (36)

Rather like Dr. Khoman in Thailand, refuge was taken in the concept of an 'Asian community'. Despite assurances by Mr. Agnew and others that the United States would live up to its commitments to its Asian allies, (37) it is clear that the Philippines was not convinced. Nor was it particularly flattered when Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, commented that the participation of the Philippines in the Vietnam War - which was at most little more than a gesture - was the work of mercenaries. Hence, when Foreign Minister, Carlos Romulo, assumed office in January 1969, he claimed that:-

"Events are beginning to show the diminishing value of reliance on one's 'friends', and as a corollary, the growing need to be self-reliant even in such matters as security and military preparedness. It will be increasingly difficult to justify the continuing presence of military bases and military assistance programs and mutual defense arrangements when these are found to be inflexible in the face of changing needs...It may then be found necessary to shorten the life of these agreements or do away with them as expeditiously as we can set up the adjustments made necessary by their termination". (38)

The problem is the adjustments that are made necessary - what are they and how quickly can they be realized? Steps have been taken by the Marcos Administration to widen the range of options that are open to the Philippines. Exports to European socialist countries have been authorized, gestures have been made towards Peking, and President Marcos even went so far as to suggest that if the United States withdrew from Asia, the Soviet Union 'might replace the United States as the counterfoil to communist China'. (39) Given such moves and suggestions - although the latter could merely have been a covert threat to the United States rather than literally intended - it is little wonder that U.S. Secretary of State, William Rogers, in his annual Foreign Policy Message to Congress in 1973, admitted that the Philippines had been moving away from its former special relationship with the United States and was strengthening other bilateral and multilateral ties. At the same time, he said, the United States would continue to contribute to the Philippines' development and security programmes. (40)

There is little chance in the immediate future that the Philippines will totally reject its relationship with the United States, as President Marcos would appear to threaten from time to time. Although the Philippines is becoming increasingly independent in attitude, it is still, like Thailand, a member of SEATO, and it will take some years yet before its relations with Moscow and Peking are established on a satisfactory basis. Until such time the Philippines has to keep an eye on security, and although the U.S. Ambassador in Manila, William Sullivan, has pointed out that American allies must bear the sole responsibility on the ground and that this will not involve the commitment of American ground forces, it was also made clear that the nuclear shield and naval and air support would continue to be provided. (41) Furthermore, American forces would be loath to withdraw from their bases in the Philippines, as the latter are of vital interest to the United States which has given no indication that it wishes to withdraw from the Western Pacific, as distinct from the mainland of

(40) Australian Financial Review, 21 April, 1973
(41) Far Eastern Economic Review, 20 May, 1974
Southeast Asia. A continued presence which, at the moment, would appear to be welcomed by most administrations, excluding those in Hanoi and Pyongyang.

3. The United States has experienced severe fluctuations in its relations with Indonesia. It has varied from editorials in the New York Herald-Tribune referring to the Indonesian President Sukarno, as that 'pipsqueak Caesar of the Pacific' (42), to a situation where relations with Indonesia can be taken as epitomizing the new kind of relationship that Washington hopes to develop with Asian states. Indeed, it has been suggested that Indonesia may have demonstrated to a significant extent a prototype of this new relationship even before the Guam pronouncement which heralded the Nixon Doctrine. (43)

The stabilization of Indonesian-American relations occurred due to the dramatic change in the Indonesian political climate after the elimination of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) with the failure of the 1965 Coup attempt. Washington became a strong supporter of General Suharto and with relatively little hesitation, the United States, along with several European countries and Japan, undertook the backing of Suharto's Indonesia by first agreeing to a postponement of the repayment of long-standing and substantial debts incurred by Sukarno's 'Old Order', and then by formally constituting the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI). By 1967 this group granted some $200 million to Indonesia - with the United States and Japan supplying approximately one-third of the amount each. By 1969 the figure had risen to $500 million. The United States also provided some unpublicized military aid and a military training programme which touched all branches of Indonesia's sprawling armed forces. (44)

In 1966, President Johnson had resumed American economic aid to Indonesia. The development of world events was to cause anxiety amongst the guardians of Indonesia's 'New Order' - even before the Nixon Doctrine, President Suharto was displaying anxiety:-

(42) The Nation, 7 November, 1963
(44) Japan Times, 11 April, 1967.
"The encouraging situation in Indonesia - stability in politics, economics and the military - is ironic now that the American people are tending to withdraw their assistance. It is unfortunate that now Indonesia has the opportunities to grow and the American people want to decrease their overseas aid." (45)

Such comments became sharper in the early seventies with dollar devaluations, changes in American foreign economic policies and attempts by the U.S. Congress to curtail foreign aid. However, such dissent is carefully controlled and there is acute awareness in Government circles of Indonesia’s continuing economic needs. The American Administration’s awareness of these needs is heightened by the fact that - according to U.S. Secretary of State, William Rogers - 'with half the population and more than 40% of the territory of Southeast Asia, Indonesia's success or failure will be a potent factor in the future of the entire region'. Hence it was suggested in Mr. Roger's annual Foreign Policy Message to Congress -

"In view of Indonesia's size, strategic importance and constructive leadership within the region, it is very much in the U.S. interest that we join Japan, Australia and the Western European countries in continuing efforts to provide assistance for Indonesia's long-term development." (46)

And indeed the United States has continued to be a prime aid giver through the Inter-Governmental Group - which provided some $760. million in 1973 - and also through bilateral military aid, the programme of which includes the handing over of an U.S. destroyer to the Indonesian Navy, the provision of twenty-one Dakota aircraft, twelve helicopters and a squadron of T-33 jet trainers - in all amounting to some $18. million. (47)

Although there have been protests from students and others about the degree to which Indonesia is in the U.S. economic orbit, President Suharto has made his position on this matter clear:-

"For the moment, there are only two alternatives to exploit Indonesia's natural wealth. We can keep it idle until... Indonesians have enough capital, skill and technogoly to exploit it, or we can be aware of (Indonesian) shortcomings and cooperate with other people who are capable on the basis of mutual profit. For me... the second alternative is clearly preferable." (48).

American multi-national corporations accepted the offer and began scouring Indonesia for natural resources. These include the exploitation of bauxite, oil and a $1,000 million investment in a liquid-natural-gas plant. Indeed the latter has been predicted to have enough potential to become Indonesia's most important export commodity to the United States, from 1977. (49)

Politically Indonesia has attempted to articulate a more independent line in foreign policy than many another Asian state. Even after the undermining of President Sukarno in 1965, Indonesia spoke out against the American bombings in Vietnam; whilst, President Suharto was in later years to criticize American activity in Cambodia. (50) Furthermore, apart from the grants of aid, Indonesia kept clear of any formal political or military links with the United States. Concerning the continued U.S. military presence in Asia, Indonesia has been cautious - one might even say ambiguous - in its position. Foreign Minister Adam Malik, told Vice-President Spiro Agnew, that Indonesia would accept a continued American presence in Thailand and the Philippines, but only on a strictly temporary basis. He said that the presence of foreign military bases in Southeast Asian countries would only increase those countries' dependency on foreign powers, and more important, would invite other powers to move in to influence the balance of power in the region. It is also true that President Suharto told a luncheon meeting of the National Press Club in Washington that major world powers should keep their troops out of Asia and permit the countries of the region to solve their own problems without outside interference. At the same time he said that steps must be taken to prevent other foreign troops from replacing the withdrawing American forces, and that aid to Asia in the future must take the form of economic assistance granted without political conditions. (51) As is the case with many other Southeast statesmen, it is clear that Indonesian leaders are worried about the consequences

(49) Far Eastern Economic Review, 9 July, 1973
Australian Financial Review, 27 June, 1974

(50) Indonesian Herald, 9 February, 1966; 7 February, 1966
Straits Times, 28 May, 1970

(51) Djakarta Times, 29 May, 1970 - for President Suharto.
Indonesian Newsletter, 29 January, 1973. 4/73 ) for Adam Malik's position.
Straits Times, 10 February, 1973 (}
of an over-hasty American withdrawal from their region, yet they fear that to protest too loudly about the latter may only serve to align them with a force whose presence, strength and interest may be diminishing. This attitude was reflected in Indonesian embarrassment over public appeals by Lee Kuan Yew - Prime Minister of Singapore - for a continuation of the U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia, which he made in Bangkok early in 1973; as one high-ranking Indonesian official was reported as commenting, 'We may agree with him but it does not help to shout about it. That only alarms the other side.' (52) While Indonesia is now making cautious gestures to the 'other side' there is little doubt that there is still a large obstacle of mistrust to be surmounted before it will feel free to dismiss the American presence completely.

4. Both Singapore and Malaysia have a heritage of closer relations with the United Kingdom than the United States. Under the Five Power Agreement, which came into force on 31 October, 1971, a collection of British, Australian and New Zealand forces were stationed in Malaysia and Singapore, although events were to prove correct the reluctance shown by the Asian participants to rely on this force for their security. A couple of years was to see the announcement of an Australian withdrawal and an agreement being reached by New Zealand and the United Kingdom to establish separate military forces in Singapore to replace the ANZUK presence. While Malaysian spokesmen tended to emphasize that they considered multilateral defence arrangements in the region as merely 'short-term expedients', the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, was to tell British leaders that the Five-Power force had only token value, and was 'irrelevant' to the real security of the area. According to Lee Kuan Yew, what was essential was to keep the U.S. bomber force in Thailand and the Seventh Fleet in the Far East, after the Vietnam war. (53)

Such public expressions of dependence for security on the United States presence is a phenomenon that would appear to have been wrought by force of circumstances rather than by ideological conviction. Indeed when Lee Kuan Yew assumed power in Singapore he proved himself to be

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(52) R. Horn - Op. Cit. - p. 520
(53) The Age, 15 December, 1972
anything but a malleable personality, or one that could be accused of acting as an American 'puppet'. Not only did he support calls for an end of the bombing of Vietnam, but he accused President Johnson of too much interference in the Southeast Asian region and successfully embarrassed both the President and the United States State Department by publicizing a bribery bid over uncovered C.I.A. activities in Singapore in the early sixties. (54) However, by 1967 Lee Kuan Yew made it clear that Singapore would not reject American protection, making the point that Singapore was even then being defended by the United States as the latter was fighting in Vietnam. (55) Within the next half decade or so this conviction became stronger, despite Singapore's nominal support for the ASEAN proposal of 1971 - declaring the region a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality'.

With the advent of the Nixon Doctrine, Lee Kuan Yew indulged in some 'crystal-gazing' - suggesting that Japan might play a greater role in the region in future years. Despite this, it was made clear that the continuation of American activity was preferable. Giving an University Address in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Lee Kuan Yew declared that 'the security and stability of the region, without which development cannot take place, can, for the time being, be provided only by an U.S. presence'. (56)

Arguing that the withdrawal of the United States from Southeast Asia is an act of selfdemotion that will not only reduce the United States from a global to a regional power, but will also create difficulties for non-communist Southeast Asian countries, the Singaporean Foreign Minister, Mr. Rajaratnam, urged that America should remain in Asia as at least an economic power. He claimed that even if the United States withdrew as a power in the region, three other contenders - China, Japan and the Soviet Union - neither could nor would, as they were geographically a part of Asia. This suggestion of the inevitable involvement of certain Great Powers in the region led to the

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(54) The Australian, 13 August, 1965
Straits Times, 2 September, 1965; 3 September, 1965
(55) Straits Times, 30 June, 1967
(56) Straits Times, 30 October, 1970
The Age, 5 April, 1973
Singaporean interpretation of neutralization – that the best of 'neutralizing' Southeast Asia and adjacent waters is to draw outside powers into a mutual balance and not to try to exclude their military presence altogether. Thus working on the premise that counterbalancing force will result in the maintenance of a certain degree of equilibrium. (57) On this basis – besides the economic considerations – Singapore is welcoming destroyers, frigates and supply ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet into its harbour, while the Fleet is finding Singapore a 'convenient centre' for docking and maintenance. (58)

Given the extreme sensitivity in Singaporean relations with Peking – despite Lee Kuan Yew's claims that if there were favourable Chinese developments, Southeast Asian nations would be delighted to see their large neighbour participate in the economic and political life of Southeast Asia – the former has proved itself capable of at least theoretically extending its options through imaginative alternatives. This is demanded by circumstances, according to Lee Kuan Yew:–

"It's as if a long freeze suddenly thawed and the ice cracked... We've got to live with these changes which flow from the breaking of the ice. New balances must be found." (59)

On the assumption that the pragmatic Prime Minister does not envisage regional balances without the intervention of a couple of major powers, he would appear, as a result, to favour the intervention of at least the three Great Powers; nor would it seem likely that this would be disputed by the economic interests in Singaporean society.

5. Malaysia, on the other hand, has continued to espouse the more orthodox interpretation of the neutralization of the region. Even before the adoption of the proposal by ASEAN, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tengku Abdul Rahman, told the visiting U.S. Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, that while it was most reassuring to know that the United States had the will and the capacity to defend the region, that all Malaysia asked was that it be left alone to pursue a policy of peace and prosperity at home, and the promotion of goodwill, understanding and friendship with

(58) Straits Times, 25 September, 1972
its neighbours and other countries. (60) In earlier years, however, guided by the same anti-communist Prime Minister, Malaysia was one of the few countries in the entire region to have come out in open support of the United States in the Vietnam war. Despite this, along with Indonesia and Singapore, it refused to allow itself to become a member of such organizations as SEATO.

Relations between Malaysia and the United States have been low-keyed since the formation of the former. Initially it was Britain that played the major role, and by the time that it began to cut back on its 'East of Suez' commitments, Malaysia was committed to the neutralization of the region. It is true that in the mid-sixties the United States provided loans to enable Malaysia to buy American military equipment, and it was also a member of the 'Aid Malaysia Club' which sought to fund development projects, (61) but by 1970, the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Ismail, addressing the American Council on Foreign Relations, was suggesting that relations between the two countries 'could have been more mutually meaningful', and that the United States could manifest more concretely its 'willingness to help us economically to build a stronger, more prosperous country and a more viable Southeast Asian balance'. It was made plain, however, that Malaysia did not ask the United States 'to fight for us'. (62)

This low-keyed relationship suits both the United States and Malaysia, according to U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers, in his annual Foreign Policy Message to Congress:-

"Malaysia's non-aligned foreign policy, its role in Asia, its self-reliant drive to develop its economy while combating two communist insurgency movements, and its participation in the five-power defence arrangement are consonant with the Nixon Doctrine and form a solid basis for U.S.-Malaysian friendship". (63)

While America may consider the Malaysians under their energetic Prime Minister a little over daring in making foreign policy advances; Malaysia, working as it is for the neutralization of the region, realizes the necessity to maintain diplomatic relations with all three of the Great Powers, and at the same time is calling on Japan to 'abandon its low posture foreign policy'.

(60) Straits Times, 9 January, 1970
(61) The Age, 8 March, 1965
(62) Straits Times, 29 October, 1970
(63) Canberra Times, 21 April, 1973
THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FIRST ELEPHANT:

From this brief glance at bilateral relations between the United States and Southeast Asian countries, it can be seen that the Nixon Doctrine has in fact made its mark - not only from the point of view of American actions rooted in the Doctrine, but even more due to Southeast Asian reactions to their perceptions of the American role in their region in the future. The emphasis has been shifted from military to economic aid, and to - at least verbal - self-sufficiency.

Despite the latter, however, American forces are still present in considerable numbers on mainland Southeast Asia (Thailand), there are American bases on the Philippines, and virtually a rim of bases and/or installations are located in Japan, Guam, Australia and in the Indian Ocean. It is clear that the Philippines is a link in this chain, while the giant naval base that the United States built at Sattahip, in the Gulf of Thailand, will have a role to play in any future Indian Ocean moves. Such moves have already taken place in behind-the-scenes manoeuvring which has ringed the Indian Ocean with American naval allies - Iran, Pakistan, Thailand and Australia. Furthermore, Washington is processing information from a secret South African ship-tracking station. Although many littoral states - India, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand - have proposed that the big powers should minimize their presence in the Indian Ocean and create a 'zone of peace'; the United States has tended to discount such demands - Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, terming the 'zone' proposal as a 'very dangerous concept'. Despite an U.S. Central Intelligence Agency assessment of the Soviet Union's Indian Ocean strength, which concluded that the Soviets would like to limit their presence in the area, but fear U.S. naval initiatives, much American reaction to regional protests is that it is simply 'posturing', and that most of the countries of the area would welcome a greater military presence. Although there is a certain amount of truth in this claim, it is unlikely that the countries of the area want an arms race between America and the Soviet Union on their doorstep; particularly now that the nuclear balance with the Soviet Union is primarily operated by missile carrying submarines. It is likely that a more limited subdued presence would be the most
welcome, and failing that, a neutral zone. (64)

A continued American presence in the Western Pacific - and there are even negotiations for a new base on Tinian in the latter - together with the build-up in the Indian Ocean area, may mark a shift in emphasis from a territorial to a maritime military strategy, the latter being able to provide the promised nuclear 'shield'. Indeed, America's Southeast Asian naval bases would appear at present to be less vulnerable than the continued presence of troops in the region, and moreover, less subject to domestic criticism in the United States. However, the chances are still there that the stability of the new American alliance system in the Indian Ocean, with its older rim of Western Pacific bases, may yet meet revolutionary challenges coming from the land. How such challenges will be met is a question for the future. At present American efforts to maintain a favourable internal situation in the countries of the region would appear to take the dual format of aid-giving and the encouragement of a regionalism that would preferably be linked in some way to the United States.

The United States has provided economic assistance at various times to all nine non-Communist nations in Southeast Asia. As can be seen from the accounts above amounts have varied considerably, with countries such as Thailand, South Vietnam and Laos receiving substantial aid; other nations such as Malaysia and Singapore receiving rather modest quantities; whilst Burma has not received any American economic aid for almost a decade. Significant changes can be traced in recent years in the official administration of such aid, including the separation of economic assistance programmes managed by AID (Agency for International Development) and military assistance programmes, managed by the Dept. of Defence, the increasing use of multilateral assistance through the United Nations and the regional monetary institution, the Asian Development Bank, and the creation in 1971 of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Yet in spite of these reforms a large portion of American economic aid in Southeast Asia is still administered on a bilateral basis for essentially military-related purposes. (65)

(64) Far Eastern Economic Review, 27 May, 1974
(65) F. Darling - Op. Cit. - pp. 617/8
The reluctance of the U. S. Congress, however, to grant such aid in large quantities may yet undermine the use of this tool by the American Administration.

The encouragement of regionalism in Southeast Asia may be attributed to two main aims - the expectation that regional cooperation can aid economic development, and that it will speed the development of a power centre, preferably including Japanese participation, which will be able to withstand Communist influence. Both of these aspects - economic and political - are interconnected, as it is hoped that the development and stability that regional cooperation may foster will also make Asian states less susceptible to subversion and able to bear more of their own defence costs.

As early as 1965, President Johnson announced a $1 billion programme to encourage regional development in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the Administration included in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1967 a specific provision authorizing expenditure in support of this goal. (66) American support was given the Asian Development Bank - as mentioned above - and also to indigenous initiatives, such as ASEAN. Richard Nixon was long an outspoken supporter of regional security cooperation claiming that an all-Asian multilateral appeal to U. S. assistance would be the most desirable way in the future to 'ensure that a U.S. response will be forthcoming if needed...' - even if this was at the time envisaged as a counterforce to the designs of China. (67) This concept was later to be included in the Nixon Doctrine - but there not couched specifically in terms of the containment of China.

Despite the ambiguities of the Nixon Doctrine, the continued activities of the C.I.A. in mainland Southeast Asia and American actions in Laos and Cambodia, it seems clear that from the adoption of regionalism and economic aid as the two preferred tools, that there is an American desire to reduce their Southeast Asian commitments. Such commitments have proved to be injurious to the United States not only abroad but at home as well. However, even given this desire there is continued adherence to

(66) Toward Disengagement in Asia, B. K. Gordon, (Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp 60/1

President Johnson's dictum, that 'No single nation can or should be permitted to dominate the Pacific Region'. (68) It may be claimed by some that this dictum is based on the old 'dog in the manger' principle - 'if we can't then nobody else can' - but this may be unfair to the United States. If the United States was content with a situation in which Southeast Asia was free from dominance by any one power, then it is more than likely that some variety of neutrality for the region would be supported, if it was convinced that it would be effective and was capable of being maintained. There is obviously some confusion however, amongst American officials whether such a situation is possible - nor is this helped by the confusion existing among Southeast Asian leaders and statesmen themselves about what they mean when they speak about the neutralization of their region. (69) Much yet depends on the outcome of the Indo Chinese conflict and upon the success of the American switch from a territorial to a naval based strategy; however, even given such variables it is clear that the states of Southeast Asia are preparing themselves to confront a new situation - one with a reduced American presence and commitment - and that having taken this step, they will not be content to return to an era of American dominance. While many of them will be happy to have America continuing to patrol the area outside their region, and will be happy to continue accepting aid, they would prefer not to invite the intervention and subversion of other Great Powers by having a closer relationship with the United States. It is this that leads them to emphasize the fact that the American military presence cannot be a permanent feature in their region.

(69) Confusion between Malaysian and Singaporean interpretations of neutralization.
   Indonesian Newsletter, 6 July, 1972. 24/72 ) For American attitudes.
   Straits Times, 1 July, 1972 )
CHAPTER FOUR:

THE SECOND ELEPHANT - CHINA

The Chinese world view can be seen as being cast in the mould of one of Mao Tse-tung's observations on revolutionary tactics - that laid down for when the enemy is over-extended, the territory being subdivided into three zones: 'our base area, his base area and an intermediate region'. This, in turn, can be translated to fit the international context:

(a) Chinese base area - the Third World;
(b) Second Intermediate Zone - the Developed countries such as Japan and European countries.
(c) Enemy base area - the two Super Powers, U.S.A and U.S.S.R.

Concerning the two Super-powers there is little one need add except perhaps to emphasize Chinese dislike at being classed in this category. The Second Intermediate Zone is an interesting distinction. It consists of developed countries whether formerly belonging to the socialist or capitalist camps, and its function is to counterbalance the two Super Powers. The Third World, to which China belongs, consists of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This may be seen as the Chinese base zone and Chinese influence and interests must, therefore, be carefully fostered.

On a more dynamic level the basic internal conflict between the two Super Powers is pointed out. Not only is there a contradiction between the Super Powers, but they have created their own antithesis in the opposition of those peoples that they have suppressed. This is chiefly the Third World, but also applies to those countries of the Second Intermediate Zone; while the latter's opposition may not be shown by outright revolution it can take the form of a smouldering resentment. There has been an increase in the emphasis placed on the Second Intermediate Zone of 'small and medium sized' countries, who 'having enlarged their union and co-ordinated their common stand, unfolded a tit-for-tat
struggle in various fields against the super-powers, hegemonism and power politics'. (1) The members of the European Economic Community fall into this category and the expansion of the latter was greeted with joy in Peking. (2)

Between the powers of the Second Intermediate Zone and the Third World there is the basic antagonism of economic inequality and 'exploitation'. At the same time in order to secure their victory it is 'possible and even compulsory' for the Asian, African and Latin American peoples to unite with the developed countries (in many cases their former colonisers) to establish 'the broadest possible united front' against the 'common enemies of the Third World' - the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. (3) It is the Third World however, that holds the key to the future, and it is to this zone that China belongs:

"China is still an economically backward country as well as a developing country. Like the overwhelming majority of the Asian, African and Latin American countries, China belongs to the Third World". (4)

Rather resembling an onion in many ways, Chinese doctrine tends to disclose further theories and explanations as each layer is peeled off. Three such theories worth mentioning to add to our dynamic model are:

(i) The irreconcilable contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in capitalist and revisionist countries (i.e. between any discontented and disruptive forces and the 'establishment' in developed countries, including Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.) (5)

(ii) Between socialist countries, on the one hand, and social-imperialism, on the other (i.e. between China, Korea, Vietnam, Albania and possibly Rumania, on the one side and the U.S.S.R., on the other).

(1) Peking Review, 4 January, 1974

(2) New York Times, 7 January, 1973. Cited a headline from the Chinese Communist Party newspaper - "Western European countries strengthen their alignment to counterbalance the two superpowers".


In a world divided into the 'powerful-becoming-weaker' and the 'weaker-becoming-stronger'. Not even power being static. (6)

So stands the world in Chinese eyes, a perspective not merely shaped by its perception of current international reality, but also as a result of its past experiences with its fellow powers, and filtered through the medium of its particular interpretation of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Of China itself, however, some more. According to one writer on the subject - C.P. FitzGerald - the Chinese world view has been adapted to international developments, rather than undergoing fundamental change. Confucian teaching, which was found inadequate, was replaced by a doctrine which a substantial section of the Western world had repudiated. Nor was the latter left in its received form, but was remoulded by Mao Tse-tung to become 'purer' than that which was accepted in the U.S.S.R. Despite these changes the central continuity of China's continued importance on the world stage remains; with China now becoming - in its own eyes at any rate - the 'centre of world revolution' after the failure of the Soviet Union to occupy this role in a satisfactory manner.

To justify its occupation of this position the vital factor is seen as the maintenance of internal ideological purity. Hence the meaning of Chinese communist statements such as 'Foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy'. (7) If the latter falls into the trap of revisionism then the former will follow accordingly. If, on the other hand, the domestic ideology is above reproach then foreign policy may be adapted without fear to fit the needs of the situation; for the centre has not only to be pure, but must also be strong and secure. Thus it is, that ideologically cleansed by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969), the Chinese people can now afford to go so far as to flirt with an imperialist Super Power, not to mention its 'lackeys'. The reasons for such a flirtation are basically national interests - the fear of threats to national survival - although it may be argued that such national interests are internationalized by China's adopted role as the centre of world revolution; that its continued security is of more than national importance.

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China's relations with Southeast Asia, over which it looms large both geographically and historically, date back some two thousand years. In these relations China has a heritage of subtle power and influence, if not control. As Sir Richard Allen - a former British Ambassador to Burma - wrote from an obviously not totally unbiased point of view:-

"The Chinese, even as communists, are far more subtle, devious and intelligent in their procedures than the Russians, as befits the heirs of the greatest civilization of the Orient". (8) It is this very subtlety that has troubled the minds of many Southeast Asian political leaders. Whilst on ideological grounds there is a fear that China may consider that the 'inevitable' could well use a little contemporary assistance. However, although the Cultural Revolution shattered many of the links built up by the careful diplomacy of the then Foreign Minister, Chen Yi, the Chinese approach to Southeast Asia, since 1969, would appear to have been modified, but despite this the legacies of previous policies have proved to be difficult to shake off.

I. The changing Chinese foreign policy is well illustrated by Sino-Burmese relations - the latter a strictly neutralist state bordering on China, whose position was well summed up by the former Burmese Premier, U Nu, as a 'tender gourd among cactus'. Burma's historic concern for tension-free relations with China, particularly in view of the vulnerability of the over 1,350 mile long border, caused it to seek good relations with China in spite of the persistence of ethnic and communist rebellions in Burma, including those whose leaders had links with Peking. In 1960 a boundary settlement was agreed to and a friendship and mutual non-aggression treaty was signed, with these negotiations being followed up by an aid agreement. By mid-1967, however, cordial relations had fallen victim to the fury of Cultural Revolution passions with denunciations and riots occurring in both countries. Full diplomatic relations were not restored until November, 1970 (9); these being underlined in August 1971 when Ne Win - the Burmese Premier - visited China at Chou En-lai's invitation. Peking also agreed to resume economic aid to Burma, laying down that the aid was to be used to expand trade between the two nations 'by all possible means'.

(8) The Task of Western Diplomacy in Southeast Asia, Sir R. Allen (Center for the study of U.S. Foreign Policy, Paper 3, Dept. of Political Science. Univ. of Cincinnati, 1964) p. 16.

(9) Times of India, 23 November, 1970
Prior to the reopening of diplomatic relations a sizeable number of border clashes occurred along the Sino-Burmese border. (10) Despite the fact that a direct Chinese threat along the border area would appear to have diminished significantly, the inter-connection of the Chinese and Burmese insurgents is still open to question. Although the early seventies saw a considerable improvement in Sino-Burmese relations, the Chinese Government did not cease all support for anti-government forces in Burma. In April, 1971, the Burmese Communist 'Voice of the People of Burma' began to broadcast with Chinese support. It has, however, been suggested that by giving the CPB (Communist Party of Burma) its own radio outlet, Chinese leaders can now avoid having to identify with Burmese Communist propaganda attacks on the Government of Burma that were formerly carried over Radio Peking. (11)

Sino-Burmese relations reflect the Janus-like approach that China has been accused of following with many Southeast Asian countries - fostering friendly relations with the government in power, while providing financial and propaganda aid for insurgents. With regard to Burma, on the one hand trade showed signs of flourishing, with imports from China rising from Kyats 57.4 million in 1970-71 to Kyats 78.8 million in 1972-73. Exports to China stood at only Kyats 3.4 million in 1970-71, but jumped to Kyats 56.7 million in 1972-73. (12) On the other hand, however, the 'Peking Review', of 23 August, 1974, printed greetings on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Burma.

It is difficult to ascertain precisely how accurate a reflection are the statements by the Burmese Communist Party of prevailing Peking attitudes. On the occasion of Tun Razak's visit to Burma in February 1972, the 'Voice of the People of Burma' declared:-

"Razak said he came to discuss the neutralization of Southeast Asia with Ne Win. Ne Win and Razak got together to cover up their imperialist running dog nature with words such as 'noninterference and 'justice'. ...Nothing will result from the Ne Win-Razak talks except the neutralization plot to destroy the liberation movements of the Southeast Asian peoples'. (13)

(10) Times of India, 8 November, 1969
(12) Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 October, 1974
This outlook has also been reflected by other Southeast Asian, Peking-oriented, Communist Parties, but not by Peking itself.

2. Although four of the five ASEAN countries have not yet established formal diplomatic relations with China, the prevailing attitude would appear to be that it is only a matter of time. (14) It did not go unnoticed that when Chou En-lai spoke at the Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in August 1973, he talked in general terms about the just struggle of the Third World, with Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia alone receiving specific mention. (15) Hence, the 'ping-pong' diplomacy proceeds apace, in many cases being consolidated by trade links. (16)

Malaysia was the first ASEAN member to establish diplomatic relations with China, causing the editor of the 'Straits Times' to write:-

"One step by Malaysia's Prime Minister, one long stride towards Malaysia's goal of a zone of peace and neutrality in Southeast Asia". (17) This step was for Malaysia a logical realization of declared foreign policy, which pointed out the necessity for Malaysia to have diplomatic relations with China, the United States and the Soviet Union, among others. (18)

Sino-Malaysian relations have followed the same tortuous route and have entailed the same ambiguities as experienced by many another. There was a long history of Chinese support for both internal and external opposition to the Malaysian state to be overcome; however, immense changes have taken place since the People's Republic of China was billed as public enemy No. 1 by Tun Razak himself. (19) Two contradictory views were to persist:-


(17) Far Eastern Economic Review, 10 June, 1974

(18) Straits Times, 27 July, 1971. Speech by Tun Razak

(a) That closer contact with China might strengthen divisive or subversive pro-China sentiment amongst the Malaysian Chinese;

(b) That better relations would encourage the integration of the Malaysian Chinese into the Malaysian society, as the latter would no longer be hostile to Chinese in general. An initial anti-China policy was gradually modified as the Malaysian state became increasingly secure, and Communist insurgency remained scattered and numerically limited. Furthermore, Malaysia's freedom from alliance ties with the United States and the absence of diplomatic relations with Nationalist China, aided a change in policy. (20)

Early signs of a thaw were apparent in January 1971 when the Peking Red Cross made a surprise offer of some $625,000 worth of food and clothing to Malaysian flood victims. (21) At the same time Tun Razak welcomed unofficial Chinese enquiries about the Malaysian proposal for neutralization. (22) Such tentative approaches were not reflected in the pro-Peking 'Voice of the Malayan Revolution':-

"In view of the repeated, disastrous defeats suffered by U.S. imperialism on the battlefields of Indo China in the past few months, the Razak clique has intensified its efforts in calling for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, guaranteed by the big powers... Your so-called guarantee of neutrality in Southeast Asia by the big powers is, to put it bluntly, only a by-product of the Nixon Doctrine. Your policy of non-alignment is only a cover for your service to imperialism in opposing communism, the people and China." (23)

As against this, however, Tengku Razaleigh returned from a trip to China which included a meeting with Chou En-lai, during which Razaleigh put forward Malaysia's neutralization policy:--


(21) Straits Times, 11 February, 1971. This aid figure has elsewhere been reported as $200,000 (Japan Times, 14 April, 1971)

(22) This occurred as the Malaysian Prime Minister was commenting on reports that Peking embassy officials in London had approached Malaysian diplomats there seeking clarification of the proposals to neutralize Southeast Asia. Pakistan Times, 18 January, 1971.

"He (Chou En-lai) told us that he followed closely the statement made by Tun Abdul Razak on the concept of neutrality and that it was also the policy of China to maintain a policy of non-interference and mutual respect for territorial sovereignty and integrity. I could only feel or think that this reaction to neutrality was quite favourable. He said that no big powers should interfere in the affairs of other nations". (24)

In earnest of the more cordial Sino-Malaysian diplomatic relations, trade was also increased - the emphasis being placed on rubber, palm oil and timber.

The ambiguities interwoven in the Sino-Malaysian relationship did little to make things easier for the Malaysians in their efforts to further Chinese intentions (25); nevertheless, a Malaysian Foreign Affairs Ministry statement on 20 May, 1974, announced that Chou En-lai had invited Tun Razak to pay an official visit to China in order to formalise the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Speaking at a banquet given in Tun Razak’s honour on May 28, Chou En-lai said that:-

"The Malaysian Government’s position for the establishment of a zone of peace and neutrality in Southeast Asia has given expression to the desire of the Southeast Asian peoples to shake off foreign interference and control, and has won support from many Third World countries.... The realities of Southeast Asia show that super-power aggression and expansion are the main sort of danger to peace and security in this region. We are convinced that so long as the Southeast Asian peoples strengthen their unity and persist in their struggle they will certainly be able to frustrate super-power schemes and safeguard their own independence and sovereignty. The Chinese people consistently support the just struggles of all oppressed nations and people". (26)

(24) Straits Times, 19 May, 1971

(25) On the one hand Tun Razak declared in Parliament that Malaysia was in no rush to enter into diplomatic relations with China, noting that - 'the Chinese clandestine radio station is still carrying out hostile propaganda toward Malaysia, and the so-called Malayan Liberation Front is still based in Peking'. - Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report (Asia, Pacific) 16 August, 1972. Cited in Current Scene, Vol. X, No. 12. On the other hand, there was the growing feeling that the smaller countries of Southeast Asia could not afford to miss out on relations with a major power in the neighbourhood, such as China.

Both Governments also considered all forms of aggression, interference, control and subversion to be non-permissible, and were opposed to any attempt by any country, or group of countries, to establish hegemony or create spheres of influence in any part of the world. (27) Since Malaysia was the first of the ASEAN nations to establish such diplomatic relations, the Sino-Malaysian agreement and joint communique could well act as a format whereby other Southeast Asian countries could come to satisfactory terms with Peking.

After the initial euphoria over the establishment of official ties with China certain realities have now to be faced. Malaysia is still a country in which the Little Red Book is banned, and although it was assumed at first that links with Peking would reduce the effectiveness of the clandestine Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in its efforts to undermine the Malaysian Government, such hopes have yet to be realized. It is disturbing for the Malaysian Government that, if anything, the 'Voice of the Malayan Revolution' (VOMR) has stepped up its attacks, dismissing the recent diplomatic initiative as an 'inevitable consequence of history', stressing that it was a 'victory for the Malayan and Chinese people'. While officials in Kuala Lumpur point out that the VOMR tends to lean toward a position which distinguishes the Chinese Government from the MCP itself, they still believe that the VOMR's radio transmitter is based in China's Southern Yunnan Province. Despite this the Chinese denials of any official aid to the MCP were adamant. (28) One certain thing is that should such Chinese aid be uncovered not all the efforts of this pacesetter of ASEAN will convince the other four members to establish the necessary ties with China.

3. China for its part has endorsed the ASEAN neutralization proposals in principle, pending more friendly relations with the majority of the member states. Liao Ch'eng-Chih, a senior adviser to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, told visiting Japanese newsmen:-

"China supported the principle of neutrality featuring national independence, democracy and peace with the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have worked out. These countries, however, sometimes say that they want to improve relations with China,

(28) Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 October, 1974
but at other times they step back, saying they are afraid. We do not fret, rush, or threaten, and we will watch the developments in regard to this situation." (29)

Despite the fears it is true that there have been developments, in some cases forced by the perceived implications of the Nixon Doctrine. In this category are countries such as Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand.

Of all the member countries of ASEAN, the Philippines has perhaps had the least contact with China. Nevertheless, as early as January 1969, in his State of the Nation Address before the Philippine Congress, President Marcos stressed the need for peaceful coexistence with China in preparation for eventual American withdrawal from Asia, and with the foresight that:-

"Before long Communist China will have increased its striking power a thousand-fold with a sophisticated delivery system for its nuclear weapons". (30)

As with Malaysia, China made its gesture by sending donations to Filipino flood victims, through the Chinese Red Cross Society. (31)

The Philippines sent its first trade mission to China early in 1971 - which arranged the exchange of Filipino coconut oil for Chinese rice - and this was followed by a series of reciprocal visits. The latter included that of President Marcos's personal and 'unofficial' emissary, his brother-in-law, Governor Benjamin Romualdez of Leyte, to Peking to talk with Chou En-lai; whilst, the Chinese Minister of Agriculture, Sha Feng, came to Manila to attend a conference on rice research in April 1972. In 1971 the ban on all trade with socialist countries was lifted, and it was decided that the semi-state National Export Trading Corporation should oversee the Chinese trade. Since the first exchange of goods in 1971, two-way trade is estimated to have exceeded $68 million, of which some $42 million was in Philippine exports to China, and $26 million imports from the People's Republic. Although China's biggest imports from the Philippines so far have been in coconut oil, with the termination of special trade relations with the United States under the Laurel-Langley Agreement, and the curtailment of Japanese and American purchases of Filipino timber, the Philippines has been eyeing China as a possible market for more of

(30) Japan Times, 28 January, 1969
its traditional exports such as sugar, wood products and, possibly, mineral ores and concentrates. The Philippines has also been sounding out the Chinese on the prospects of securing crude oil from China. Furthermore, in anticipation of an upsurge in the China trade, the Government-owned Philippine National Bank established financial connections with Peking in 1973, by formalizing a correspondent agreement with the Bank of China. (32)

Diplomatic relations with China have yet to be established. President Marcos claimed that the Philippines will have to solve its problem of foreign support for leftist insurgents before it can draw up a timetable to establish such relations. China was quoted as being one of the countries which was alleged to be supporting Filipino insurgents, although contrary arguments claim that, at most, such support consisted of verbal endorsement of the New People's Army, and that this would probably be restricted if the Philippines were willing to cut off diplomatic relations with Taiwan and transfer them to Peking. (33) It would appear that such a move is likely to occur.

President Marcos, in June 1974, said that establishing diplomatic relations with China will be a definite step by the Government in the future, but the timing has not been set yet. (34) The following September saw Madame Marcos - as a 'special representative of President Marcos' - in Peking. In her speech at a banquet given in her honour, Madame Marcos said:--

"It is my hope that in the course of this goodwill visit, we can explore with the leaders of the People's Republic of China the possibilities for closer and stable relations between our peoples based on equality and mutual respect." (35)

Diplomatic relations with the Chinese - who for their part appear to be placing a genuine emphasis on conventional links with the Philippines - would appear to be but a matter of time.

(32) Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 October, 1974
(35) Peking Review, 27 September, 1974
4. Unlike the Philippines, Thailand is acutely aware that it is separated from China by only a relatively narrow strip of Burmese and Laotian territory; despite this location, however, there has rarely been a threat of land invasion. Nevertheless, Sino-Thai antagonism has been very marked since the establishment of the People's Republic, with the latter acting as a refuge for Thai political exiles, and giving, at the very least, verbal support for Thai insurgents. Thailand, on the other hand, became closely aligned with the United States, acting as a base for the heavy bombing raids on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and North Vietnam, and even involving Thai troops in the Vietnamese war on the side of Saigon. (36) Two other underlying factors have been suggested; the fact that Cambodia - a traditional enemy of Thailand - under Sihanouk, was a neutral favoured by Peking; and a basic age-old anti-Chinese sentiment. (37) The logic of a changing international context is, however, demanding a reassessment of both attitudes and alignments.

Chinese support for Thai insurgents was noticeable throughout the sixties, and with the passing of time the ethnic minorities in Thailand received greater attention from both China and the Thai front groups as a potential revolutionary element. The pro-Peking radio station - the 'Voice of the People of Thailand' (VPT) - broadcasts in White Meo (Mung) dialect and Isan Lao. (38) Insurgency continues in Thailand today with the VPT being easily and clearly picked up in Bangkok. The radio station is located in Southern China, and although Thai officials concede that this is only 'an irritant', it is not guaranteed to improve Sino-Thai relations. (39) Nonetheless, apart from providing such propaganda aid and moral support, it has been admitted that the Chinese commitment has been fundamentally cautious, with Peking being careful not to explicitly endorse, at Government level, any of the Thai front organizations.

(36) The Thai forces have now been withdrawn from South Vietnam, but it has been alleged that Thai military advisers pay, train and recruit Lao living in Thailand for fighting in Laos as 'Volunteers'. F. Langdon - Op. Cit. - p. 311.
(37) China and Southeast Asia since 1945, C.P. FitzGerald. (Longman, Australia Ltd., 1973) p. 64.
Such support as was, and is, shown comes from the Chinese Communist Party. (40)

Addressing representatives of the student council of the National Institute of Development Administration, on January 4, 1974, the Air Chief Marshal Thawi Chunlasap, then Minister of Defence, told his audience that 'Chinese leaders had given assurances that the PRC Government had given no support to communist terrorists in Thailand'. Whilst dealing with the withdrawal of American forces from the country, Thawi said that once political stability was restored to South Vietnam and Cambodia, 'all U.S. troops must be withdrawn'. (41) Commenting on the new political emphasis in Thailand the editorial of the 'Straits Times' - 18 January, 1974 - pointed out that:

"... The Thai Deputy Foreign Minister led a trade mission to Peking only last month and has referred to Sino-Thai ties as "only a matter of time". Reconciliation took the form of 'ping-pong diplomacy, which was in turn, consolidated by trade links. (42) Despite the fact that the Thai Government has so far been unable to repeal Revolutionary Party Decree No. 53, which bans trade with China, the decree has been twice amended so that merchants who obtain a government licence can now legally conduct trade with China. Indeed, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Chatichai Choonhavan, visited Peking in December 1973, with a resulting contract for the delivery of 50,000 tons of diesel oil at 'friendship price', and an agreement on the general principles of future trade. (43)

Concerning the Chinese attitude toward the American bases in Thailand, the situation is far from clear. When Marshall Green - representing the U.S. State Department - went to Bangkok to report on the Kissinger and Nixon talks in Peking, he claimed that the Chinese had not raised the question of the American bases in Thailand as an obstacle to better relations. (44) As has been suggested above, China may prefer a temporary continuation
of the American presence to an uncertain vacuum in the area. The one fact that has emerged is that on this issue - as with a number of others - there is little hope for the clarification of existing ambiguities until peace is reached in Indo China. Sino-Thai relations have seen an undoubted improvement but they still have a considerable way yet to go.

5. As early as May 1970, Mr. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore's Foreign Minister, pointed out that although a Western withdrawal from Southeast Asia could enhance prospects for communist revolutions in the region, he did not believe that they would result from Chinese aggression. He said that:

"Communist uprisings have invariably been indigenous.... The Chinese may give moral, ideological and even material support, but the armed forces of China have never intervened, except in Korea, for clearly defensive purposes." (45)

The following year, the Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, during a visit to Rumania, claimed that Singapore strove like Rumania for friendship in all regions:

"We are friends of the Soviet Union, with the U.S.A. You are friends with the People's Republic of China too. Maybe sometime we too shall be friends with the People's Republic of China". (46)

Despite this Singapore has proved reticent in its relations with China. There are a number of reasons to explain this reticence - the consciousness that the majority of the Singaporean population are regarded as 'overseas Chinese' (78% in 1970) by the rest of Southeast Asia; a general suspicion of Chinese motives in the region and the old ambiguity of the dual governmental and Party relations. China endorsed opposition to the Government by the indigenous Malayan Communist Party, which in 1968 called for a Maoist armed struggle against the 'puppet regimes' of both Singapore and Malaysia in order to establish a 'People's Republic of Malaya'. (47) Lee Kuan Yew proved that he recognized the distinction when he said at a rally on 27 August, 1974:

"We should not make the mistake of confusing the PRC with the CPM, the Communist Party of Malaya, as they call themselves - Peninsular Malaya together with Singapore. They demonstrated it quite clearly,

(45) Times of India, 19 May, 1970
(46) Straits Times, 13 November, 1971
the PRC may, for their own national interests, have government to
government correct relations - government to government. But the
local communist party is a separate matter." (48)

While the distinction is recognized, and even to a limited extent, accepted
by the pragmatic Singaporeans, it does little to establish a climate conducive
to developing common interests.

Singapore has made it clear more than once that it will not be either
the first or second of the ASEAN countries to establish diplomatic relations
with China. According to the Prime Minister - 'When our immediate
neighbours, Malaysia, Indonesia have diplomatic relations, we will have
diplomatic relations'. (49) Although Malaysia has opened such relations
it would appear to be some time before similar moves are likely to be made
on the Sino-Indonesian front - a delay that does not seem to worry the
Singaporean Government.

Despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations, this does not
prevent contact with China. Dialogue is carried on in the United Nations,
and at different points of contact, like London or Tokyo - the Chinese
Ambassador in London accepted an invitation to attend Singapore's celebration
of its National Day. As with other Southeast Asian countries, sport and
trade links have been utilized in the place of formal diplomacy. There are
two banks in Singapore - the Bank of China and the Kwantung Provincial
Bank - which are owned by the Chinese Government, as well as two insurance
companies. The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce sent a delegation
to China in October 1971 at a Chinese invitation; whilst China offered to
have up to ten ships per month stop at Singapore, en route to Europe, to
pick up shipments at freight rates 40% below those of the Far East Freight
Conference, which otherwise monopolized shipping rates. (50) The
Sino-Singaporean trade balance has always been in China's favour, but
as Lee Kuan Yew said - 'We don't object to this so long as overall, there
is a credit balance'. In 1973, Singapore's imports from China were
$573.2 million, exports $128.4 million, compared with $399.2 million
in imports and $57.6 million exports for 1972, even excluding imported

(48) The Mirror (Singapore), 9 September, 1974. Speech by Lee Kuan Yew at
the National Day Rally, 18 August, 1974

(49) Ibid.

re-export goods from Hong Kong, which totalled $50 million in 1972. (51)

The Singaporean attitude toward China can, perhaps, be summed up as flexible. Within Lee Kuan Yew's interpretation of a 'neutralized' Southeast Asia all three Great Powers would continue to be involved in the region, however, it would appear that there have been few concrete moves made to realize this interpretation. With regard to China's attitude it seems that it is in little hurry and is prepared to wait until Singapore considers that the time is ripe to establish formal relations.

6. Sino-Indonesian relations have experienced considerable fluctuations within the past two decades. From being in a pre-September 1965 position of reliance, if not dependence, on China, diplomatic relations between the two countries were effectively severed in October 1967 - on the basis that China was guilty of ignoring the normal traditions amongst 'civilized nations' (52) - whilst by December 1970, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, said that the concept of a neutral Southeast Asia guaranteed by the big powers, including China, could only materialize if Peking restored relations with Djakarta. (53) These ties have not proved easy to restore, the alleged involvement of the Chinese in the 1965 Gestapu coup attempt providing a haunting memory in many minds. In 1972, while asserting in his Independence Day Address that Indonesia wanted friendly relations and cooperation with all countries, including China, President Suharto emphasized that the initiative had to come from China. At the same time it became known that Indonesia had rejected a possible Chinese initiative - the Government had turned down an invitation to send a table tennis team to the Asian Table Tennis Union Championships in Peking, in 1972 (as it had also done in 1971). (54)

Somewhat less cautious than his President, the Indonesian Foreign Minister asked the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia (Mr. Mirko Tepavac) and of Rumania (Mr. Corneliu Manescu) to sound out Peking on the normalization of relations with China - this in mid 1971. Mr. Malik then reported back a

(51) Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 October, 1974
(52) The Age, 10 October, 1967
(53) Pakistan Times, 23 December, 1970
favourable response to these initiatives. (55) By September and October 1972, Adam Malik was arguing that Chinese policy was indeed undergoing a change for the better. A number of factors were cited in evidence - the attendance of Peking's U.N. Ambassador, Huang Hua, at the Indonesian Ambassador's Independence Day reception in New York, and the reciprocation by the Indonesian Ambassador on China's National Day. Mr. Malik claimed that Radio Peking had become less militant and abusive; while it was also noted as encouraging that the Chinese had continued to extend 'ping-pong diplomacy' toward Indonesia, even in the face of previous rebuffs. Furthermore, it was pointed out that China's communiques with the United States and Japan promised non-interference, and that all indications showed that such a provision would also apply to Indonesia. (56) Despite all this, in April of the same year, it was also Adam Malik who had to protest at the continuation of Chinese support for internal subversion in Indonesia - even since its admission into the United Nations. (57)

Indonesia's approach to the restoration of relations with China has been very much a matter of two steps forward, one step backwards, and vice versa, depending on the internal Indonesian political situation at the time. It would appear that the initiative toward restoring relations is being taken by Adam Malik, with President Suharto and his group showing less enthusiasm. However, this in itself could also be a clever Indonesian ploy to provide themselves with a safety catch - that internal obstacles prevent the hastening of the necessary rehabilitation of relations.

By early 1973, Mr. Malik reported that a 50% thaw had already taken place in Sino-Indonesian relations - with the final restoration being dependent on the security situation in Indonesia. Mr. Malik claimed that China had ceased its subversive activities in Indonesia, dismissing in the process the opposing view as 'accusations or assumptions'. (58) It was disclosed later in the year that Adam Malik had met his Chinese counterpart - Mr. Chi Peng-fei - in New York and Paris, and that they had discussed the restoration of the suspended Djakarta-Peking relations. (59)

(55) The Guardian (Burma), 8 July, 1971
(56) R. Horn - Op. Cit. - p. 529
(57) Djakarta Times, 18 April, 1972
(59) Indonesian Newsletter, 9 July, 1973. 27/73
Two very real impediments to a close Sino-Indonesian relationship still exist - on top of the suspicion that exists concerning the intentions of China:

(a) The fact that the feeling against the Indonesian Chinese minority still runs high, as reflected in periodic eruptions of violence.
(b) The reported activities of the mainly Sarawakian, Chinese guerrilla forces, operating along the border of Sarawak and West Kalimantan.

Nevertheless, signs of change can be registered; in January 1974, Adam Malik stated that in the present situation the thawing of diplomatic relations with China depended on Indonesia as China had fulfilled all the necessary preconditions, which had included - among other things - a cessation of hostility toward the Government of President Suharto. (60) Whilst in March an Indonesian Foreign Office spokesman disclosed to reporters that the Chinese Foreign Minister gave an assurance to Adam Malik in Paris, at the time of the Peace Conference on Vietnam, that China would not support or encourage any communist rebellion in Indonesia. (61)

One of the chief reasons for the lethargic attitude of the Indonesians toward diplomatic relations with China may be a general lack of interest since the early seventies in foreign policy issues, largely due to a concentration on the problems of the internal political situation. The 'Guidelines of the State Policy', solemnly stipulated by the People's Assembly, on 23 March, 1973, refers to foreign policy in a few sentences only. (62) Despite this apparent lack of interest in normalizing formal relations, Sino-Indonesian trade has proceeded apace with the current trade balance heavily favouring China. Chinese exports to Indonesia increased from U.S. $27.6 million in 1971, to $54.7 million in 1973. These figures can be increased somewhat by the addition of imports that come through a third country - chiefly Hong Kong or Singapore. On the other hand, trade statistics show few Indonesian exports going to China. There is little agreement on the effect of closer Sino-Indonesian ties on trade. (63)

(63) Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 October, 1974
Sino-Indonesian relations are now very much a matter of timing; the latter, however, is important in the sensitive Indonesian situation. For some eight years the anti-Peking sentiment has been used as a basis of legitimacy for the Suharto Government. The latter now, in the President's words, wish to:

"Be able to create such social conditions that will make it impossible for communist ideas and potential to grow and develop in Indonasia".

Until this is accomplished there will undoubtedly be elements in the Indonesian governing elite who will argue against normalizing relations with China on the grounds that this could encourage the growth of communist ideas and influence. As against this, however, international events will not wait on internal developments and Indonesia may yet be hastened into taking those final steps.

7. A factor in China's relations with Southeast Asia that does not allow itself to be overlooked is the role played by the Overseas Chinese - ethnic Chinese outside China; for my purposes, Nanyang (or Southeast Asian) Chinese. These emigrant Chinese have been entering Southeast Asia throughout the centuries, the volume of the flow being determined largely by the internal situation in South China. By 1974 they composed some 5% of the population of Southeast Asia, and due to their numbers and association with China, weigh in the minds of Southeast Asian foreign policy makers.

The distribution of the Nanyang Chinese is scattered, with the percentage in most countries being really rather low. However, there is another group (those countries that now compose Malaysia) where the percentage is from about one-fifth to one-third of the whole. While in Singapore it was three-quarters of the total - with reports indicating a rise on this.

The fate of the Nanyang Chinese, and their effect on foreign policy is largely determined by three factors - the attitude of the country involved to its Chinese minority (majority in the case of Singapore, but both this and Malaysia are in exceptional circumstances); the current attitude of the Peking Government to the Nanyang Chinese; and the level of the relations between the Peking Government and the Southeast Asian country in question. Underlying these factors is that vital element - the rate of assimilation of the Nanyang Chinese into their adopted country and culture.
Policies adopted by Southeast Asian countries for their Chinese population have tended to vary. In Thailand the problem has been reduced due to the intermarriage that has taken place between Thais and Chinese. In Indonesia and the Philippines the acquisition of local nationality, whether by birth or naturalization, still leaves the Chinese under political and often economic disabilities. (64) Not a situation conducive to successful assimilation. However, with regard to the Philippines, the more moderate approach taken by China would appear to be reflected in greater attempts to 'Filipinize' the country's Chinese. These developments coincided, early in 1972, with moves being made to restore relations with Peking. For their part the Chinese—in the person of Chou En-lai speaking to General Ne Win of Burm, in August 1971—repeated that overseas Chinese should obey the laws of the country in which they reside, and that it was the policy of the Chinese Government to see that this principle was observed. (65)

In Malaysia and Singapore, Nanyang Chinese are present in such numbers that they can participate in a significant manner in the internal political workings of these countries. However, all is not calm in Malaysian race relations, with the Alliance Party Victory in the 1969 General Election being followed by racial riots. Concerning the attitude of China, the following was included in the joint communique issued during the visit of Tun Abdul Razak to China, in June 1974:-

"...The Chinese Government considers anyone of Chinese origin who has taken up of his own will or has acquired Malaysian nationality as automatically forfeiting Chinese nationality. As for those residents who retain Chinese nationality of their own will, the Chinese Government, acting in accordance with its consistent policy, will enjoin them to abide by the law of the Government of Malaysia, respect the customs and habits of the people there and live in amity with them. And their proper rights and interests will be protected by the Government of China and respected by the Government of Malaysia." (66)

As this in all possibility will be the format of future agreements on this question with other Southeast Asian governments, the latter are watching with interest to see how it will work out in Malaysia.

(64) C. P. FitzGerald - Op. Cit. - p. 85
Singapore, even more than Malaysia, is acutely conscious of the problems which the Nanyang Chinese create in Southeast Asia. Here they are in such proportions that the constant fear would appear to be the submergence of a Singaporean identity under a Chinese one. That Lee Kuan Yew is sensitive lest other Southeast Asian countries regard Singapore as China's fifth column in the region, is clear. This indeed is one of his declared reasons for taking Sino-Singaporean diplomatic relations slowly. (67) It must undoubtedly worry Lee Kuan Yew that closer links with China would encourage an upsurge of Chinese sympathy among his Singaporeans. However, against this he can hope that the interests of the two countries may diverge somewhat, and that the allegiance of the younger generations will be given to Singapore.

With regard to the attitude of the overseas Chinese themselves it is difficult to categorize the combination of diverse political allegiances and the nebulous cultural attachment to Chinese heritage. In cases where they were subjected to a second class citizenship the Chinese attachment must inevitably have been incorporated into an alternative sense of identity. Feelings like that of a Dutch-educated Chinese in Indonesia are not common:-

"If you ask me what Chinese culture is, I cannot say. We cannot define it exactly, but we know that we like it and want to keep it... We want (our children) to be loyal to Indonesia as their country, but we hope that they will not forget Chinese culture". (68)

There are two difficulties here, however, that of expecting second class citizens to assimilate totally into a culture whose members partly reject them; and that of hoping that nation-builders (and many of the Southeast Asian nations are relatively modern states) will tolerate the existence of a sub-culture which owes allegiance to an extra-regional giant. The result is that the overseas Chinese can often end up as political scapegoats - thereby giving the vicious circle of separateness another spin. However, integration of any such ethnic minority group, if it is achievable at all, is only so by means of time.

(67) The Mirror (Singapore), 9 September, 1974
THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SECOND ELEPHANT

China is a major world power - it has been so for some time, but on 25 October, 1971, it at last obtained the legal trappings of such, when the Peking Government received a majority vote in the United Nations Assembly which recognised it as the legitimate regime and entitled to China's U.N. seat. So much for its position on the global stage. With regard to Southeast Asia there is the added ingredient of a long history of association and influence, together with the hints of that Great Power prerogative, spheres of influence. Aware of the latter, the Southeast Asian states are battling for a position of compromise where all the external powers involved in the region would show mutual self-restraint. Such a step would undoubtedly be in China's interest if it could rely on the good faith of the United States and Russia. Not only would it remove the threat of encirclement by opposing powers, but should the region become stabilized - and the prospects for effective subversion diminished - then the Chinese influence could still be established, but through more orthodox channels. It is certain, given the historical and geographical relationship of China to Southeast Asia, that irrespective of what long-term arrangements are reached, Chinese influence on the region will be significant.

Whatever may be true of the Great Powers, Southeast Asian nations have long recognized this fact. In the early sixties, in an interview with the French newspaper, 'Le Monde', Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk commented that:-

"The Chinese know very well that the alignment of Bangkok on the U.S. side is temporary and that it may reverse itself tomorrow... Perhaps I shall astonish you by saying that I never go to Peking without being contacted by some semi-official emissary of Bangkok... The United States protest. After their return the emissaries are arrested. They spend a few pampered days in prison, just long enough to calm the Americans. Then they are released". (69)

It is not difficult to imagine such occurrences, set, as they are, in the context of centuries of delicate diplomatic manoeuvrings - in such a setting Western intervention must take on the appearance of a crude aberration. Diplomatic realities have proved, and are proving, stronger than ideological antagonisms; and despite the small number of Southeast Asian countries that

actually have diplomatic relations with China, the stage has been well set for others to make this move when they consider it to be in their national interest.

It is true that the ambiguities of China's two level approach - government-to-government and party-to-party - do not make the situation easier for the members of the region. However, it is becoming increasingly accepted that outside the insurgent movements in Indo China, support for the Southeast Asian liberation movements chiefly takes the form of verbal encouragement, and that coming mainly from the Chinese Communist Party, rather than from Government sources. The Chinese emphasis is now very decidedly on the governmental level, although party-to-party communications are kept open perhaps partly in the form of leverage and partly as an ideological justification. The need for the latter has been eased somewhat by the stance that each country must generate its own revolutionary spirit. It is interesting to note that the two countries that have been cited in recent months as suffering from Chinese media support for their insurgents - Burma and Thailand - are two where the element of threat may be involved, so as to prevent Burma from establishing close links with the Soviet Union which has been courting it, and in Thailand, to encourage the reduction of the overt American presence. (70) With regard to many of the Southeast Asian insurgent movements, however action is not necessarily taken or stopped at the behest of Peking - although it may have certain influences at times in the matter - but may continue in spite of the latter, being motivated by indigenous grievances. Hence, after the Sino-Malaysian diplomatic accords were signed in June 1974, Tun Razak was assured by Chinese leaders that the communist guerrillas in Malaysia were an internal Malaysian problem. A similar attitude to that taken as applying to the Nanyang Chinese.

China's attitude to the proposal to neutralize Southeast Asia has been somewhat circumspect. There would appear to be involved in this an element of not wishing to support a scheme openly, a course of whose future is as yet uncertain. In May 1971, Tunku Razaleigh, who was heading a Malaysian trade mission in Peking, reported a favourable response from Chou En-lai. The following year a more definite statement of support for the proposal was

(70) The Age, 21 August, 1974
made by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei, who stated in August 1972 that Peking supported the policies of peace, neutralization and nonalignment proposed by Asian, African and Latin American countries. (71) On this issue, as on many others, Peking would appear to be indulging in its two level approach - with the Government supporting the neutralization suggestion, in the abstract at any rate, and the Party having its doubts. Little can be gleaned from previous Chinese reactions to neutralization proposals as they depended to a great extent on Chinese interest at the time rather than on any ideological stand on the concept. Hence, the Chinese support for President de Gaulle's proposal in the early sixties (72), whilst a description of Averall Harriman's efforts to neutralize Laos described:-

"This smooth foxy plutocrat... trying to argue the Conference (Geneva) into subordinating the sovereignty of Laos to a new kind of international trusteeship". (73)

Chinese alignments and interests, however, have come a long way since 1961. As self-nominated champion of the Third World, the fact that the present neutralization proposals come from Malaysia, a Third World country, will undoubtedly make them that much more savoury to the Chinese, a point brought out by Chang Wen-chin, the Assistant Foreign Minister in June, 1973:-

"Now the Southeast Asian states have raised this slogan. Our understanding is that no big power should interfere in their affairs so that their independence and sovereign rights can be respected. We are in favour of this approach. There is still a U.S. military presence in both Thailand and the Philippines, this is contrary to neutralization. It is not an easy job for the United States to withdraw at once because the Soviet Union tries to involve itself there so there must be a process (of withdrawal). Of course we try to involve ourselves but we are not very strong. We can only say empty words." (74)

And so we return to the interplay of the 'elephants' - the decisive factor in the issue - and here alignments are still in a state of flux. Admittedly

(71) Straits Times, 15 August, 1972
Sino-American interests in relation to Southeast Asia would appear to be co-incident at the moment, but in November 1974, the Chinese despatched a somewhat conciliatory message to Moscow on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, while a certain anxiety was shown over the Soviet-American summit meeting. (75) Despite certain given factors in China's relations with Southeast Asia, the role that it will play with regard to the latter will largely be dependent on the configurations that will emerge from the interactions of the Great Powers - and concerning these, as the Chinese themselves say, 'The Yellow River has many Bends'.

(75) The Economist, 16 November, 1974. Discussion concerning this message which while demanding a mutual pull back of forces dropped the long standing insistence that the Tsarist treaties were 'unequal', and therefore morally invalid. This message, may, however, be merely a facade of a peace offer, as a week previously, in a speech, Teng Hsiao-ping was still referring to the Russians as 'despicable and vicious'.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE THIRD ELEPHANT - THE SOVIET UNION

Although some 75% of the territory of the Soviet Union is in Asia, the country is mainly Europe-oriented as evidenced by the fact that some 71.1% of the Soviet population live in European U.S.S.R., most of the industrial production takes place there, and whilst strategically Russian history has seen expansion eastwards and southwards into Asia, tactically the Soviet Union has tended to look westwards - both with regard to politics and commerce. In one of his earliest pamphlets (1898) Lenin described Russia as 'semi-Asiatic', yet he also reflected Eurocentricity.

Despite this background, the climate of increasing tension between China and the Soviet Union has prompted the latter to engage in a more active diplomacy aimed at acquiring friends in the Asian region. In this task it was aided by the extremism of the People's Republic itself, with Peking losing ground by being closely identified with the 1965 Gestapu Coup attempt in Indonesia, and with the disruptions occasioned by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Chinese foreign policy has been presented to Asia by Soviet commentators as 'the Great Strategic Plan of Mao Tse-tung', which aims at no less than 'the establishment of a sort of superstate embracing not only eastern and central Asia but later even western Asia...'. In several stages Peking's sway would thus be extended over thousands of miles. Furthermore, according to the Soviet Union, the long-term plan 'is not restricted to the Maoization of Asia', but Africa and Latin America are part of its targets besides. (1)

While it may be true that China would not reject the offer of having influence in these Third World regions, it is rather rhetorical to describe its ambitions in terms of the establishment of a 'superstate'. However, a similar exaggeration is displayed by the Chinese when describing Soviet ambitions.

To what extent the Soviet Union believes its own rhetoric is difficult to say, it is nevertheless clear that it hopes for an involvement in Southeast Asia that can be presented to the latter as rational, pragmatic and constructive beside the ambiguities of Chinese activities. One such approach is that of the Soviet Union setting itself forward as a dependable aid giver - as opposed to the Chinese - making it clear, besides that such aid does not entail pressure on, and interference in the internal affairs of recipient countries as it is alleged Chinese aid has done in the past.

In examining Soviet policies towards individual Southeast Asian countries the element of competition with the Chinese is never far from the surface. Perhaps most obvious in this regard are Indonesia and Burma - excluding the Indo Chinese countries - the respective arenas in which Moscow and Peking have invested their most significant efforts, which the other in turn attempted to undermine.

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE REGION

I. Soviet compliments to Burma - described by Mr. Brezhnev as being the only country in Asia proper which was 'on the non-capitalist road of development' (2) - have been unusually profuse and continuous. While it has been suggested that these could be rooted in Soviet ignorance of Burmese conditions (3), it is more likely that Moscow wishes to underline its good relations with a state close to the southern flank of China. Indeed, this close proximity to China has already hindered Soviet initiatives in the country, as Burmese leaders are fearful of getting involved in anything that might antagonize their powerful neighbour. Hence, for example, total foreign aid has been remarkably low - some 1/2% of the Burmese Gross National Product - and only about one-sixteenth of that is of Soviet origin. (4)

The Soviet Union has made every effort to exploit the ambiguities in Sino-Burmese relations. In a rather typical broadcast, 'Radio Peace and


(4) Ibid.
"The most terrible crimes are committed against the Burmese State by pro-Peking units from among citizens of Chinese origin" (5)

It has been further alleged that Peking is guilty of conspiring with the White Flag Communists to overthrow the existing government. While, on the other hand, appeals are made to the Burmese Communist Party to bring to an end their Maoist control. Soviet writers refer to the disorganization of the Communist movement in Burma in recent years as an example for all those who are in danger of falling under Maoist influence - 'They show that the Maoists completely disregard the national interests of any country they wish to ensnare in their tentacles' (6)

Soviet denunciations of the American C.I.A. involvement in Burma have also played on the Burmese Government's fears of subversion. These linked the existence of the exiled ex-Premier U Nu and his entourage in Thailand with the Karen separatists in Burma, while it was claimed that C.I.A. machinations were behind both. (7) The American disregard of the neutrality of Cambodia was cited as an uncomfortably close example of American activity and potential in the region. Such reporting of both American and Chinese attempts to subvert the Burmese Government at a glance could result in an interpretation that perceived a linkage between the two - Soviet commentators did not exert themselves to dispel such an unwarranted interpretation.

Meanwhile Moscow's efforts to foster Soviet-Burmese ties proceeded apace. The rift between Burma and China in 1967 was used by the Soviet Union who offered to step into the 'void' by offering military and economic support. (8) In October 1971, Soviet President Podgorny paid a visit to

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(5) SWB. 21 January, 1974. Radio Peace and Progress in English. 08.00 GMT., 18/1/74. SU/4505/A3/2.


It might be noted here that the Thai Government have since requested U Nu to leave Thailand which he has duly done.

Burma, and in February of the following year, the Soviet Cultural Minister, Furtseva. Besides this, verbal support is evident, Moscow commentators have noted that the 'Constitution of Burma is very similar to that of the Soviet Union' and are constantly praising General Ne Win's Revolutionary Council. (9)

Although such statements are flattering it is rather unlikely that they will persuade General Ne Win, for the present at any rate, to abandon his neutralist policy. Burma has in recent months undoubtedly been showing signs of a thaw in its isolationism, but the economic assistance that it has been accepting has come from either Japan or an international agency - the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. In terms of diplomatic contact it has been most open to its regional members. If it is determined to shed its isolationism completely in the future, it is clear that Burma has yet to develop a strategy of balancing the Great Powers.

2.

With Indonesia, on the other hand, Soviet involvement has been open and concrete - no restriction to verbal encouragement here. In the Sukarno era there was considerable Soviet aid channelled into Indonesia, but this was curtailed when Djakarta showed signs of a Peking-orientation. There was little Soviet sorrow at the overthrow of President Sukarno; indeed their initial reaction to the upheaval was marked by its mildness. However, a change in mood was occasioned by the ferocity of the crackdown on Indonesian communists; the return of Western assets to their owners; the efforts of the Indonesian Government to attract Western capital; and finally, the distinct lack of enthusiasm by the Indonesian Government to pay off its large debts to the Soviet Union. By October, 1966, the Soviet Government was demanding that Indonesia should repay its debts (10) (which according to Adam Malid stood at US $931 million), and although rescheduling was agreed to, it was not ratified until May 1968. As for the allocation of guilt in this deterioration of relations, the ultimate blame was always placed on Chinese 'adventurism'. On the other hand, Moscow repeatedly reminded Indonesia of the treachery that had been practised against

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(9) Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 February, 1974
(10) The Age, 23 November, 1966
it - and was to be expected from - the West, especially in terms of Dutch colonialism and efforts by the United States to finance revolts and support reactionaries against the Indonesian Government.

One of the chief areas of Soviet concern was the increasing economic relations between Indonesia and the West. Not that economically the Soviet Union did much to forestall such a move, it chose not to participate in the 'Tokyo Club' of eight of Indonesia's creditors, and was more hesitant about agreeing to reschedule debts.

Despite the fact that Soviet publications continued until 1968 to print Indonesian statements of attachment to a non-alignment policy without comment, they were obviously increasingly worried by:

(a) Indonesia's participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which the Soviet Union claimed was in danger of turning into an anti-communist, military-political alliance under American control.

(b) Indonesia's attitude towards the Vietnam conflict. Speculation in the Indonesian press, especially in the Armed Forces' newspaper - 'Angkatan Bersendjata' - of the need for a review of Indonesia's policy concerning the war, rather worried the Russians. (11)

1968 would appear to have been the breaking point. Radio Moscow as it closed that year admitted that 'Regrettably 1968 has not been the best year for relations between the Soviet Union and Indonesia'. It has been suggested that the increased antagonism was due to the Soviet need to prove themselves 'good communists' in the eyes of the Communist world, in order to be in a position to defend their actions over Czechoslovakia to a potentially hostile Communist movement. (12) If this was so then Indonesia was an easy target - in 1968 there were Indonesian demonstrations over the Czech-crisis and the continuation of anti-PKI campaigns. As a result a Soviet mission scheduled for a visit to Indonesia in August 1968 to discuss 'unsettled matters' was cancelled; while protests over the treatment of PKI suspects referred ever more bitterly to Indonesia's 'reactionary circles'. (13)


Concerning support for the PKI a pro-Soviet group had been formed in Moscow after the 1965 coup from an amalgam of pro-Sukarno diplomats, students and Army officers who were training in the Soviet Union at that time. Furthermore, Soviet reports attempted to rehabilitate the PKI by pointing out that only a narrow section of the PKI membership had taken part in the Gestapu and that 'the broad masses of communists and members of other democratic progressive organizations had nothing to do with it.'

(14) However, Soviet support for the movement would appear to have gone little beyond the publicizing of a congratulatory message from 'underground Indonesian communists' to the CPSU on the Fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution - this general verbal encouragement and sympathy, with numerous warnings against Maoism thrown in for good measure. Despite lack of overt support, Soviet efforts regarding the regenerated PKI have been significant enough to have earned strong Chinese attacks.

The Indonesian reaction was for President Suharto to state pointedly in April 1969 that Indonesia would not interfere in the internal affairs of any foreign country that may subscribe to the communist ideology, and at the same time no country had the right to interfere in Indonesia's domestic affairs. Equally the feeling prevailed in Indonesia that:--

"With all the difficulties and problems which face it, Indonesia is sufficiently aware of the importance of her position in this part of the world... Big nations, such as the United States and the Soviet Union very greatly need Indonesia's support in maintaining peace and stability in Southeast Asia." (16)

Nevertheless, in May 1970, Suharto was still stressing that a 'good relationship' between Djakarta and Moscow did not exist as the Soviet Union lacked 'understanding about developments in Indonesia." (17)


(16) Harian Operasi Indonesian, 7 October, 1969

By mid-1969 the Soviet media began to tone down their comments which were directed at Indonesia, and in August, the newly arrived Russian ambassador assured the Indonesian Government that the U.S.S.R. stood for non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. An offer of a small scale resumption of economic aid was made, and in August 1970, the Foreign Minister reported that the Russians had agreed 'in principle' to extend new economic assistance to Indonesia. That same month saw a further rescheduling of the Indonesian debt to the Soviet Union. (18) However, Adam Malik stressed that such agreements were 'not linked to any political questions'. (19)

Nonetheless, increasingly amiable relations appeared to progress with the seventies. By 1972 - in his Independence Day Address - Suharto called specifically for good relations with the U.S.S.R., and added that hostility to communism within Indonesia did not mean that the Government opposed establishing friendly relations with countries of communist ideology. (20) Despite such calls for better relations and more trade with the U.S.S.R., and they were to continue - a certain tenseness still characterized the relationship. Nor was this helped by Indonesia's sensitivity to communism and criticism, and Moscow's lingering sympathy for Indonesian communism - no matter how passive such sympathy may have been. The eagerness with which Soviet assurances of non-intervention in Indonesian affairs was received was an indication of the latter's fears. Adam Malik reported that he had been assured that the Soviet Government 'had never indulged and never would indulge in subversive activities against Indonesia'. (21) Moscow claimed that Peking, on the other hand, could not be so trusted.

Although it is clear that a thaw has now set in in Soviet-Indonesian relations there is little likelihood of the 'eternal peoples' friendship' that marked the early sixties. The willingness of the Socialist bloc to aid Indonesian development has been welcomed (22) but there is little

(18) *Djakarta Times*, 29 August, 1970
conviction that the latter will be able to provide the massive economic assistance sought. For this approaches have been made - and reciprocated - to the West and Japan. However, while President Suharto is unwilling to move too quickly in establishing concrete ties with the U.S.S.R., at the same time he is keen to maintain friendly relations with the Socialist countries, in the interests of Indonesia's non-aligned position. This is a situation that the Russians understand, while nevertheless making it clear that they are always prepared for a closer relationship.

3. At the other extreme of Soviet activity in Southeast Asia is the Philippines which has not been blessed with intense Soviet interest or attention - although this is changing. Changes may also be perceived on the Filipino side despite the fact that the bipolar view of international relations was for a long time deeply engrained in Filipino foreign policy. Indeed so strong has the pro-American, anti-Communist orientation been that for many years no diplomatic relations existed between the Philippines and any communist countries. In recent years, however, not only has Filipino foreign policy reflected international changes but initiative has been shown by some sections of Philippine society to bring pressure on the Government to seek a new, more independent modus vivendi with the United States.

One aspect of such change has been an increased openness to countries of the Socialist bloc. Early in 1972 President Marcos announced that agreements had been reached with several socialist countries and by March, diplomatic relations had been established with Rumania and Yugoslavia. The normalization of relations with the Soviet Union was commenced through a visit by Imelda Marcos - the President's wife - as a private citizen to Moscow.

One of the reasons for the lack of extensive Soviet interest in the Philippines was the feeling that the country was too closely allied with the United States, and consequently, that the effort required appeared out of proportion to the reward - should there eventually be one at all. Not even the attempts at revolution in the Philippines received much Soviet attention. According to the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission, in 1969-
"The various factions in the field and the dissident Communist groups in the cities have operated on an essentially independent, national basis. Ties with other Communist countries, including particularly the Soviet Union and China, have not been significant." (23)

Despite such independence the communist movement in the Philippines is well divided into Maoist and Soviet camps. It is the former that would now appear to be bearing the brunt of maintaining revolution in the Philippines:

"The most significant development so far in the Philippine revolution is the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the supreme guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought." (24)

This re-established Communist Party has denounced the Soviet Union as being guilty of 'social-imperialism' and 'reaction', while seeking a close relationship with the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Albania. (25)

Nevertheless, the pro-Moscow section of the PKP (Philippine Communist Party) remains in existence, sending a message to the 24th CPSU Congress criticizing the PKP (re-established) as being 'guided by the counter-revolutionary concept serving the Maoist leaders' aspiration to dominate in Southeast Asia'. (26)

Meanwhile, efforts by the Soviet Government to establish better relations with the Philippines have increased since the victory of President Marcos and the Nationalist Party in the 1969 elections - this chiefly due to the former's undertaking to consider establishing diplomatic relations with communist countries. Furthermore, the withdrawal of some of the Filipino forces - a military engineering unit - from South Vietnam was welcomed. (27)

Soviet approval was also shown of the sentiments expressed in President Marcos's State-of-the-Nation Message to the last pre-election session of Congress, on 27 January, 1969, in which it was suggested that new realities had to be faced, and the old attitudes of unthinkingly following 'foreigners' beliefs in foreign policy must be cast away in favour of a foreign policy dictated by national interest. Hoping to confirm such views the Soviet Union broadcast condemnations of C.I.A. agents who were allegedly

operating during the 1969 elections in an effort to prevent a Marcos victory. (28)

The main Soviet approach to the Philippines has been through trade, although calculated on a purely ecommercial basis the prospects for Soviet-Philippine trade do not appear particularly large. In many of its main exports the Philippines would be in competition with established Soviet trading partners - such as Cuba. However, it is clear that commercial considerations were not the only ones taken into account, and despite Filipino caution, by March 1972 it was announced that machinery for trade relations with the Soviet Union would be established. (29) Prior to this the Soviet Union had made repeated offers in the hope of opening such trade relations. Between May 1972 and October 1973, it was reported that transactions between the Philippines and socialist and communist nations resulted in a favourable trade balance for the former of some $15,000,000. Nevertheless, it is perhaps significant that the first direct trade contact with a communist country was established with China. (30) The Soviet Union has followed up the opening of their trading relations with suggestions of financial and technical cooperation with the Philippine Government on specific projects - such as oil exploration. (31)

With regard to diplomatic relations the Soviet Government cannot but have been encouraged by the establishment of such relations between the Philippines and Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, in the autumn of 1973; links that appeared to be a lead up to the fulfillment of President Marcos's aspiration for a world-wide rapprochement with 'socialist countries'. (32) As far as the Philippines is concerned friendly relations with the Soviet Union would help display a more independent position, open the possibility of new channels of economic aid and - as would appear to have already happened - lessen the danger from pro-Moscow revolutionaries.

(30) Bulletin Today, 10 December, 1973
(31) Bulletin Today, 11 September, 1973
According to a Government announcement twenty seven leading politburo members of the PKP surrendered, ending the Party's forty-four year underground existence; documents of amnesty were being prepared for the latter, along with those imprisoned, while officials of the Armed forces were cited by the Far Eastern Broadcasting Corporation as saying that the Communist Party may possibly be recognized by the Government. (33) The Peking-oriented faction of the Party is still battling on with little sign of being prepared to meet the Government.

The Soviet interest in the Philippines is derived from its general desire to have greater influence in Southeast Asian countries than China, and the prestige of weaning away from the American bloc one of the latter's most dependable disciples. At present the state of Soviet-Philippine relations is favourable - although, from the Soviet view, not to so great an extent that it excludes equally favourable progress in Manila-Peking relations.

4. Although Thailand established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union as long ago as 1947 contact between the two countries has remained at a rather low level. Nor has there been any considerable linkage between the Soviet Union and the subversive movements that operate in Thailand. Such movements are chiefly Peking inspired and there are no indications that they have any connections with the U.S.S.R. Indeed the opposite, for on 21 March 1970, 'Radio Peace and Progress' described the leaders of the Communist Parties of Burma, Thailand and Malaysia as having isolated themselves from the working class by the adoption of 'adventurist' Chinese ways. There is much to suggest that the Soviet Union sees no hope of achieving substantial influence with the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), and so is concentrating on improving its relations with the Thai Government. (34) As in other cases trade is instrumental in this diplomatic bid. However, despite trade agreements between Thailand and Bulgaria and Rumania being signed in March 1969, and one with the Soviet Union in December 1970, Thai trade with the Soviet bloc has remained limited (representing less than 1% of total Thai exports), and with only a limited potential for expansion.

Nor are commercial agreements attained with the ease that is natural - a normal air agreement (signed on 6 May 1971) took some four years to negotiate. (35)

Governmental relations between the two countries are over-shadowed by the Thai-American alliance, and although the latter has been subjected to some pressure with, and since, the Nixon Doctrine, Thailand is still a member of SEATO and continues to be used as a base for American troops and planes. Soviet condemnations are levelled at both the United States and the Thai Government - 'The Thai ruling set are the only ones to benefit from the American presence'. (36) But by far the greatest amount of blame is heaped on the American Government for imposing an unequal alliance on the Thais:

"There is also every sign that the alliance with the United States considerably restricts Thailand's independent actions on the world scene. It has long become a rule that Bangkok cannot make a step without looking back to Washington for permission". (37)

Soviet commentators also blame the alliance for forcing Thai involvement in the Indo Chinese conflict. (38)

This attitude suits the Thai Government who are now indicating that they are not particularly satisfied with the American alliance - particularly when U.S. support was not guaranteed indefinitely. As early as March 1969, Thanat Khoman pointed out that the moves towards a reduction of the U.S. commitment in Asia coincided with an increased Soviet interest in the region. (39) In November of the same year he told an American audience that:

"If you avoid a tiger (China) and come to face a crocodile (Soviet Union), it is not much of a change... If we do not have any other alternative, may be we will have to live with the crocodile... This is exactly the international pattern that may emerge if and when the United States has to yield to the pressure of completely withdrawing from this part of the world... because we cannot claim that our regional grouping is powerful enough... We hope... that you will discreetly support the efforts of the

(35) Ibid.
(36) SWB. 30 July, 1969. Moscow in English for South Asia, 16.00 GMT., 28/7/69.
(37) Ibid.
(39) Bangkok Post, 20 March, 1969
nations of the area who are trying to form a cohesive grouping". (40)

Although the latter statement was undoubtedly part blackmail or threat to the United States should it continue its withdrawal suggestions, there is yet the element of feasibility there - given the Sino-Soviet rift why should the U.S.S.R. not be viewed as a prospective protector from the Chinese? This then may have been the reason behind the Thai desire to maintain relations with the Soviet Union irrespective of how modest such relations might be. So far little effort has been forthcoming from the Soviet side on the possible assessment that Thailand is more likely to regularize its relations with China in the event of an American withdrawal rather than to expose itself to Chinese antagonism by participating in a Soviet-oriented foreign policy. (41) The ideal for Thailand would be to balance its potential partners, but for this it would be preferable to have regional backing; as for individual countries indulging in such an effort there is always the discouraging example of Sihanouk's Cambodia which is far too close to Thailand for the latter to forget.

5. The intense Indonesian opposition to the formation of Malaysia placed the Soviet Union in a quandary as to what attitude to adopt. That Malaysia appreciated the Soviet position was shown in November 1965, when the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in answer to a parliamentary question said that:

"Malaysia will consider having relations with any country having any form of ideology provided those countries desire friendly relations with Malaysia."

The only country that was specifically excluded from this provision was China, according to the Tunku Malaysia would support any retaliatory moves against Peking's influence in Southeast Asia because of China's expansionist policy. (42) The ending of Confrontation in 1966 was greeted with relief by the Soviet Union as it left the latter free to cultivate its relations with all the Asian parties to the dispute.


(42) Bangkok Post, 11 November, 1965
Due to the fact that the Malayan Communist Party has remained solidly Peking-oriented the Soviet Union was virtually forced into a position where they had to seek to establish good relations with the incumbent government. A situation which in recent years has suited Soviet policies and approaches in Southeast Asia. By the end of 1967 a Soviet trade mission had been established in Kuala Lumpur, and the setting up of diplomatic missions at ambassadorial level had been announced. (43) The formal establishment of diplomatic relations followed in 1968. Soviet broadcasts celebrated these links as the breaking of a monopoly that the Western capitalist powers had sought to impose over Malaysia. (44) Peking, in turn, condemned these Soviet-Malaysian links as:

"...The Soviet revisionists... (working) hand in glove with the U.S. imperialists to organize anti-China, anti-Communist and anti-people Southeast Asia regional cooperation, thus pushing ahead... their collaboration with Malaysia. (45)

Certainly in one respect this statement rung true, the Soviet cultivation of Malaysia was anti-Peking.

The Soviet Union, however, claimed the right to trade with such 'capitalist' countries as Malaysia; it was pointed out that many types of states 'inhabited the same Earth, and as they could not get rid of each other they had to live with each other'. Furthermore, it was claimed that 'not to have any dealings with them would be to play the imperialists' game'; that Chinese firms were doing a thriving trade in Malaysia, and that the Maoists in their chauvinism considered themselves 'entitled to start a fire while forbidding others even to switch on the light'. (46) Soviet trade with Malaysia continued to expand - rubber maintaining its position as the main commodity. Indeed, the U.S.S.R. became the biggest buyer of Malaysian rubber - by 1969 purchasing up to 200,000 tons p.a. In September 1969, the first Soviet-Malaysian trade and industrial exhibition was organized in Kuala Lumpur, and the same

(43) Straits Times, 4 April, 1967
Straits Times, 24 November, 1967
(44) SWB. 16 February, 1968. Moscow in English for South Asia, 10.00 GMT., 14/2/68. SU/2697/A3/3.
(45) Straits Times, 29 May, 1968
year saw a visit to Malaysia by the Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade, Patolichev. There has been a greater emphasis on increased Soviet exports to Malaysia due to the fact that the latter were in negligible proportions during the sixties and hence the rubber imports had to be paid for in convertible currency, thereby imposing strains on Soviet resources. (47)

By October 1971, Malaysia's establishment of diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia left Albania and East Germany as the only European communist countries with which it did not have relations; however, East Germany was making approaches to the Malaysian Government regarding trade relations. Two years later diplomatic relations were established with North Vietnam, and similar negotiations were in progress with the Government of North Korea. (48) Relations with the Soviet Union continued to be cordial with the latter exploiting the internal instability in Malaysia in Spring 1969, to blame both Peking and the West for interference. The West because:

"The Western Powers repeatedly tried to force the Malaysian Government to follow a policy in accordance with their wishes. For instance, by reducing the world price of rubber they tried to put economic pressure on the country".

With regard to Peking:

"In recent years, Peking has repeatedly employed Chinese inhabitants of various South-east Asian countries to create internal disorder and carry out activities against governments it dislikes. This happened in Burma and Indonesia, and it is happening at this moment in Malaysia." (49)

Not a broadcast that could be guaranteed to improve race relations in a situation where the latter were already under severe strain.

Another important aspect of relations between Moscow and Kuala Lumpur was that which revolved around the proposal to neutralize Southeast Asia - but that will be discussed below.

(48) Straits Times, 31 March, 1973
     Bulletin Today, 20 April, 1973
(49) SWB. 20 May, 1969. Moscow in Indonesian, 15.00 GMT., 16/5/69. SU/3078/A3/1.
6. Concerning Soviet relations with Singapore there is really little to report. Singapore was proclaimed an independent state on 9 August, 1965, having failed to settle itself comfortably within the Federation of Malaysia and Singapore. As early as November 1965, the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore led a delegation to the Soviet Union and an agreement was reached, in principle, to establish a Soviet trade mission and a Tass office in Singapore. April 1966 saw a reciprocal visit by a Soviet trade delegation which resulted in a trade agreement and the establishment of a permanent trade mission. Diplomatic relations at embassy level were set up in 1968 - a move that the Soviet Union interpreted as frustrating the 'attempts by the imperialist Powers to establish full control over the former British colonies in Southeast Asia'. (50) Despite the establishment of such relations, the Singaporean Foreign Minister, Mr. Rajaratnam, criticized in no uncertain manner the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. (51)

With regard to trade Singapore's main significance to the Soviet Union is its facilities for ship repairs and the importance of Singapore's entrepot trade - much of the Soviet purchased Malaysian and Indonesian rubber being shipped through there. (52) In April 1971, a three-man delegation from the Soviet Ministry of Merchant Marine, visiting Singapore, said that the latter would be the main port of call for the Soviet merchant fleet as it increases its trade with Asian countries. The delegation also proposed the setting up of a joint shipping line by Singapore, Malaysia and the Soviet Union. (53) However, the translation of suggestions into firm proposals has been slow.

Moscow continues to be conscious of the fact that a large percentage of the Singaporean population is of Chinese origin, and while emphasizing the 'national unity is one of the essentials of national development', it never misses a chance to warn against the threat of the 'Great

(50) SWB, 11 June, 1968. English for South Asia, 15.00 GMT., 9/6/68. SU/2792/A3/2.

(51) Straits Times, 24 August, 1968


Power chauvinist ideas which Peking is either directly or indirectly imposing on the overseas Chinese in South-east Asia. (54) Not a warning that the Prime Minister of Singapore is in need of.

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE THIRD ELEPHANT

So much for the Soviet Union's relations with individual Southeast Asian countries. However, in a speech delivered to the Moscow World Conference of Communist Parties, 7 June 1969, Leonid Brezhnev made a brief reference to a new proposal that was to apply to the whole of Asia:

"We are also of the opinion that the course of events is also bringing to the fore the need to create a collective security system in Asia". (55)

This comment has been described as 'an exercise in kite-flying', and the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, Troyanovskiy, admitted that the U.S.S.R. had not worked out any specific plans for the scheme and were not even decided on which countries should be invited to join. (56)

Why was this system proposed and subsequently endorsed in Gromyko's report on foreign policy to the Sixth Session of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, on 10 July 1969? Certainly there was an anti-China aspect to it, with the Soviet media a mere week before the Brezhnev speech going so far as to call for 'common resolution' in Asia on the grounds that 'some figures in Asia, obsessed by Great Power chauvinism, have renounced the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and are even resorting to force in futile attempts to achieve world leadership'. (57) Besides this anti-Chinese aspect there was the background of the Soviet Union's expanding interests in Asia, its desire for greater cooperation with its southern neighbours - India, Pakistan.


Afghanistan and Iran (58) - and as an attempt to limit American involvement on the continent. All this, it was felt, could be achieved by curtailing intra-regional conflicts and establishing some form of multilateral alliance to which the United States - and hopefully China - would not be parties. However accusations that the whole concept was an attempt to establish an anti-Chinese alliance are vehemently denied by Soviet commentators, while ambiguities in both the doctrine itself and its presentation allow for a multiplicity of escape hatches. (59)

The early days of the proposal were overshadowed by a combination of uncertainties, a cool reception by many of the Asian countries at which it was directed and virulent attacks on the whole scheme by the Chinese media. (60) In the face of this there was an increasing emphasis that the final shape of the system should be decided by the Asians themselves, with the Soviet Union's role being set as one 'prepared to take part in the consultations'. (61) While references continued to be made by Soviet leaders and some of their Asian visitors, and/or hosts, to the idea of collective security, there appeared to be little effort made to really sell the plan with the large-scale campaign that would be needed. This, however, was probably due to the Soviet fear of provoking outright rejection. Nevertheless, further moves were made by Mr. Brezhnev towards defining the proposal - in his address to the Fifteenth Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions:

"Collective security in Asia, as we see it, should be based on such principles as the renunciation of the use of force in relations among states, respect of sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in internal affairs, extensive development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of full equality and mutual advantage. " (62)


(59) Examples of the ambiguous attitude taken - a Moscow Radio broadcast of 8 July, 1969, clearly included China in the system; while an article in 'Izvestia', by Matveev left the question open - 3 August, 1969. Other broadcasts suggested that it was China's own fault that it was excluded. Jukes - Op. Cit. - pp. 24/25.


There have, over the past four years, been periodic intensifications in attempts to have the idea of a collective security system accepted. Yet despite the publicity Moscow has maintained a reluctance in specifying the type of security system it envisages. While leaving itself maximum flexibility, this reluctance has manoeuvred the Soviet Union into a position in which many of its prospective allies are uncertain of the motives behind the Soviet proposal, and hence tend to interpret them in a worse rather than a better light. An example of this is the view expressed by the Malaysian Government Minister, Ghazali bin Shafie, when speaking of the four big powers active in Southeast Asia, he told a conference at the end of 1973, "Perhaps the Soviet Union is the one that appears to be moving... with a design and a purpose". However, Shafie continued:

"It would seem that any Soviet initiative that is designated or even only such as to appear to further the Soviet cause in the Sino-Soviet dispute is not likely to gain the support of countries in the region. This factor is unfortunate because the Soviet Union has much to contribute to the development of the region." (63)

Fear of getting themselves involved in an anti-Chinese scheme has frightened off many Southeast Asian countries from consideration of the Soviet proposal. However, other Asian states have adopted a wait and see attitude. Typical of the latter is the Thai Government which has expressed a cautious interest in the Asian security plan – according to the 'Bangkok Post' (a newspaper which usually reflects the views of the Thai Foreign Ministry) –

"If the Soviet Union is merely trying to broaden the base of its cooperation with countries in the region on all matters, not excluding defense, and is not planning to set up an anti-Peking front for its own reasons, the Soviet moves deserve careful consideration." (64)

It is true, however, that if all the Southeast Asian countries were assured that such were the motives behind the Soviet proposal then there would be few that would refrain from granting it careful consideration.


Besides the fear of antagonizing China another reason for the rejection, or lack of interest, (65) in the Soviet collective security proposal is the Southeast Asian preference for their own neutralization plans. It fell to the Malaysian Prime Minister to visit Moscow in October 1972, to explain this preference. In answer to questions at a press conference, Tun Razak pointed out that while the objectives of collective security and neutralization were essentially the same, 'Our neutralization proposals relate to a smaller area. To bring in the big countries in Asia into such a scheme will be to bring in problems which we, the small countries (in Southeast Asia), may find difficult to resolve'. (66) Although little definite came out of this meeting the Soviet response was by no means unfavourable. Furthermore, immediately prior to the Soviet-Malaysian talks, the Polish Government made an unequivocal statement of support for the neutralization proposal. A joint communique issued stated that:-

"The Prime Minister of Malaysia explained his government's proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia and Premier Jaroszewicz expressed his support for the efforts of the Malaysian Government aimed at the consolidation of peace and neutrality." (67)

To what extent this Polish support for the concept of neutralization was an indirect Soviet approval is difficult to ascertain. Bordering also on this category is the support given by North Korea, in January 1974, for the ASEAN proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia', (68) although in the latter case it may well be more directly connected with internal Korean developments.

Despite the enormous diplomatic strides that the Soviet Union has made in Southeast Asia, other countries in the region have displayed no greater willingness than Malaysia to barter their neutralization scheme for the Soviet collective security proposals. Nor has Moscow's new approach - of attempting to use India to obtain the support of Indonesia, which it regards as the key to the success of the proposal - achieved any more successful results. (69) Indonesia

(65) President Podgorny's advocacy of this scheme met with little response from Ne Win when they met in Rangoon in 1971. Malaysian and Indonesian reactions have also been less than warm.
(67) Straits Times, 6 October, 1972
(68) Straits Times, 30 September, 1972
(69) Far Eastern Economic Review, 7 May, 1973
is not likely to welcome the establishment of any supra-national organizations, 
presided over by an extra-regional great power, in its part of the world.
Indeed as early as October 1969, it was made clear that:-

"Since Indonesia rejects all military pacts, she also is not fascinated by 
the concept of Asian collective security, an idea "dropped" by the Kremlin, 
a concept which opposes the new thinking developing in the United States..."
(70).

The Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, later condemned the Soviet proposal because 
it was 'not yet clear'; whilst Malik also pointed out that the difference between 
the Soviet idea and the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration for a zone of neutrality, 
was that the former had been proposed by the Russians alone, while the other 
plan was supported by many countries. (71) Not even a visit by the Soviet Deputy 
Foreign Minister, Mr. Firyubin to Indonesia, in March 1974, managed to win 
Indonesian support for the Soviet scheme.

Due to a general failure to inspire regional enthusiasm for its plan the 
Soviet Union has been accused of exploiting every opportunity to claim a 
degree of endorsement, often unjustifiably. In support of this accusation 
reports from Soviet commentators, such as Viktor Mayevsky of Pravda, are 
cited when they write that the Soviet proposal has the support of 'leading 
statemen' in India and other Asian states, including Malaysia. In fact the 
main welcome that has been given to the proposal - and that a qualified one - 
came from two of the Soviet Union's immediate neighbours, Iran and 
Afghanistan. (72)

(70) Harian Operasi Indonesian, 7 October, 1969
(71) Straits Times, 25 August, 1973
Straits Times, 8 March, 1974; 11 March 1974.
(72) Iran on the basis of a communique which was issued at the end of a visit 
to Moscow by the Iranian Prime Minister in August 1973. The visit to the 
Soviet Union by President Daoud of Afghanistan, in June 1974, produced 
a similar agreement - according to 'Pravda' on 9 June, that 'the creation 
of a collective security system by the collective efforts of all the states 
in Asia would meet the interests of Asian peoples'. However, this too was 
qualified. Cited in U.S.S.R. and Third World, March/April, 1974. - 
The confrontation between the Soviet collective security idea and the Southeast Asian concept of neutralization has led to an interesting development. Only some two years ago the General Secretary of an Asian Communist Party (Sri Lanka) could only see two alternatives for the Asian continent:

"The idea of 'collective security' countering the strategy of internecine war is the only realistic alternative to the Guam Doctrine (i.e. Nixon Doctrine)" (73)

Towards the close of the same year Alexei Kosygin, Head of the Soviet Government, during Tun Razak's visit to the Soviet Union, said that:

"We understand Malaysia's interest in normalising the situation in Southeast Asia, of which you Mr. Prime Minister spoke during our talks. Your interest finds a reflection, among other things, in the known plan for neutralization of Southeast Asia. We treat with respect many considerations in this plan." (74)

Although the joint communique issued at the end of this visit did not indicate any definite agreement over the neutralization proposals, there would appear to be a growing number of attempts to equate the concept of collective security with that of neutralization. It has been pointed out that both proposals:

".....Advocate principles of non-use of force in settling controversial issues, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in internal affairs." (75)

Such an account of the ASEAN neutralization proposals being a far cry from earlier descriptions of that organization and its purposes:

"...The U.S. imperialists are seeking more flexible ways of persuading the independent Asian nations to the U.S. line. Washington is now using those nations and to persuade them to set up alliances like ASEAN and ASPAC... There is no doubt that such new military groupings would have close ties with.... the U.S. imperialists' policy of aggression in Southeast Asia." (76)

What was to account for the change in Soviet attitude? Certainly the relative acceptability of the neutralization proposals compared with the coolness with which the collective security system was received has played its part. However, another underlying factor may well have been the fear of a total U.S. withdrawal from the region before the Soviet Union was in a position

(74) Pavlovsky - Op. Cit. - p. 66
(75) Ibid.
to prevent any potential Chinese expansion into the area. While finally, it is possible that the Soviet Union has decided to adopt a more versatile attitude to Asia, continuing to press its collective security system on the immediate Asian neighbours of the U.S.S.R. (excluding China - although not obviously so) and the countries of South Asia, while leaving itself free to support the neutralization of Southeast Asia, if the latter appears feasible in the future. While undoubtedly preferring its own scheme - which was described by the Chinese as being picked up from the 'garbage-heap of the notorious war-monger John Foster Dulles' (77) - the Soviet Union has been left in a position in which it cannot denounce neutralization openly for fear that Peking would capitalize on such an attitude. The last decade has witnessed too much diplomatic effort and flexibility of approach being invested by the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia for the results to be undermined by rigidity at this stage in the game.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERESTED NEIGHBOURS:

Other external powers besides the three Great Powers have an interest in the Southeast Asian region. Of these it is fair to designate Australia, New Zealand and India as 'interested neighbours', existing essentially on the sidelines of Southeast Asia. Japan, on the other hand, is more intimately involved in the region and while it cannot be placed on the same level as the Elephants, it does warrant special consideration. Its decisions have a global significance that cannot be overlooked, while their impact on the Southeast Asian region are undeniably important.

Although shifts in the international power structure have not left Japan untouched by change, the American-Japanese alliance forms the backbone of Japanese foreign policy. It is true that Japan may well have felt a sense of outrage at the lack of consultation involved in the 'Nixon shocks' - these consisted of President Nixon's announcement, without prior consultation with Tokyo, in July 1971, that he would visit Peking and Moscow; and the following month, the imposition of a 10% surcharge on foreign goods (the U.S. is Japan's biggest customer) and the devaluation of the dollar - but subsequent Japanese foreign policy has exhibited little change that would not have been demanded by the Nixon Doctrine in any case.

A combination of economic difficulties and the thaw in Cold War

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(2) Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 May, 1974. In fiscal year 1973 (ending March 1974) Japan suffered its biggest deficit in international balance of payments - $13,400 million - which sharply compares with surpluses of $8,043 million in 1971 and $2,962 million in 1972. Currency reserves that had hit a peak of $19,200 million in February 1973, had already declined three months later to $12,000 million. Besides this there were worries of oil shortages.
attitudes in the United States has encouraged Japan to re-assess its relations with the Soviet Union and China. The Sino-American rapprochement marked the turning point in the Japanese attitude towards the Chinese, while Japanese 'economic diplomacy' with the Soviet Union has been proceeding apace. Indeed, Japanese alignment has been the subject of considerable Sino-Soviet rivalry, with the former making wide propaganda use of the Japanese-Soviet disagreement over the four northern islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu. (3) The Soviet Union, for its part, has been seeking Japanese investment in a number of Siberian projects whose projected crude oil yield to Japan has been estimated at some 25-40 million tons per year, for some 20 years. (4) Recent oil shortages have made such offers attractive to the Japanese.

Needless to say the Chinese reaction to Soviet-Japanese negotiations has been clamorous dissent, while diversionary tactics have sought to enhance Sino-Japanese relations. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in September 1972, and in January 1974, a bilateral trade agreement formalized the already significant flow of trade, while laying the foundations for the expansion and improvement of the latter. Besides these developments, Peking's Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei, not only suggested that Japan needed to maintain its security treaty with the United States to counter Soviet threats, but also warned against a precipitated scrapping of the treaty before Japan had built up a credible defence capability. (5) This is a far cry from the days when the Chinese broadcasts were attacking United States-Japanese-Soviet 'collusion' in Asia; it is now the Soviet media that is stressing the dangers of a 'Chinese-Japanese link up in the political and economic fields'. (6)

The 'economic diplomacy' that Japan has been using to a large extent in its dealings with the Soviet Union and China, has also been used in dealings

(3) Peking Review, 13 July, 1973
Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 March, 1973
with Southeast Asia. Although in relation to its careful manoeuvrings to
establish satisfactory links with the Great Powers, Japan's treatment of Southeast
Asia would appear to place the latter in a position as an appendage to Japanese
trade policy. Despite the fact that Japan is heavily enmeshed in interdependent
economic relations with the Southeast Asian region its economic strength and
history of imperialism are sufficient to place it on a separate level - resulting
in the continuation of Southeast Asian suspicion, and even hostility, to the
Japanese. In its most extreme form this assumes that Japan is seeking to construct
by economic means the 'Dai Toa Kyoei Ken' (Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity
Sphere) under Japanese hegemony that it failed to achieve through military might.

A boycott of Japanese goods in Thailand in late 1972 appears to
have had a considerable impact on Japanese leaders and prompted some serious
thought about the Japanese image in Southeast Asia. At Government level moves
were made to improve the quality and terms of Japanese aid. The Japanese
Economic Research Institute issued a general report, the following year, which
recommended that international public relations should be seen as a matter of the
highest priority. This point was finally driven home by the riots and demonstrations
that marked Prime Minister Tanaka's tour of the ASEAN countries in January 1974 -
with the most violence occurring in Indonesia and Thailand. Although this led
to a Foreign Ministry spokesman stating that the Prime Minister would take advantage
of his experience in Southeast Asia to remove sources of local complaint, there is
little that can be done to conceal the economic inequalities. It has been suggested
that at the present rate of growth, Japan will have an annual surplus of some
US $7 billion in its trade with Southeast Asia by the end of the decade. (7)

Since World War II, Japan's most important goal in Southeast
Asia has been the promotion of its own economic development and prosperity
through obtaining important raw materials and markets for its manufactures. This
is set about doing by settling war reparations with various Southeast Asian countries
and by joining the Colombo Plan in December 1954. March 1955 saw the United
Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) holding its regular
meeting in Tokyo, confirming Japan's re-emergence on the Southeast Asian scene.
By the mid-sixties Japan was combating lingering anti-Japanese sentiment by pouring
large amounts of economic aid into Southeast Asian countries. However, the complaint

(7) 'Japan's Future Role in Southeast Asia', A. Singh Rye. New Directions in the
International Relations of Southeast Asia, (Economic Relations), Lee Soo Ann, ed.
most frequently levelled at Japanese aid has been that it is rooted in commercial
considerations - the most aid being concentrated in those regional countries that
Japan does the most trade with, and that furthermore, the loans are 'tied' to the
purchase of Japanese goods. It is true that the Japanese Government have
promised to remedy this situation (8). However, Japan has still far to go to
fulfill its promises for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

JAPAN AND THE REGION:

The Southeast Asian region plays a not inconsiderable role in
Japanese foreign trade. The region has still an uncharted wealth of raw materials,
while its proximity to Japanese industrial centres and the cheap, though largely
unskilled, labour force, enhances its economic significance to the Japanese.
Furthermore, Southeast Asia is important on the basis of the expanding markets
it provides and its strategic importance to the safety of Japanese commercial
routes.

1. It is the Philippines that does the most trading with Japan and receives
more Japanese aid than any other Southeast Asian state. Nevertheless, its
attitude towards Japan has been marked by bitter memories of the Second World
War and the fear of economic domination. This has been reflected in the
successful opposition to the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce
and Navigation (FCN) - negotiated with the Japanese in 1960 and ratified
by the latter at that time - for over a decade. With ratification of the treaty
the aim of the Japanese would appear to be to replace the United States as
the Philippines major trading partner, and also to acquire equity in manufacturing
and extractive industries. Although it will be some time yet before Japanese
investment can match that of the United States, few efforts are being spared
to achieve that desired position.

Japan's principal imports from the Philippines are raw materials, and
Japan provides the largest market for Filipino timber, copper, iron ore and
mercury. In 1972, the Philippines exports to Japan were valued at US

(8) For the Second United Nations Development Decade, Japan has pledged
1% of its GNP by 1975 and hopes to increase the ratio of Official
Development Assistance to GNP and maintain basic support for 'untied' aid.
$470 million. (9) By 1973, when Japan became the No. 1 consumer of Philippine products, the figure had risen to $675 million. Philippine purchases from Japan, on the other hand, are mostly capital equipment, industrial and producer goods. In 1973, the Philippines imported some $519 million worth of Japanese goods, compared to $457 million in 1972. (10)

Japanese investment has been permitted in the Philippines since 1967, and has indeed been encouraged by President Marcos who has particularly strong feelings about it. The bulk of Japanese investment has been channelled into copper, nickel, timber and steel; while a growing interest is being shown in the country's rapidly expanding tourist trade. However, a 1972 Study by the Philippine Board of Investment into direct investment by Japanese enterprises in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, concluded that 'securing, maintaining and developing markets has been the dominant motive for Japanese investment in the past'. It also warned that the establishment of low-cost bases from which to export back goods to Japan would be of growing importance during the 1970's. Although Japanese investment brings much needed capital into the country, the Philippine Government have found that some of its development projects have been rendered uneconomical by Japanese export competition. (11)

There would appear to be a need for the Japanese to coordinate their commercial and their aid policies.

2. Despite the status of Japanese-Philippine relations, it is not unlikely that Japan attaches greater importance to its links with Indonesia - due to the size, large population, strategic position and important raw materials of the latter. The policy of the Suharto Government of recovery through economic development encouraged the Japanese to take the initiative after Sukarno's fall in reorganizing a consortium of Indonesia's creditors to provide aid in an attempt to reduce inflation and economic chaos. Meanwhile not only was Japan building up good relations with Indonesia, but it was promoting its own commerce by underwriting Indonesian imports of Japanese goods (with government yen credits). (12)

(10) Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 May, 1974
Indonesia is important to Japan as the producer of low-sulphur content crude oil, which is invaluable as a non-pollutant fuel. Even though this oil is only a small part of Japan's total requirements, the latter takes 75% of Indonesia's output. Both the Japanese Government and private enterprise are involved in both the operation of existing oil wells and in prospecting for new ones in off-shore areas off Borneo and Sumatra. Indonesia has undertaken to supply some 58,000,000 kilolitres of oil to Japan over the next decade. Imports of bauxite, nickel and timber are also important.

Given the example of other Southeast Asian economies Indonesia has managed to preserve its consumer market from Japanese domination. In fact, Indonesia has generally got a favourable balance of trade with Japan - its principal imports being machinery, chemicals, textiles and industrial goods. According to figures from the Japanese Ministry of Finance, in 1972 Indonesian imports of Japanese goods were valued at some US $65 million, while Indonesian exports to Japan amounted to $1,198 million. (13)

Japanese investment in the country has now overtaken the United States and is Indonesia's major source of foreign investment. There is some conflict over the short-term profit investment favoured by the Japanese, as against the long-term development investment that Indonesia needs. With regard to the latter, the Indonesians have demanded that more refining and processing industries should be Indonesian-based, thereby providing local employment.

Japanese aid to Indonesia is sizeable, being provided bilaterally through individual agreements and multilaterally via the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI). Japan provides one-third of the aid pledged by the latter. In addition to this a bi-lateral agreement was signed in March 1973, to provide an initial loan of Yen 62,000 million for seventeen projects associated with oil infrastructure development. Other bilateral assistance took the form of the development of a hydro-electric power station and an associated aluminium smelter at Asahan, in Northern Sumatra. That such measures, however, have not succeeded in totally winning over the Indonesians was shown by the fact that violent demonstrations occurred in Indonesia during Mr. Tanaka's tour in 1974. It is true, however, that the Indonesian ruling elite have continued to encourage and seek Japanese investment.

3. Thailand has been outspoken in recent years about Japanese 'economic imperialism' - or at least those sections of Thai society that have won the headlines. Little positive would appear to have resulted, however, from the alleged 'soul-searching' that followed the riots of January, 1973. In March there was a report of a Japanese proposal to establish a new joint committee of Japanese and Thai officials to deal with problems arising from Japanese investment in the country - but that proposal has yet to be officially concluded by both sides. (14) Despite the fact that Japanese investment in Thailand was controlled somewhat since November 1972, when a number of changes designed to protect local enterprise and control foreign influence were made to Thai investment laws, Japan remains safely in the No. 1 position. According to the statistics of the Board of Investment, Japanese investments in Thailand, as of 31 January, 1974, totalled 37.4% of all foreign investments, with the United States ranking second with 16.2%. (15)

There is an extreme trade imbalance between the two countries, with Thailand importing about twice as much from Japan as it exports there. The figures in 1972 were in the order of imports valued at US $552.7 million, while exports amounted to $252.3 million. This deficit has been reduced somewhat in the two years following due to the improved performance of several categories of Thai goods, including the increased export of some manufactured goods. The development of this critical trade situation was partially due to the fact that previous Thai administrations made little, or no, effort to regulate the flow of Japanese consumer goods into the country.

Japan has provided certain economic assistance for Thailand - particularly for its second and third economic development plans. Technical training for Thais has also been provided in Japan, while a number of Japanese experts have worked in Thailand under Japanese technical assistance programmes. Potential popularity for such gestures, however, has been more than offset by the feeling of economic exploitation, and by rumours, such as the recent one that certain Japanese businessmen are financing some members of the National Legislative Assembly to obstruct the Government's attempt to abrogate Revolutionary Party Decree No. 53 - which would open trade with China. Such rumours will do little to ease the already tense atmosphere concerning Thai-Japanese economic relations, nor indeed, to make the 6,000 – 7,000 member Japanese community in

(14) Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 May, 1974
(15) Ibid.
4. Anti-Japanese feelings in Malaysia are kept well under control due to the vigilance of the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Razak. If there is disapproval of certain Japanese practices it is registered at an official level - as occurred in June 1973, when the "Straits Times" claimed that Malaysia might boycott the Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia in Tokyo, in October, because of Japan's 'indifference' towards the economic development of countries in the region. It added that the meeting would serve no purpose if Japan continued its 'aggressive economic policy'. While this threat was not carried out it was a sign of official displeasure over Japan's fast-expanding production of synthetic rubber, which it is feared in time will erode the economic base of rubber-producing countries in Southeast Asia - Malaysia itself being a major one. In April 1973, Tun Ismail made this point when he criticized the expansion of this Japanese industry and said that by exporting synthetic rubber Japan was depriving Malaysia of its livelihood.

Japan is Malaysia's leading trading partner - in 1973, Japan accounted for 23% of Malaysia's total imports and 19% of its total exports. The latter are primarily raw materials - tin, rubber, palm oil, bauxite, timber and iron ore; while Malaysia's imports are in the manufacturing field. Some Japanese consumer goods are assembled or manufactured in Malaysia, mainly with Chinese partners. While the large Malayawata Steel mill in Malaysia was sponsored by Japan, and is 39% Japanese owned.

Japanese investment in joint-venture industries is encouraged and Japan ranks fourth among investing countries. Tun Razak put the 1972 figure for Japanese investment at about M$ 50,000,000 in some fifty different industries, including electronics, copper mining and shipbuilding. The copper mining project in the Mamut Valley, Sabah, is expected to produce some 5,250,000 tons of copper ore a year for 15 years, when in full production. A Japanese consortium will hold 51% equity, and the entire output of the mine is to be exported to Japan.
Aid to Malaysia from Japan is not as extensive as it is to other Southeast Asian countries, and is subject to similar criticisms - 'tied aid', the fact that lines of credit are often directly related to the promotion of Japanese exports and the rigid procedures involved in applying for and receiving aid disbursements.

5. Singapore's relations with Japan - despite complaints about business practices and the neglect of local staff - tend to be on a good businesslike basis. A fact that is perhaps encouraged by a certain similarity in circumstance and outlook. Japanese involvement in the island republic is welcomed by official circles who claim that the Singaporean economy has little to fear from Japan. Japanese investment has played a significant role in Singapore's industrialization - chiefly through joint ventures - with shipbuilding attracting substantial amounts of Japanese money. However, there has now been a shift in emphasis to the attraction of Japanese technology. Such participation is particularly sought for two 'strategic' projects - a $1,000 million petrochemical complex and a fully integrated steel mill. Although the latter is still on the drawing-board, Sumitomo and Mitsubishi have already agreed in principle to be partners with Shell and the Singapore Government in the former project. (16)

The trade situation is less satisfactory although the trade deficit vis-a-vis Japan is not particularly worrying to Singaporean officials, who account for it largely by the import of capital equipment for Singapore's factories. Singapore in 1972 was the tenth largest market for Japanese manufactured goods. In June 1973, a sizeable Singaporean trade mission visited Japan to promote Singaporean goods and it was hoped that a market could be opened for manufactured items in Japan. Despite such trade deficits and some discontent at the expansion of the Japanese synthetic rubber industry, Prime Minister Tanaka's visit to Singapore would appear to have been one of the few bright moments in his Southeast Asian tour.

Despite the fact that there have been protests at Japanese 'economic imperialism', much of the opposition to Japanese investment has come from student and radical groups, while the Southeast Asian ruling elites have

(16) Ibid.
tended to cooperate with Japanese business—depending on the state, either for the sake of national development or for personal reasons. Furthermore, Southeast Asian countries have tended to seek such investment individually rather than forming a "common front". It was the exception rather than the rule when ASEAN used its collective voice to demand fair economic treatment (17) from Japan, particularly on such matters as the increased Japanese production of synthetic rubber. (18)

Apart from the ASEAN countries, Japanese investment in other Southeast Asian nations—Laos, the Khmer Republic (Cambodia), and North and South Vietnam—which are politically unstable, is noticeable by its absence. With regard to aid, Japan has sought to steer a non-political course by agreeing to give aid to Vietnam as a whole rather than to either North or South. At the far side of the region, a large proportion of the bilateral aid going to Burma is donated by Japan, and friendly relations between the two countries have been fostered by an exchange of goodwill visits in 1972 and 1973.

While Japan's economic role in Southeast Asia is a key one and well assured—its diplomatic and political role is less certain. Its active participation in the Asian Development Bank and its calling of a Cabinet-level conference on Southeast Asian economic development in 1966, (19) have a certain political significance, but are basically economic. Unlike these, however, Japanese membership of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC)—formed in June 1966 with the expressed purpose "to promote constructive cooperation towards the achievement of peace and progress"—has had a considerable political impact, with Japan successfully preventing the organization from being turned into an anti-Chinese movement. In this task Japan was ably seconded by Malaysia.

In line with an increasingly autonomous Asian policy, Japan commenced diplomatic initiatives towards Mongolia and North Vietnam—its relations with the latter being formalized in September 1973. Beside such moves Japanese diplomatic initiatives in the sixties were very tentative,—such as offering mediation in the Indonesian-Malaysian dispute in 1963, and supporting Suharto in 1966. At the turn of the decade, however—1970—

(18) Straits Times, 19 April, 1973
(19) Significant because it was called on Japanese initiative.
Japan did play a prominent part in the Djakarta Conference on Cambodia. Two years later Mr. Tanaka called for a peace and reconstruction conference for Vietnam; it was suggested that the latter was designed chiefly with an eye to the internal Japanese political scene, but peace in Indo China would remove Japan from the quandary in which it found itself - the maintenance of strict loyalty to the United States, while seeking not to completely alienate powerful communist neighbours. After Canada's withdrawal from the International Commission of Control and Supervision of Vietnam, in 1973, Japan refused a South Vietnamese invitation to be the replacement. Although different reasons were given, one of the main reasons would appear to have been that the invitation came only from South Vietnam, and was not endorsed by the North.

The role that Japan will play in Southeast Asia will depend largely on the adjustment of its relations with the Great Powers in the not too distant future. Its relations with the Southeast Asian countries themselves will depend largely on how diplomatically it pursues its own economic advancement. Concerning the activity of Japanese companies abroad, Japan has been described as 'a sick pseudo-great power', that is a powerful state which is not actually in full control of the nation. In the interests of preventing the alienation of those that it should be cultivating the nation will have to be brought under control. As for the Japanese attitude to the neutralization of Southeast Asia - this too is awaiting the clarification that the decided framework of Great Power relations will determine.

AUSTRALIA:

It is now generally accepted that Australia is an Indo-Pacific power and not merely a backward offspring kindly fostered by Britain. Acceptance of this change in status has been gradual, as had the shift in attitude that no longer views Asia as primarily a threat to Australian security. The ability of past Australian Prime Ministers to understand Asia and its problems has been summarized as:-

"...After Menzies' aloofness and Holt's warmth, the track record of Gorton and MacMahon was of prime ministerial bulls in the Asian china shop." (20)

(20) Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 February, 1974
1972, however, brought a new Labor Government to power under the leadership of Mr. Gough Whitlam - a man who appeared anxious to create an individual foreign policy image in Asia. At the most obvious level this took the form of the diplomatic recognition of China, North Vietnam and North Korea, and a general reduction in Australian participation in both SEATO and ANZUK.

Unlike Pakistan and France, Australia did not totally withdraw from SEATO; nevertheless, it was made clear that both Australia and New Zealand - under the new Labor Government of Norman Kirk - had strong reservations concerning the military nature of the pact. In place of the latter both Governments called for increased emphasis on the socio-economic work of the organization. The current Australian view of SEATO would appear to be that the organization can be safely left to 'wither away' in its own time. (21)

With regard to ANZUK - Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom - the three countries that provided forces under the Five Power Agreement to be stationed in Malaysia and Singapore - more definite action has been taken. The Australian Government, true to the Labor Party's traditional opposition to the despatch of forces abroad in peace time, announced that it would be withdrawing the ground force component of its ANZUK commitment at the end of its tour of duty. Resulting from this decision, New Zealand and the United Kingdom announced, in December, 1973, that they had reached an agreement to establish separate military forces in Singapore to replace the ANZUK presence.

The treaty that is considered by both Australia and New Zealand as one of the principal pillars of their security is the ANZUS Treaty - between Australia, New Zealand and the United States - which was signed on 1 September, 1951. Although it was originally designed to guarantee the two smaller partners against a resurgent Japan, events proved this unnecessary and the alliance has been taken on a more general connotation. This treaty still retains its importance for Australia despite a change from the days when any criticism of American policy generally tended to be treated as a

mixture of high treason and lèse-majesté, by the ruling Liberal-Country Party government.

Certainly there was a change in 1972 - under the new Labor Government it was made clear that Australian subservience to every American whim would cease, and that such occurrences as the Australian involvement in the Vietnam War would not easily happen again. A critical private letter from Mr. Whitlam to President Nixon in December 1972, condemning the bombing raids on Hanoi, obviously came as a shock to Americans. Yet by July 1973, when Mr. Whitlam visited Washington, it was made clear that Australia was still very much the loyal ally of the United States. Despite this, however, there is a powerful current of anti-Americanism on the Left in Australian politics which concentrates on such issues as the future of American installations in Australia. Even given a Labor Government, these installations would appear quite secure.

With regard to Southeast Asia Australian policy would seem to be rooted in the desire for a general friendship while avoiding any onerous commitments. When ASEAN was first established the then leader of the Opposition party, Mr. Whitlam, suggested that it would be a good idea if Australia and New Zealand were to join the organization (22); however, it was soon made clear that this would not be acceptable to the members. A more realistic approach was taken by Mr. Whitlam when in power, and in April 1974, some A$5 million were made available for economic projects adopted by ASEAN. (23) Concerning the ASEAN proposal for neutralization of the region, as early as June 1972, Australian Prime Minister, William MacMahon gave the idea his qualified approval, saying that his country was willing to support Southeast Asian moves towards neutrality but would not abandon its defence links under ANZUS. (24) However, two years later, Mr. Whitlam provided a more enthusiastic endorsement of the proposal:-

(123)

(22) The Guardian, 2 January, 1968
(23) Straits Times, 17 April, 1974
(24) Djakarta Times, 12 June, 1972
“Australia applauds this initiative and welcomes the objectives which the ASEAN countries have set for themselves for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia. It is a creative concept which, if fulfilled, will not only benefit the nations in the zone, it will itself be a further step towards detente, if the great powers are able to agree not to use this region as the field for destructive rivalry.” (25)

That his Government supported the neutralization proposal was made clear by Mr. Whitlam on his tour of Southeast Asia in February 1974. Nor indeed is there any wonder, as neutralization of the region would preserve it free from the hegemony of any one Great Power - something that should be in the Australian interest.

Mr. Whitlam, besides backing the neutralization concept, is also a strong proponent of Australia's playing a larger role in the region, particularly with regard to economic assistance. At present, however, most economic aid that Australia makes available goes either to Papua New Guinea, or to its largest northern neighbour, Indonesia. Before taking office the Australian Labor Party pledged to contribute 'not less than 1% of the national income to economic aid for developing countries (26); after six months in office, however, it announced that it would be working towards an official aid target of 0.7% of G.N.P. by the end of the decade'. (27) This may be partially explained by the economic difficulties that Australia found itself in. Besides this economic aid, Mr. Whitlam also favoured Australian participation in a new loose 'association' for Asia - but this Asian Forum idea has yet to get off the drawing-board. In the meantime Australia, now more acutely conscious of its own identity, joins the Southeast Asian nations in awaiting the development of the new Asian balance that will play such a decisive role in determining the future of the region to Australia's north.

(27) Cited in Ibid.
NEW ZEALAND:

New Zealand, geographically further from Southeast Asia than Australia, is that much more remote from Asian problems. However, the history of its relations with Asia run largely parallel to the Australian experience. What makes this parallel even more striking was the election to office of Mr. Kirk's Labor Government around the same time as Mr. Whitlam assumed power in Australia.

On questions such as participation in SEATO, Mr. Kirk adopted a similar approach to that of Mr. Whitlam, telling the annual conference of the Returned Services Association in June 1973, that New Zealand would steadily decrease the level of its involvement in SEATO. He said:

"We can continue to play our part in collective defence arrangements that are valued by the countries of Southeast Asia". (28)

To this he added that New Zealand could no longer afford to rely too heavily on Britain or the United States, and must learn to work more closely with other countries in Asia and the Pacific, and especially in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia. As in earnest of its emphasis on the socio-economic aspect of SEATO, the New Zealand Government provided a fund of US $18,950 to SEATO in March 1973, to aid the construction of community centres in the Philippines and to complete a hamlet irrigation scheme serving some 700 displaced families at Lam Dom Noi Dam, in the North-East of Thailand. (29)

With regard to ANZUK, however, New Zealand did not adopt the same attitude as the Australian Government deciding that New Zealand forces would remain in Singapore after the Australians withdrew. According to Mr. Kirk:

"Without any reflection on Australian policies, it seems to us that in the relationship we are trying to foster in the region - to improve and strengthen New Zealand's links with these countries - the decision for us to keep on was the right one." (30)

(28) Straits Times, 13 June, 1973
(29) Bangkok Post, 1 March, 1973
(30) The Age, 17 August, 1973
It has, nevertheless, been made clear that the New Zealand forces will stay in Asia only so long as Malaysia and Singapore wish them to remain.

A point that was constantly made by Mr. Kirk when he was in office was that New Zealand wished to rid itself of the image of a 'rich, isolated, Europe-centred country', and wished instead to become attuned to the reality of its geographical position and to become an active partner in Asian and Pacific affairs. In acting out this role the New Zealand Government approved the spending of N.Z$ 50 million, in bilateral aid to Asia and the Pacific over the three years commencing June 1973. (31)

Furthermore, Mr. Kirk pushed for a new Pacific Union - of the countries along the western rim of the Pacific - to complement ASEAN. (32) Concerning the New Zealand attitude to the neutralization proposals, this was favourable from an earlier date than the Australian - with the initial ASEAN declaration in 1971 being supported by the New Zealand Defence Secretary of the time, Mr. J. Robertson. This sympathy with the proposal was enthusiastically endorsed by Norman Kirk's Government. (33) Similar concerns to Australia would naturally recommend the scheme.

**THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURS:**

Concerning the neighbours of the Southeast Asian region it would appear logical for Australia and New Zealand to sit back and applause indigenous regional schemes for neutralization - it is in their interests to do so. In the event of such proposals not being realized both countries would undoubtly prefer a continued American presence in Southeast Asia than either Chinese or Russian - the importance both Governments ascribe to their ANZUS Treaty would point to this. It is also clear that neither Government will take any concrete steps to encourage the United States to withdraw from the region more rapidly - while welcoming the neutralization proposals there is a large degree of dubiousness as to whether these proposals will ever be realized.

(31) _Straits Times_, 20 June, 1973
(32) _Straits Times_, 26 March, 1973
(33) _Straits Times_, 2 December, 1971
_Straits Times_, 22 December, 1973
Nor is it in India's interest for the region to fall under the influence of any one Great Power. However, as between Great Powers, Chinese hegemony is viewed with considerably greater apprehension than American or Russian. It could indeed be argued that Soviet hegemony in Southeast Asia would reinforce the Indian position as against the Chinese; however, while Soviet support is welcomed in India, it is doubtful that the latter would seek too great a Soviet presence on its own doorstep. Indeed India itself, as a new nuclear power, might yet acquire certain ambitions for influence in the Southeast Asian region. In the meantime a zone of neutrality would not only be in India's interest, but would be in line with the international 'morality' adopted by that country since its independence.

Japan - a country that has been cited as a potential member of the Asian balance - has been very cautious in its approach to Southeast Asian politics. Attempts by the Soviet Union to involve Japan in its security suggestions have met with little success, and it is worth noting that the much publicized Soviet proposal for an Asian collective security system was not even mentioned in the extensive communique which was issued after the Tanaka-Brezhnev meeting in the U.S.S.R. in October 1973. According to Mr Tanaka the issue was never raised. Despite this, the New China News Agency reported that 'Soviet revisionists tried to drag Japan into their Asian collective security system'. It quoted the 'Jiji New Agency' for the disclosure that the reference to such a system was deleted from the draft 'Soviet-Japanese joint statement when it failed to make Japan express its approval'. (34) Although it is true that the Chinese had a vested interest in putting this line across, it seems rather unlikely that the issue would not have been raised by the Russians at some point in the meeting.

In October 1971, the Malaysian Prime Minister urged Japan to shed its 'low posture' foreign policy. At a press conference in Tokyo he pointed out that Japan's emergence as Asia's most economically advanced nation - and a world power - placed upon it a moral responsibility to concern itself rather more than before with the fundamental issues of peace, progress and prosperity.

He added that he would welcome it if Japan was to become a 'fourth guarantor' of the Southeast Asian neutralization plan. (35) Some twelve months later, Mr. Kiichi Aichi, the special envoy of the Japanese Prime Minister, assured Tun Razak that Japan and China would oppose any move by other powers to establish hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, nor would they seek such hegemony themselves. (36) This assurance came soon after the formal inauguration of Sino-Japanese links, it was undoubtedly deemed necessary as a result of Soviet broadcasts.

As pointed out above, the role that Japan will play in Southeast Asia will depend largely on the adjustment of its relations with the Great Powers and its decision as to what form its defense will take in the future. With regard to the latter, three alternatives are apparent - continued reliance on the United States nuclear umbrella, attainment of an independent nuclear deterrent, or neutrality. Support can be discovered for each of these options, with the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party favouring the first, the Socialists the third, and some hawkish elements of the LDP (including former Prime Minister, Nobusuke Kishi and some of his associates) and the right-wing, Seiran-Kai group, advocating the second. Perhaps the strongest external restraint on those Japanese who favour nuclear armaments comes from America, as a nuclear Japan would drastically reduce the latter's dependence on the United States. Despite the Nixon Doctrine and the reversion of Okinawa - minus nuclear installations - to Japan in 1971, Washington still maintains in Japan its largest defence structure in the Far East - 13,000 army, 33,000 navy and marines, 19,000 air force and 5,000 civilian personnel. (37)

It is true that the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Yasahiro Nakasone, stated in his Preface to the White Paper, 'The Defence of Japan':

"According to the Western way of thinking there exists a certain preconceived idea that economically great powers will inevitably become military great powers, but we challenge that way of thinking and hereby declare that the nation of Japan will become a great power

(35) Straits Times, 15 October, 1971
(36) Straits Times, 14 December, 1972
in an economic sense, but never in a military sense". (38)

Likewise, the last Prime Minister, Mr. Tanaka, made a similar statement prior to his election, to the effect that he would work towards making Japan an economic super-power, but not a military super-power. Whilst gauging from the political history of the present Prime Minister, Takeo Miki, he is not a man to favour nuclear armaments. Nevertheless, it may be noted that although Japan signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 it has yet to be ratified - an important decision that still has to be taken.

If Japan proceeds to go nuclear and thereby becomes increasingly autonomous of the United States, its attitude to Southeast Asia will become a vital factor in the future of the region. However, if its present course of 'economic diplomacy' is maintained - as it would appear likely for some time to come - the Japanese interest in the region will be largely determined by economic factors. In order to ensure the safety of investments, strategic commercial routes, raw materials and markets, it is preferable for Japan that the region should cease being an area of conflict - particularly Great Power conflict. If a neutral Southeast Asia could achieve this situation then it would be in Japan's interests to back the proposal. However, at this stage, when the concept appears far from realization - not to mention success - the Japanese policy would appear to be to wait and see in the relative comfort of the sidelines.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE QUANDARY OF THE MOUSEDEER:

As the Southeast Asian region consists of some ten different states it is necessary to give it the benefit of a closer scrutiny. There is perhaps as much that serves to divide Southeast Asian states as to unite them, but those things that they hold in common are chiefly problems that demand urgent attention.

Upon achieving independence the majority of Southeast Asian states were confronted with a multiplicity of problems which ranged from the existence of conscious ethnic minorities to socio-economic underdevelopment, and from the need to forge a national identity to the fear of external aggression. States often appeared to be fashioned around individual personalities rather than collective identities, and leaders were faced with the awesome leap from the unquestioned morality of demanding independence to the more debatable morality of realizing national interests. (1) In pursuit of the latter it became clear that utopia was not announced by the removal of colonial rule and that intraregional tensions and conflicts could - and did - develop. It is true that some of these intraregional conflicts may be traced back to colonial roots. These include the superimposition of the concept of central governmental authority and sovereign state boundaries on people whose allegiance and mobility often continued to follow historic patterns, and the fact that these boundaries tended to be arbitrary - for example the division of the central core of the Laotian people between Thailand and Laos. Nevertheless, despite this, the fact remains that there was no goal sufficiently substantial or intensely enough desired, the common pursuit of which would have resulted in divisive feelings being overcome. This situation, however, may hopefully be changing. (2)


The basis for such regional cooperation as did occur was to be found in the shared problems of underdevelopment and the management of rather weak national economies. Regional groupings inspired by economic cooperation existing in Europe and Latin America, the 'proven efficacy' of which, according to President Macapagal of the Philippines in 1963, 'makes it imperative for us' to explore the possibilities in Asia. Hence regional associations in Southeast Asia have tended to concentrate on economic and cultural issues, steering carefully away from the more controversial questions raised by politics and security, which it was feared might throw any regional venture on to the rocks of disagreement.

It is true that the less formal regional meetings of earlier years did have a certain degree of political content in their deliberations, however, was to result in little of significance. Concerning the Bandung Conference of 1955, which has been described as the 'High Noon' of the Afro-Asian movement, Mr. Mehru's realistic assessment was that 'The seats were comfortable'. Even this 'High Noon' period could offer little of substance to those that sought unifying political factors among Southeast Asian states. Thailand and the Philippines had recently become members of SEATO, while Burma and Indonesia were proclaiming themselves non-aligned. Of the non-aligned, Indonesia and Burma freely chose this policy for a number of reasons; Laos and Cambodia, on the other hand, had non-alignment virtually thrust upon them. Although in the years following the Bandung Conference the concept of non-alignment was to acquire increasing respectability in the world at large, it did not serve as the basis of a regional bond due to the fact that its adherents were scattered geographically and ideologically - a diversification that was to become increasingly obvious at successive non-aligned summits and conferences.


(4) Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment, G. Jansen (Faber & Faber, 1966) p. 225.
With the establishment of ASA and Maphilindo (5) the emphasis was firmly placed on economic and social problems – with some racial overtones to the latter. It has been argued that the stressing of this emphasis obscures the real motivating force behind the development of Southeast Asian regionalism, namely political necessity (6), but given the individual political considerations and decisions necessary to bring about regional cooperation in the first place, the common interests among the states involved thereafter tended to focus on social and economic issues. With regard to these economic issues there would appear to be the inevitable array of factors for and against Southeast Asian regionalism. As the situation stands, and over the past decade, the shares of the countries intraregional trade in their total international trade is relatively small (7), the primary explanation for this being the basic lack of economic complementarity among the countries of the region. Nearly all of them are primary producers, with two or more of them producing large quantities of the same commodity – tin, rubber, timber and the like – which are mainly exported to extraregional destinations. Given these circumstances the immediate effects

(5) ASA (the Association of Southeast Asia) was established in July, 1961, and consisted of the Philippines, Thailand and Malaya (later Malaysia). The association was most remarkable for its survival as it was virtually frozen for three years due to the ill-feeling between Malaysia and the Philippines over the question of North Borneo (Sabah). This dispute has lasted for some time over the sovereignty of Sabah. ASA ceased to function in 1967, giving away to ASEAN. Maphilindo, established in August 1963, was a confederation of Malay peoples – Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. It suffered from both the Malaysian-Philippine antagonism, and the policy of Confrontation that Indonesia adopted against Malaysia. It also ceased to function in 1967.

(6) Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia, S. Xuto, (Chulalongkorn University, 1973) p. 55.

(7) Hiroshi Kitamura, the Director of Research and Planning for ECAFE, claimed that less than 21% of the ASEAN countries' trade was intraregional, and if Singapore's entrepot trade is excluded, the share of intraregional trade falls to 6-10%. Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East, Vol. XX, No. 2, September 1969. p. 3.

Furthermore, according to Premier Lee Kuan Yew "As a percentage, trade within ASEAN to total ASEAN trade with the world dropped from 18.3% in 1966 to 15.7% in 1970." Straits Times, 14 April, 1972
of trade liberalization in the region would appear to be rather limited; this is not to rule out a phased trade liberalization programme, which although not totally free from difficulties is a practical proposition. (8) A pooling of capital and trained personnel - both of which are scarce in the region - together with the rationalization of industry could mean economizing on scarce resources. Optimum scale can be achieved with a larger market. Even if the combined market does not suffice, export potential to extraregional countries can be realized to advantage as a larger, protected market can absorb the fixed cost of production so that the price of exports may be based on variable cost alone. With wider markets and greater specialization it should also be easier to attract foreign capital. (9)

There are of course the drawbacks - with the basic hindrance being the economic nationalism and desire for independence that is so typical of recently autonomous states. There must, for example, be agreed specialization and harmonization of investment and production programmes. Furthermore, as has been shown by the Latin American Free Trade Association there is no guarantee that all countries will benefit equally because of the unequal economic, social and political assets of the various countries. However, given regional development in the long-run all countries should benefit to a certain extent. A potential obstacle, if regional economic coordination and planning are not undertaken in the near future, is the development of vested interests.

In practise the economic element cannot be separated out, and, as is the situation with many another newly independent or underdeveloped area, political-economy tends to be spelt with a capital 'P' and a small 'e'. Not only does this occur within the regional associations but even their composition can be explained largely by differing foreign policies and attitudes to external powers. In 1967 Maphilindo fell to accusations that it was too racist in concept -


being a confederation of the Malay peoples. (10) ASA, in its turn, disappeared in an effort to accomodate Indonesia which viewed the former as a 'Western-inspired' organization which it could - or would - not join. 

ASEAN - officially launched in August 1967 - also had a full programme of economic and social aims, but again avoided the issue of regional defence. It is true that the wording of the Declaration establishing ASEAN stated that the members "Are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities", and that on Indonesian insistence a clause was included in the Preamble of the Declaration affirming that:-

"...All foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of States in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development".

This, however, was only included when Adam Malik insisted that the political survival of the Indonesian 'New Order' depended on its inclusion; the other reference that he sought to include - concerning 'arrangements of collective defence which should not be used to serve the interests of any of the big powers' - was deleted at the insistence of the Filipino Foreign Secretary, Ramos. (11) Despite the guarded attitude to regional defence displayed at the ASEAN Conference, and the disavowals of Ramos and the Singaporean Foreign Minister, Rajaratnam, (12) the possibility of ASEAN developing into some kind of security arrangement was not discounted by all. Tun Razak raised the possibility as did Adam Malik who compared ASEAN to a house with five doors. 'If a burglar comes in one door, its a problem for everyone in the house.' Some time later Thanat Khoman also spoke in terms of Southeast Asian countries cooperating closely and not relying too much on western assistance for defence, security and independence - this, however,

(10) Manila Bulletin, 1 January, 1966
    Straits Times, 4 January, 1966
(11) Philippines Herald, 17 August, 1967
    Straits Times, 9 September, 1967
was phrased in terms of an anti-Communist front. (13)

Despite disavowals by other members of Thanat Khoman's implications, the attitudes of the Great Powers appeared to reflect the latter. After the ASEAN Declaration was signed the U.S. State Department issued a statement 'welcoming' the formation of the new association, which, it pointed out, did 'not conflict with any military security arrangements with member governments'. (14) Peking, however, accused the United States of joining hands 'with the Soviet revisionist ruling clique' in an attempt to form a full moon to encircle China, and declared that 'ASEAN is part of this anti-China ring'; while the Soviet Union also denounced ASEAN as an instrument of American policy. (15) Given the receptiveness of Washington towards ASEAN it has been suggested that the Philippine Government's objections to the Indonesian inspired clauses on 'security' stemmed more from its fears of an 'alliance' dominated by the Indonesian army than from any objections put forward by the American Administration. (16) Furthermore, collective security agreements were liable to impinge even more on the sensitive area of national sovereignty than economic cooperation.

Subsequent developments encouraged the members of ASEAN to recognize that their creation was more successful and effective than its predecessors - it is noteworthy that serious intraregional conflict was successfully averted during ASEAN's early years. Besides this, parallel events saw an "Asia for the Asians" policy being gradually accepted, initially in Western Europe and later spreading across the Atlantic. Great Britain advanced its military withdrawal from Southeast Asia to 1971, and neither the United States nor Australia appeared enthusiastic to fill the defence gap, thus leaving Singapore and Malaysia to seek alternative security arrangements. At the same time, Thailand and the Philippines were growing increasingly sceptical.

(13) Straits Times, 11 August, 1967; 12 August, 1967
Bangkok World, 21 February, 1968

(14) Bangkok World, 10 August, 1967

(15) Straits Times, 14 August, 1967
Japan Times, 26 April, 1969. (Soviet)
Straits Times, 30 September, 1967

about the military value of SEATO.

As early as January 1968, President Marcos of the Philippines made official visits to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand openly proposing, in the process, ASEAN's expansion into a collective defence system. Even if it was phrased as a 'deterrent against the expansionist plans of Red China', this was a sizeable step towards abandoning the caution that the Filipino delegate had displayed in August 1967. The response to the proposal was mixed, with Thailand displaying somewhat less enthusiasm than its fellow members. However, even Thailand did not dismiss the plan in the long-term. 1968 also saw much discussion in Malaysia over the proposal for Southeast Asian neutralization. This was to remain a Malaysian preoccupation for some time, other ASEAN members not accepting the proposal until 1971. Since the Kuala Lumpur Declaration which emerged at the end of November, 1971 meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN - a meeting outside the formal auspices of the Association - emphasis has shifted somewhat from the concept of regional collective security systems to the furtherance of Great Power acceptance of the 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' which was to lead to the long-term neutralization of the region.

The initial agreement of the ASEAN member states to the Malaysian proposal had, in fact, taken place a month before the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, at a meeting in New York convened by Tun Razak. The task of drafting the Declaration fell, in the main, to Thailand. It was pointed out at the November meeting that:-

"The neutralization proposal has won approval in principle from China, the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as other powers". Despite the general acceptance in November 1971, a considerable divergence of opinion was to make itself felt even between ASEAN members. A certain reluctance on the part of Indonesia has been attributed to the conviction of the Indonesian Government that as the largest and most populous state within Southeast Asia, Indonesia has the best claim to play the leading role in

Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 February, 1968

(18) Manila Bulletin, 11 November, 1971
The Age, 11 November, 1971
instituting a new pattern of regional order. Furthermore, their conception of that order - which will be discussed below - was not identical to that proposed by Malaysia; however, the reduction of the latter's proposal to a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality opened the way to the later implementation of the Indonesian scheme. (19) In the meantime, Adam Malik, who had earlier said that ASEAN would be departing from its original course if it discussed military matters in connection with the neutralization proposal, was given a special mandate by the Kuala Lumpur meeting to approach China for a possible endorsement of the neutrality proposal.

Tun Abdul Razak declared himself happy about the result of the talks, pointing out that it had been delegated to permanent secretary level to decide on the next step to be taken to ensure peace and security in the region, while a summit meeting of ASEAN leaders was to be held in Manila, in March 1972, to underscore the Declaration. Predictably both Thailand and the Philippines sounded the note of caution – the former making it clear that it would not give up its defence commitments to SEATO until the prospects of peace, freedom and neutrality in the region were assured. The Thai envoy, Thanat Khoman, furthermore, dismissed any collective ASEAN defence arrangements as incompatible with the neutrality proposed – a rather different stand from that voiced by the Cambodian observer earlier in the meeting. (20) The Philippine Foreign Secretary, Carlos Romulo, who described the conference as a historic occasion which would evolve 'an eventual integration of all Asian regional groups' warned that it must not be forgotten that:

"No declaration of neutrality, demilitarisation, neutralization, multi-alignment, non-aggression or of Southeast Asia as a 'Zone of Peace', will stand for long if it is not respected by any of these powers."

He also noted that 'the continuing tragedy of our time' is that the affairs of the nations in the region were very much determined by the 'ill-considered actions of the super-powers.' (21) It was made clear by the Singaporean

(19) 'Regional Order in Southeast Asia', M. Leifer. The Round Table (Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs), No. 255, July 1974, p.312.

(20) Straits Times, 27 November, 1971

Foreign Minister, Mr. Rajaratnam, that considerable 'give and take' was needed to achieve the consensus which made it possible for the Declaration and communique to be issued; while Carlos Romulo pointed out that the Foreign Ministers' consensus was subject to the approval of their respective Heads of State. This latter reservation was attributed to the fact that the Philippines had obligations and commitments which would have to be resolved before finalization of any neutralization declaration. Another issue that might have carried some weight was the still vexed Sabah question, and the fear that neutralization of the region might impose a status quo situation under which Sabah could not be raised again. (22)

Despite the close relations prevailing between many ASEAN members and the Western bloc, one of the attractions of neutralization that came across clearly was the urge to stop being pawns, and to eliminate from the area the Great Power rivalries that had resulted in so much Asian suffering during both the Korean and the Vietnam wars. Furthermore, the neutralization plan was viewed as a bid to benefit from the changing alignments in Great Power politics. As against this, however, was the necessity to trust China to a certain extent; to resolve the clashes of interest among ASEAN countries - with Carlos Romulo saying decisively that 'Anything we do here must be without prejudice to the bilateral settlement of outstanding problems between countries in the region' - and the biggest single doubt about a proposed neutral zone, the lack of security that would go with it. (23)

Despite the fact that a certain degree of consensus was reached in regional circles about the proposal, the circumstances of individual geographical location within the region, together with historical experience and internal political and economic situations have tended to promote exclusive viewpoints. These encompass not only interpretations of neutralization, but also perceptions of both external powers and intraregional relations.

1. Despite its identification with the Western bloc Thailand has been closely involved in regionalism in Southeast Asia, being - or having been - a member of ASA, ASEAN, ASPAC, and a number of other groupings; hosting

(22) Straits Times, 29 November, 1971
Manila Bulletin, 1 December, 1971
(23) The Age, 1 December, 1971
Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 December, 1971
the headquarters of many of these in Bangkok; and frequently acting as
mediator in intraregional disputes. The long-time Foreign Minister, and
by 1974 Special Adviser to the Thai Government, Thanat Khoman, has been
outspoken on the theme of the need for Southeast Asian nations to mould
their own destinies, as he claimed in an interview, in January 1969:-
"I am firmly convinced that effective solutions to the problems of Southeast
Asia can be found in political consultation and cooperation rather than
military alliances. When I say political, I mean not only diplomatic
conversations, but also common concrete decisions, economic, cultural
and social. In this part of Asia we are not military powers. Therefore,
I believe political steps to be more efficient." (24)

Furthermore, while he pointed out that results in Asia from non-alignment
measures were thus far not encouraging, a successful regional organization
should be 'non-aligned by principle' - i.e., would not try to follow the policy
of any of the Great Powers, but would be prepared to cooperate with them as
long as it was on the basis of equality. (25) With the announcement of
President Nixon's Doctrine Southeast Asian regionalism became even more
attractive to the Thais, acquiring as it did the dual purpose of reducing
Thailand's direct ties to U.S. - supported alliances and increasing its own
importance within all-Asian organizations. (26) A consequence of this -
as the hopeful Thais have undoubtedly considered - is that a less clearly
aligned Thailand would possibly encourage Peking to attempt to further an
American-Thai divorcement through diplomacy, paying for the latter by a
substantially diminished support role on behalf of the Thai communists. (27)

Although this is in the realms of speculation it cannot be omitted from the
equation which confronts the Thai decision-makers.

Thailand was the first ASEAN country Tun Razak visited to
canvas support for neutralization; however, the subsequent joint communique
issued in December 1970 noted only that discussion on neutralization had taken
place. A series of comments that followed tended to be somewhat contradictory,

(25) Ibid.
(Heath Lexington Books, 1971) p. 43.
with certain members of the Government - including Thanom Kittikachorn - seeing the Malaysian proposal as 'not very realistic', while the Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, obviously supported the idea, in principle at least. In June 1971 the latter was already speaking in terms of a collective approach to the big powers, and as Thai envoy to the November meeting in Kuala Lumpur, said:

"We, of course, welcome this (the proposal). This is the first step, with many things to be cleared up later. But (it) is an important step."

A note of warning was added - that the final step was still remote and must be approached with caution. (28) Even while Thanat Khoman was working on the draft proposal, General Saiyud Kerdphol, Chief of Communist Suppression in Thailand, stated that neutralization would not save the country from communism - 'Once we become neutral, American aid may drop or even be totally cut'. While some months later, the Deputy Chairman of the then ruling National Executive Council, General Prapass Charusathien, in agreement rejected the proposed neutralization. (29) In short the Foreign Office appeared to be coming off second-best in its support - even if it was only support in principle - for the scheme. This was confirmed at the end of 1971 with the removal of Thanat Khoman from the Ministry. The Deputy Foreign Minister, Major General Chatichai Choonhavan, was later to outline the Thai position - three phases being foreseen - (a) the establishment of 'real and stable' peace in Southeast Asia; (b) the withdrawal of foreign bases; and (c) a vigorous campaign for neutralization. (30) By this stage, however, the realization of Khoman's 1970 predictions were demanding a change in policy, thus causing Chatichai Choonhavan, in October 1973, to re-emphasize the 1971 ASEAN Declaration in addressing the United Nations General Assembly.

(28) Straits Times, 25 March, 1971
Straits Times, 16 June, 1971
Bangkok World, 27 November, 1971

Djakarta Times, 9 August, 1972

(30) Straits Times, 1 February, 1973
and to call for a new order in Southeast Asia 'free from all forms of interference from outside'. Concurrent with this call was the collapse of the old order at home. (31)

A new element of obvious flexibility rather than radical change marked the new civilian Government's foreign policy approach. Thanat Khoman re-emerged as Special Adviser to the Government. Although it is not true - as Communist propaganda asserts - that the new regime is not essentially different from that of the Marshals Thanom and Prapass, it is true that there are still sizeable numbers of American forces based in Thailand despite the recent withdrawals. The latter is one of the reasons for the lack of dialogue with North Vietnam, which continues to regard the Thai Government as 'new wine in old bottles'. Despite this, relations with Peking have been pursued; Soviet officials were pleasantly surprised by the encouraging tone of references to Thai-Soviet relations made by Foreign Minister Charunphan; the first direct contact between Thailand and North Korea was established in 1974; and in July, the Thai Government stopped the United States from flying reconnaissance missions over the Indian Ocean from the U-Tapao Airbase, one of the reasons given being that they undermined the ASEAN Declaration on peace and neutrality, which Thailand supports. (32)

Apart from the ill-feeling and mistrust that Thailand continues to be subjected to from some of its near neighbours due to its involvement in the Indo China war, there are other problems to be confronted - internal instability and some coolness in its relations with Malaysia. Concerning the former, badly drawn boundaries and porous borders have resulted in ethnic minority problems in the North, North-East and South of Thailand. During 1974, the rebel movements - composed of Communists and/or ethnic minorities - continued to grow, principally in the North and North-Eastern regions. Furthermore, it has been reported that Government casualties continued to run almost 50% higher than insurgent losses - indicating that battlefield success is nowhere in sight. (33) Made easier by hostilities in North Burma


and Cambodia, where the authorities are unable to exercise adequate border controls, there is a high level of smuggling in the disturbed areas of Thailand. Endemic corruption among local Thai officials and policemen does little to prevent the growth of this phenomenon. However, the result has been 'misunderstandings' at Government level with Laos and Malaysia complaining of lack of cooperation from the Thai Government. Both the smuggling and the boundary problems have extended to the sea where there have been disputes with Cambodia and South Vietnam, and numerous instances where Thai fishing boats have been shot at or arrested by the South Vietnamese.

The most serious deterioration in relations arising over ethnic minorities was the distressful one between Thailand and Malaysia over the predominantly Malay-Moslim population in the four southern provinces of Thailand. The situation came to a head with the controversial and misrepresented remarks of the Malaysian Minister of Land Development and Special Functions, Dato Haji Mahammed Asri, in July 1974. The latter said:-

"In my opinion and view, the request for autonomy, with specific conditions in the administration for the four southern provinces of Thailand, such as those put forward by the Freedom Front, seems credible, and it could mean a wise move towards reconciliation and peace."

However, the Thai reports of these remarks managed to interpret them in the sense that Asri supported secession for the Muslims of Southern Thailand. Cool informal diplomatic exchanges took place between the two Governments, with, in the end, a letter being sent from Tun Razak which reassured the Thai Government that there had been no change in Malaysia's policy of non-interference in Thai affairs. Nevertheless, a certain mutual suspicion lingered on with questionable 'intelligence reports' about Malaysian operations in the South having been leaked to the Thai press - much the same as occurred in Manila concerning alleged Malaysian involvement in the troubled Southern Philippines. Furthermore, there is a certain fear among some Malaysians that the Thais short-sightedly prefer to have the Tenth Regiment of the Malayan Communist Party - which straddles the border more effectively than any separatist movement - continue its operations in the region so that it will force Kuala Lumpur to think twice before aiding secessionists since their
success would only bring the communists back within Malaysia. (34) Although this situation is discouraging in that it creates disagreement between two stalwart ASEAN supporters, it does not appear likely to upset relations seriously and the latter would now seem to be restored to a satisfactory condition. It is, however, in controversies like this that the most benefit could be derived from an effective regional machinery to manage intraregional conflicts.

With regard to the larger perspective of the neutralization of the region, Thailand would seem to have adopted a cautious wait and see position - supporting the concept and participating in its furtherance, but not rushing the scheme. A significant contribution is being made by the improvement of bilateral relations with all of the Great Powers although relations with Peking have still quite some way to go. Nevertheless, as it has been suggested, the prevention of the exercise of undue influence by the Vietnamese Communists within Indo China may come to be seen as a common interest linking Thailand with China. (35) Until such a time when neutralization becomes definite and/or bilateral relations with all the Powers have been established on a satisfactory basis, there is little chance that any radical action - such as the expulsion of American forces from Thailand - will take place.

2. Questioned in 1968 about his reaction to a proposal to neutralize Southeast Asia, President Marcos responded that he would like to remain silent on this question because although neutralization was an idea that had appealed to many Asian leaders, and to previous Philippine administrations, the Philippines was still a member of a mutual defence pact which precluded its neutralization. (36) The pact referred to was, of course, concluded with the United States. Nevertheless, the following year saw Salvador Lopez, the Filipino Ambassador to the United Nations, speaking in terms of the long-term neutralization of the region 'where the Great Powers sort of neutralize each other'. Foreign Secretary, Carlos Romulo, concurred, making his position clear in December, 1969, when

in an interview with 'Agence France-Presse' he advocated a non-intervention agreement among the super-powers for the ultimate security of Asia in the event of an American withdrawal from the Philippines. (37) Such comments could be seen as being very much directed at the long-term; but not so in July 1971, when President Marcos urged an ASPAC meeting in Manila to study seriously the proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia. A realization that the Malaysian concept warranted serious consideration was also reflected by Carlos Romulo the previous month, when speaking on a resolution that the Philippines ought to be declared a neutral country, he said:-

"I believe that the ultimate security of this region lies in an understanding among the four powers - the United States, the Soviet Union, China and Japan - that will not allow any single power to build a hegemony over this region. And since this is so, it is my hope that a sort of neutralization pact can be agreed upon by these powers, or a non-aggression pact". (38)

Carlos Romulo, however, in supporting neutralization was not the only voice raised on the issue. Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jose Ingles, labelled the neutralization proposal a 'negative approach', in November 1971, suggested instead total demilitarization or denuclearization of the region. Ingles represented those who saw the Malaysian proposal as inimical to the Philippines, especially with respect to its claim on Sabah, and hence suspect in that it originated in Malaysia. Ingles stressed that it was imperative for the Philippines to maintain its sovereignty unimpaired, and be uncommitted through maintaining friendly relations with all the powers. Furthermore, he encouraged President Marcos to continue to think in terms of his perceived role as Asian statesman supreme, through pressing for the establishment of his Asian Forum which the President had advocated earlier as a mechanism for defusing tensions in the region. (39)

The Constitutional Convention's Committee on Foreign Relations approved in principle a proposal for the neutralization of the Philippines - the accepted proposal stating that the latter would mean (a) the abrogation of military alliances between the Philippines, the United States and Asian countries -

(38) Straits Times, II June, 1971; 15 July, 1971
(39) Manila Bulletin, 14 November, 1971
specially SEATO; and (b) the withdrawal of all United Stated military bases from the Philippines. (40) President Marcos himself, however, in considering the Malaysian neutralization proposal was more cautious, pointing out - rightly - that:-

"Neutralization... is by no means a settled concept and the idea of neutralizing a collection of sovereign states with vital interests that inevitably differ, must be unprecedented in history."

He added that too many unseen elements, involving not only the states to be neutralized, but also the nature of the relations among the guarantor nations needed to be studied before a categorical answer could be given. Despite this, as the month before President Marcos had replied in an interview that neutralization was preferable to polarization and becoming 'pawns in the struggle between the super-powers', it was clear that the Philippines attitude was to maintain an open mind on the whole subject. (41) Carlos Romulo was instructed to show the same caution when he went to the November meeting in Kuala Lumpur. When he signed the Declaration it was with the understanding that reservations were being made which would have to be decided by the heads of the five ASEAN nations during the March Summit. The Foreign Policy Council, composed of leading statesmen, businessmen and publishers sustained the stand of the President. Furthermore, President Marcos made it clear that Philippine agreement with the Declaration would not, for the present, affect whatever military or bases agreements that the Philippines had with the United States - although the possibility of this situation changing after the March Summit was admitted. (42)

The latter possibility was reinforced by remarks made by Carlos Romulo some days later, the Foreign Secretary told newsmen that:-

"What the ASEAN members seem to have in mind is a broadly based arrangement that will enable the countries of the region to meet their own defence requirement. In effect, a new form of security arrangement for Southeast Asia will have to be devised... not military alliances but devoted purely to the self-defence of the region and based on the native capabilities of the countries in the region."

(40) Manila Bulletin, 19 November, 1971
(41) Working Peoples' Daily (Rangoon), 10 October, 1971
(42) Manila Bulletin, 28 November, 1971
In realization of neutralization, General Romulo made it clear that Philippine-U.S. defence arrangements must be 'phased out'. However, the Philippines was not the only country that had to take such a step - but all the ASEAN member states with similar defence agreements with extra-regional powers. (43)

Further consideration of the impact of neutralization on the Philippines and the feasibility of the scheme was delegated to a special committee of elder statesmen. In this study the Nixon-Chou En-lai communique was given pride of place due to its implications - political, economic and military - on Southeast Asian nations. It was suggested that the communique with its pledge by the two powers not to seek hegemony in the region, might give impetus to the formation of a neutralized Southeast Asia. However, American secrecy concerning their China initiatives was to draw criticism from their smaller allies, as General Romulo later complained, the situation is unhealthy in which smaller nations are left to guess about the causes of action by the Great Powers. (44) Closely bound up with consideration of the communique was the study of the security arrangements that the Philippines had with the United States, this due to the feeling that there was likely to be a change in the deployment of American forces in the Southeast Asian-Western Pacific area. Indeed, Philippines concern with security arrangements can be gleaned from the sudden trip by Defence Secretary, Juan Ponce Enrile, to the United States. According to President Marcos the trip had something to do 'with our efforts to adopt a five-year program with the ultimate objective of self-defense or a self-reliant posture'. (45) The result was an announcement a month later that the Philippines would propose military cooperation among members of ASEAN for regional security. According to Jose Ingles' response at a press conference:

"It will be better than SEATO because it will exclude outside powers from security arrangements in Southeast Asia."

(43) Manila Bulletin, 4 December, 1971
(44) Japan Times, 17 April, 1972
(45) Manila Bulletin, 5 March, 1972
It was added that in the initial stages the proposal would call for joint patrols, training of personnel and exchange of intelligence. (46) Without undue formalities such developments have in fact taken place among ASEAN countries to a limited extent. It was the Philippines that also took the initiative the following year in calling for a forum to settle intraregional disputes - a fitting initiative from a country that has often been involved in such disputes in the past history of Asian regionalism. (47)

Now is the Philippines yet free from trouble with its neighbours. Besides the Sabah issue which remains unresolved if quiescent, the violence in the predominantly Muslim Southern Philippines - which has been succinctly summed up as the Filipino Muslims as a whole remain 'in an unhappy state of animated and violent suspension between integration and secession' - has caused tension with the Islamic nations. The latter is troubling not only for internal reasons (48) but because of the need to maintain ASEAN solidarity and the nation's oil supplies. However, despite some allegations of covert Malaysian aid to the insurgents, ASEAN has proved its worth as a forum of discussion of the Philippine situation, with President Suharto acting as mediator. Furthermore, the ASEAN nations represented at the 1974 Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference went out of their way to prevent extraregional extremists, such as Libya, from upsetting the Conference consensus in favour of a 'political solution'. In a speech to a seminar on security in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew used the Southern Philippines as an example of the need to control intraregional conflict in the interests of regional neutrality. (49)

In the context of Great Power politics President Marcos has made it clear for some time that diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and China would be established as soon as possible. However, there has been no

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(46) Jakarta Times, 22 April, 1972
(47) Straits Times, 21 July, 1973
(48) Although in an informal discussion in the A.N.U. on 14 February, 1975 former Filipino Senator Raul Manglapus suggested that the trouble in the Southern Philippines might be useful as an excuse for President Marcos to continue his martial law.
significant diminution in the American military presence in the Philippines despite much publicized statements by various Philippine politicians and officials in the past three years about the need for greater independence in the country's external relations. It would appear that the phasing out of the American presence will be rather a long-term procedure if it is to take place. Like Thailand, the Philippines is not prepared to break off one security arrangement if the alternative - neutralization of the region - has yet to be agreed to by the Great Powers and implemented. However, also like Thailand, the Philippines has a heritage of involvement in Asian regionalism and is even more conscious than most of its need to prove itself a part of Asia. The importance of a sense of identity plays a major role in the Philippine political and national psyche - as Carlos Romulo wrote:

"The sense of identity is most intense in Asia because of our past experience, and without identity, just as without vision, nations die. This identity asserts itself in... the insistence of our various countries that they be allowed to determine their individual national destinies; in our refusal to be involved in the political manoeuvres of the big powers." (50)

That the Philippines has been so involved makes it even more vital for it to play its part in this new bid to free the region from Great Power interference - if it can do so cautiously by not antagonizing its long-term, although now less reliable, ally then so much the better.

3. It has been suggested that the Indonesian approach to foreign relations is rooted in the doctrine of 'national resiliency', which, in turn, is based on the proposition that real national security resides not in alliances but in 'self-reliance', i.e., domestic economic and political strength and stability, infused by a high national morale. While the multiplicity of economic problems that confront Indonesia, and its dependence on large-scale financial aid from Japan and the West, can leave one in doubt as to the reality of Indonesian 'national resiliency', it is true that it is not a member of any military pact and is formally non-aligned.

As the largest Southeast Asian state—and very conscious of the fact—Indonesia demands a certain pride of place among its fellow regional members. Its refusal to join ASA in 1966 resulted in the establishment of ASEAN a year later, and the latter is very much Indonesia's chosen vehicle for both promoting political stability through economic and social development, and seeking to play the role of diplomatic manager in the creation of a regional order. Although Indonesia welcomed the Malaysian proposal for the neutralization of the region—in reply to Tun Razak's first policy speech as Prime Minister—it was later made clear that it would not be included under the formal auspices of ASEAN lest it might be detrimental to the latter. It was only when neutralization was an accepted and respectable concept that it was allowed to slip under the ASEAN cloak. However, according to Adam Malik—although he had earlier said that Indonesia had had 'the same idea' as Malaysia—the solution he preferred was the development within the region of 'an area of indigenous stability, based on indigenous socio-political and economic strength'. An extension of 'national resiliency' to the entire region. Furthermore, he added, that he felt Switzerland and Austria to be unsuitable models for 'a vast and diverse area', and a big power agreement on neutralization unlikely. (51)

Despite the proposed alternative, Adam Malik signed the 1971 Declaration for Indonesia mentioning as he did:

"Although the present talks have been successful, it is apparent that there are different interests among the respective states. But member nations have listened with open minds to views of others while being guided by a common aim of creating peace, stability and security in the region."

However, it was made clear that Indonesia would support neutralization if it was meant to free the region from external interference. (52) Obviously the fear was that a precipitate American withdrawal might leave a vacuum that the Soviet Union, or, worse still, China might fill before the countries of the region had time to build up their indigenous forces. In pursuit of such a build up Indonesia encouraged bilateral cooperation with other ASEAN members rather than a regional military pact. The latter was seen as opening the way for interference in the internal affairs of member states—something that Indonesia is

Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 September, 1971
particularly sensitive about. Concerning existing military pacts in Southeast Asia, Adam Malik claimed that they were temporary and would gradually be abolished, adding that the contractual parties had assured him that the military pacts would gradually become defunct. (53)

President Suharto also spoke out in favour of freeing the region from the danger of its becoming an arena in which Great Powers could confront each other. However, his interpretation of neutralization was something different again from that envisaged in the 1971 Declaration:-

"Through the national resilience of each country in the territory of Southeast Asia, the concept of neutralization of Southeast (Asia) will possibly (be) realized in its true sense and not just neutralization dependent on the big powers." (54)

Once again the emphasis was placed on the endeavours of the individual national entity. However, in the context of the Great Power perspectives, Indonesians must have viewed 1972 as a successful year. According to Adam Malik, since France as a nuclear nation supported the proposed neutralization, other nuclear nations would take it into consideration. For example, the Nixon-Chou joint communique's support for the Bandung principles of non-interference could be construed as support for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, thus leaving the Soviet Union as the only nuclear nation - at that time - which had not decided whether or not to support the proposal. (55). All in all an interpretation that was rather over-optimistic at this stage.

Discussions concerning neutralization in Indonesia have tended to crystallize around the two related topics of relations with the Great Powers and Asian defence. Time and again it has been reiterated that the presence of foreign troops in the region must be temporary - although the 'temporary' duration has never been specified - and that military cooperation between ASEAN members must be based on independent and active policy without forming

(53) Straits Times, 2 May, 1972
Concerning bilateral relations - Straits Times, 25 April, 1972
Indonesian Newsletter, 15 September, 1972. 72/34.
(54) Indonesian Newsletter, 1 December, 1973. 72/48
Djakarta Times, 18 August, 1972
defence pacts. Concerning relations with the Great Powers, Indonesia has rivalled Singapore in holding the most conservative position of the ASEAN countries towards China, although Adam Malik has admitted that the neutralization of Southeast Asia would be useless without normalization of relations between the countries of the region and China. (56) Although the two countries have engaged in some 'ping-pong' diplomacy, and Adam Malik has said that Indonesia will 'in time' normalize relations, the situation remains stalemated. It may be that the Foreign Office is considerably keener to normalize relations with China than the President and his aides. In short, behind the rhetoric relations with the Great Powers have changed little over the past three years.

What has changed, however, is Indonesia's position in the region. Despite the fact that Malaysia was the country that tended to take initiative - both over the neutralization proposal and in establishing relations with China - Indonesia has emerged as the dominant force in the area, a position which it considers itself well qualified to hold. This position was virtually institutionalized by the choice of Djakarta for the ASEAN secretariat in preference to Manila; whilst, as mentioned above, President Suharto emerged as mediator in the recent Philippine-Malaysian dispute, even if this did earn him a slight reproach from the latter. A number of factors have contributed to the acceptance of Indonesia:-

(a) In spite of its break with Peking in the wake of the 1965 abortive coup attempt and its increasingly closer ties with the United States and Japan, Indonesia still preserves its prestige as a major non-aligned power - a position that it tends to play on as when it refused to join ASA on the basis that it was aligned with the Western bloc.

(b) The much prized Indonesian oil resources which fellow ASEAN members hope will relieve their fuel shortages. This asset also promises prosperity for Indonesia.

(c) Despite large numbers of political prisoners and occasional outbursts of rioting, the relatively stable political situation in Indonesia, ruled by a strong man who inspires confidence in the other strong regimes ruling in

(56) Straits Times, 10 May, 1973
in Singapore, the Philippines and to a certain extent, in Malaysia. (57)
(d) Indonesian realism which emphasizes economic and social development is attractive to countries such as Singapore; on the other hand, Indonesia's support of neutralization pleases Tun Razak.

Furthermore, while Indonesia refused to talk about 'militarizing' ASEAN at the moment through formal pacts due to the fact that it would needlessly limit flexibility, there is no guarantee that this attitude will be maintained. Indeed, it is quite feasible that Indonesia does not wish to see the crystallization or attempted implementation of any long-term proposal for the region at present, until its own military capabilities have been built up. It may even be in this context that Indonesia's planned possession of nuclear armaments in 1985 was announced in July 1974 - while it was termed an 'armament of peace' this could be because it was conceived as an instrument to maintain peace in the Southeast Asian region. (58) In such a case the 'militarizing' of ASEAN might be reconsidered. Certainly Indonesia has already gained from ASEAN regionalism, that it would also stand to gain from a successful 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' is beyond doubt - the uncertain factor is how to achieve the latter without risking insecurity.

4. It is interesting to note that the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who is now perhaps the most pessimistic of ASEAN Heads of State about the prospects of a neutralized Southeast Asia, suggested neutralization for the region himself as early as April 1966, when speaking at a meeting of the Socialist International in Sweden. (59) Conditions and attitudes, however, have changed since then and Lee Kuan Yew now assesses of the situation in a different light. Given the neutralization proposal the concept must now prove its feasibility rather than residing in the realm of rhetorical notions. Hence while Lee Kuan Yew welcomed the discussion of neutralization - saying in March 1971 that the Malaysian proposal was 'the best answer' for the region, provided the Great Powers agreed to it -

(57) Bulletin Today, 15 May, 1974
(58) Indonesian Newsletter, 31 July, 1974. 74/20
(59) Straits Times, 28 April, 1966
he told a seminar on Communism and Democracy, in May, that - 'we must... be realistic and expect that there will be considerable competition for influence among the major powers over this region.' (60) In November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was in Kuala Lumpur to sign the Declaration. There, Mr. Rajaratnam stressed the need to reach agreement on the meaning of the neutralization concept; to have the total and sincere agreement of the big powers; to win over the support of the other countries in the region and to concentrate on ensuring individual domestic stability and strength. Given such a situation neutralization of the region was declared to be 'theoretically... the most perfect of all the solutions that could be thought of'. (61)

However, as the pragmatic Prime Minister has invariably pointed out a 'Shangri-la Southeast Asia' is not possible - particularly if it depends on the 'total and sincere agreement' of the major powers. In July 1972, he told 'Newsweek' that he would like the United States to maintain sufficient presence in Southeast Asia after the Vietnam war to stop another power, or group of powers, from gaining complete hegemony over the area. He did not think that they needed bases to do that, as the Soviet Union did not have bases and 'they are extending their influence all right'. (62) By December, however, in a debate on the B.B.C., Lee Kuan Yew said that he would be 'most alarmed' if the Americans withdrew militarily from Thailand; at this point he appeared to support a version of the famed 'domino theory' - declaring that if South Vietnam were to become communist, then Laos and Cambodia would not be far behind, and without Thailand 'as a buffer' communism would spread 'through accretion from contiguous areas' into the Malay peninsula. In short, Thailand was the linchpin that must be protected at all costs. (63) Furthermore, unlike his earlier stand that American bases were not necessary, Lee continued to speak in terms of American forces in Thailand, finally provoking a protest from Adam Malik who pointed out that Singapore had never submitted such a suggestion to meetings of ASEAN. (64) Mr. Rajaratnam took a more moderate line saying that the presence of American

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(60) Sunday Times (Singapore), 21 March, 1971; 9 May, 1971
(61) Asian Almanac 1972, Vol. IO, No. 2. 15 January, 1972. 4980/1
(63) The Mirror (Singapore) 6 November, 1972
(64) Indonesian Newsletter, 2 July, 1973. 73/26.
military bases in Thailand had not militated against neutralization of
the region because when the big powers guaranteed that neutrality the
Thais were certain to ask the Americans to go home - with a vote of
thanks. However, since as yet there had been little sign of the required
guarantees the issue was rather theoretical. (65)

What distinguishes Lee Kuan Yew from his ASEAN colleagues
in their considerations over the future of the region is that the former,
rather than favouring the neutralization of Southeast Asia would prefer
to see it being satisfactorily internationalized. For Singaporean thinking
the basic premise is that the Great Powers are unlikely to act as guarantors,
ḥence some solution must be found that will prevent the region from being
carved up into spheres of influence for the latter. On the occasion of
the visit of the Yugoslav Prime Minister, in March 1973, Lee argued that
'for the small countries, the question now is not how to avoid being sucked
into warring camps of the Great Powers, but how to have their interests
taken into consideration when the Great Powers reach their compromises'. (66)
This is going one step further - for it is unlikely that the Great Powers will
bother to consider the interests of the smaller Southeast Asian countries
unless the latter are economically powerful and/or politically significant.
As Great Power detente would appear to be undermining the last, economic
strength is undoubtedly the factor that Singapore is relying on for notice -
particularly with the potential scramble for off-shore oil resources in the
region. Indeed, both Lee Kuan Yew and Rajaratnam have repeatedly
emphasized that:-

"...Unless we are economically viable other countries will listen to
us with great politeness and very little else. Therefore, ASEAN
must first be economically viable before others will listen to us." (67)

If there is a Singaporean obsession which rivals the Philippine one with
national identity, it is to be a proven viable and respected independent
entity - one of the reasons for its fear that in a neutralized Southeast Asia
it might be swamped by a tide of larger, more populous but underdeveloped

(65) Straits Times, 10 April, 1973
    Bangkok Post, 15 April, 1973
(66) Sunday Times, (Singapore), 18 March, 1973
(67) The Mirror (Singapore), 20 May, 1974; 11 November, 1974
countries, particularly its neighbouring Malay states. It is hoped that the continued involvement of the Great Powers in the area - whose competing interests will, in theory, cancel one another out - would relieve Singapore from the potential pressures of its neighbours. (68)

The security 'mix' that Lee Kuan Yew has envisaged has gone through a number of stages. In early 1971, for example, he suggested that a Soviet naval fleet in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea could be useful as 'a counterpoise to China's weight leaning on the littoral countries of Asia'. He also hoped that Britain, New Zealand and Australia would retain a military presence in Malaysia-Singapore and that the United States Seventh Fleet would stay in the area. With the run-down of the Five Power forces the emphasis has shifted to the Seventh Fleet. By May 1973, Premier Lee was in Tokyo proposing that Japan, the United States, Australia and various European powers, should form a permanent joint naval task-force to patrol Southeast Asian waters in order to keep the peace and match the growing Soviet influence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. According to Lee, this would result in counter-balancing forces that would achieve a certain degree of equilibrium. The latter being the focal point of the various proposals. When questioned about the basic contradiction between his idea of involving extraregional powers in Southeast Asian affairs and the concept of neutralizing Southeast Asia by eliminating undesirable foreign interference and influence, he replied that while all were agreed that the ideal solution would be to aim for a secure and stable Southeast Asia, free from all pressures and influences, this objective would take some time to achieve. However, within the next twenty-five years, barring sudden changes in trends, the region would have to face a triangular equation - of China, Russia and America - and that someway or other a balance would have to be maintained between the three. (69) While admitting that his idea was in direct contradiction to the ASEAN concept, Lee Kuan Yew excused this on the basis that the latter


(69) *National Times*, 23-28 July, 1973
was not operable in the immediate future. Indeed, the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, was to say that he did not think that neutralization was practicable in the next twenty-five years, unless the super-powers and the middling powers changed their habits. (70) Singapore, in the meantime, shows little sign of encouraging such a change. Should the conditions for neutralization of the region develop, it is unlikely that Singapore would refuse to go along with its four ASEAN colleagues - however, the Singaporean attitude remains that if such a situation does not materialize then there are alternatives to be considered, and preferably ones that will maintain Singapore's security and status.

As the initiator and foremost advocate of the neutralization of Southeast Asia, the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration was a triumph for Malaysian diplomacy. Speaking at that conference, Tun Razak announced that ASEAN members would have to undertake three major steps to make the neutrality concept a reality - a show of determination by themselves to exist as sovereign, independent states free from external interference; an approach to other countries in Southeast Asia to commit themselves to the principle of neutrality; and an approach to the big powers, especially China, the United States and the Soviet Union to guarantee the neutrality. Referring to defence arrangements, Tun Razak said that all countries in the region must ensure that they would not be used in any conflict. Ultimately when the Great Powers had accepted neutralization the question of bases and treaties would be phased out. 'If we can get outside powers to respect us, then we don't need any security arrangement. Once peace and security have been achieved such arrangements do not arise. Neutralization will never involve a military alliance', he said. (71) The latter section of the Tun's Address was perhaps a reflection of the idealistic level on which discussions concerning neutralization tended to take place at this early stage - that peace and stability once achieved would be the status quo situation. However, even the fact that the Kuala Lumpur Declaration - with its emphasis on a 'Zone of Peace, Freedom

(70) The Age, 29 August, 1974

and Neutrality' - fell short of the original Malaysian proposal must have opened the latter's eyes to the position where the acceptance of neutralization was by no means a foregone conclusion.

In line with its commitment to neutralization, Malaysia's foreign policy continued to shift from a total commitment to the West to a non-aligned stance; while endeavours to secure neutralization by the steps outlined by Tun Razak above, formed the central element of that foreign policy. In 1972, anxious to enhance his country's non-aligned image and to gain acceptance for the concept of neutralization, Tun Razak made a three week state visit to Switzerland, Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union. The neutralization proposal was explained to the Russian leaders, but no endorsement was requested or received. The visits to Austria and Switzerland were undoubtedly symbolic - although an unexpected 'bonus' was the meeting in Vienna between the Prime Minister and the Chinese Ambassador to Austria - and Poland proved itself ready to receive the proposal warmly. Although Tun Razak claimed that the Great Powers would not be approached as prospective 'guarantors' for neutralization until all the countries in the region agreed to it (72) Malaysia has worked steadily itself towards improving its relations with all the major powers. A notable triumph was the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. As the first ASEAN country to blaze the Peking trail, the consequences - if any - will obviously be closely watched by its ASEAN colleagues, each of whom have a multiplicity of reasons why they should not follow Malaysia's example.

On the question of bases in Southeast Asia there is the continuing inconsistency between Malaysia's participation in the Five Power Defence Agreement and the country's pursuit of non-alignment, although this has been reduced in recent years due to the run-down of the ANZUK forces. However, in March, 1973, the then Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Ismail, was still insisting that the Five Power Agreement was necessary because of the 'fluid situation' in the region. He added that when neutralization

(72) Straits Times, 20 January, 1972
of Southeast Asia is phased in, the defence arrangement can be phased out. (73) This would appear to be the consistent Malaysian stand on this issue – as early as March, 1971, Tun Razak told the Malaysian Parliament:–

"As long as Malaysia's intention to make Southeast Asia an area of peace and calm has not yet been achieved, Malaysia is forced to take measures it thinks fit to ensure the nation's security." (74) Increasingly, in recent years more emphasis has been placed on the Indonesian notion of 'national resiliency' with respect to security – particularly internal security where domestic forces have proved successful in controlling communist insurgents in the past year. (75) Moreover, as the Malaysian Minister for Internal Affairs, told a conference on Regionalism in Southeast Asia:–

"In time each state of Southeast Asia will attain national resilience, a process that will be greatly aided by intra-regional harmony and external power disengagement from the region." (76) Given this simultaneous development of internal national resilience and Southeast Asian regionalism, Malaysia has declared itself undisturbed by the prospect of a power vacuum should the United States withdraw its forces from the region. Furthermore, in the event of internal stability that is difficult to handle – such as communist insurgency – Tun Razak suggested that Southeast Asian countries could call on friendly regional neighbours for aid. Despite this it has been asserted that Malaysia has no intention of forming a defence arrangement with its ASEAN counterparts, but rather relying on bilateral agreements for defence cooperation. (77) In an effort to dissociate itself from pro-Western and extraregional pacts, Malaysia made a point of withdrawing from ASPAC in March 1973. (78)

(73) The Age, 27 March, 1971
(74) Djakarta Times, 15 March, 1971
Straits Times, 20 June, 1972; 4 October, 1972.; 16 April, 1973
(76) Indonesian Times, 25 October, 1974
(77) Straits Times, 13 December, 1972.; 6 February, 1973
Besides the work calculated to enhance the standing and feasibility of the neutralization concept in the eyes of the Great Powers and of the world, Malaysia has endeavoured to improve its relations with the Southeast Asian states outside ASEAN. To the latter it has broached the subject of neutralization, in the process establishing diplomatic relations with Hanoi - Indonesia being the only ASEAN country to have diplomatic links with North Vietnam prior to Malaysia. Improved relations with Indonesia include economic and technical cooperation; joint border control committees aimed against communist insurgents; a common spelling system and a joint decision to extend their respective territorial waters from three to twelve miles, in effect declaring the Straits of Malacca to be national waters of the two nations. The latter was objected to by the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union and Singapore who favour free passage through the Straits; but while Malaysia and Indonesia conceded the 'right of innocent passage' they were opposed to the internationalization of the waterway, or passage for tankers exceeding 200,000 tons. This, however, is a question that remains as-yet unsolved.

As has been noted above, Malaysian relations with two other ASEAN members - Thailand and the Philippines - have not been so cordial; although Malaysian-Thai relations would have appeared to have been marred by suspicion rather than any danger of a direct break. With Singapore, a realistic approach to common problems is encouraging relations to return to an even keel after the traumatic period which followed the Republic's expulsion from the Malaysian Federation. The fear that Malaysia's reputation and position as the pacesetter of ASEAN might remove it somewhat from its colleagues does not appear likely to be realized as long as neutralization continues to be viewed by Foreign Office officials as a long-term concept - and particularly if the problems and apprehensions of Malaysia's neighbours are not overlooked in the heady atmosphere of Great Power relations.
THE QUANDARY:

From the foregoing consideration of the mousedeer it can be seen that the very sweep of the neutralization proposals gives rise to serious difficulties. Despite apparent agreements over definitions at the ASEAN committee level, the primary difficulty resides in differing concepts of regional neutrality. On the one hand, Singapore would appear to favour internationalization of the region; on the other, Malaysia is calling for the virtual exclusion of such powers. Moreover, while Indonesia supports the latter stand it approaches it from the level of expanding 'national resiliency', whereas others favour the regional approach. Meanwhile, Thailand and the Philippines continue to host substantial numbers of American troops and bases.

Outside the ASEAN members are five other states that have to be considered - although the ASEAN committee agreed in June 1973 that the neutrality zone should initially include only the five ASEAN members. It was to be left open-ended to include North and South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Burma at a later stage, (79) this being a change from the original Malaysian position on the issue. Of the Outer Five - Lon Nol's Khmer Republic (Cambodia) announced official support for neutralization in February 1972; Laos as early as April 1971; and Tun Razak, at the end of discussions with General Ne Win, in February 1972, stated that Burma backed neutralization but would 'take part in a regional plan only if the other countries are genuinely neutral'. (80) Hanoi and Saigon have both been less forthcoming on the matter - much depending on the conclusion of their struggle.

Given this complex mix of countries the joint adoption of neutrality could rather resemble 'the formation of a party of independent M.P's: either they act as a party and cease being independents, or their

(79) Straits Times, 23 June, 1973
(80) Straits Times, 21 February, 1972
party group disintegrates under the stress of their diverse policies'. (81)
On the other hand, they could agree to accept one link in common -
nutrality - and be otherwise independent; an independence that would
probably be considerably fuller than that experienced by many Southeast
Asian states over the past two or three decades. The latter fact would
appear to be recognized by the countries of the region - the fear, however,
is that security would have to be bartered for this independence. It is
here that both the development of an effective regionalism and individual
'national resiliency' must be brought to bear. The latter for reasons of
internal security; the former because it could - if necessary - be utilized
as both a defence and a mediatory mechanism, besides giving regional
governments a vested interest in driving the 'burglar from the house',
to borrow Adam Malik's metaphor.

While the development of both regionalism and a greater
individual self-confidence has been a hopeful sign over the past years -
there is little hope that the mousedeer will be able to resolve their
quandary in the near future without some sign of acquiescence from the
elephants. Progress has indeed been made towards a 'Zone of Peace,
Freedom and Neutrality', but its eventual realization will depend largely
on decisions made by extraregional forces and how they can be manipulated
in favour of the mousedeers' aspirations.

(81) 'Neutrality within the Asian System of Powers', A. Stargardt.
New Directions in the International Relations of Southeast Asia
(International Relations) Lau Teik Soon, ed. (Singapore University
Press, 1973) p. III.
CONCLUSION:

LITTLE REST FOR THE EXHAUSTED MOUSEDEER:

The Malaysia proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia has been under discussion for some seven years now. The Great Power response which was one of the prerequisites for the realization of the scheme has, however, been ambiguous. It is true that these years have been busy ones for the Great Powers themselves in that they have established a more flexible network of relationships, which in turn has served to undermine the crude philosophy of bipolarity - 'them and us'. Examined in the Asian context this new balance of power undoubtedly favours the United States - China and the Soviet Union being hampered by their rift; while Japan has not yet brought its full potential weight to bear on the situation. The doctrines of the three Great Powers in relation to Southeast Asia are set in the context of this new balance of power. China claims to be the natural leader of the Third World and hence, automatically, the dominant influence in Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union seeks to curtail Chinese influence by expanding its own significance in the region. The United States wishes to make good its large scale military, political and economic investment in Southeast Asia by maintaining its influence there at little further cost to itself - in President Nixon's terms, 'Peace with honour'. In practice, however, these contradictory aims have led to a number of Great Power compromises grounded in the present Chinese weakness vis-à-vis the two super-powers.

From the viewpoint of the Great Powers, how do the costs of a neutralized Southeast Asia balance against the benefits accruing from the latter? Successful neutralization would cost China little except the reconciliation of the ambiguous dual policy that it has been accused of following. Should the region become stabilized, the prospects for effective subversion would be diminished and the Chinese impact could be established by more orthodox channels. It is
certain, given the historical and geographical relationship of China to Southeast Asia that irrespective of what arrangements are reached Chinese influence on the region will be significant. As for the Soviet Union, successful neutralization would also cost it little - in the short term at any rate - whilst it might achieve both the erosion of the American presence in the area and the containment of any concrete Chinese expansion. On the other hand, the physical encirclement of China would be prevented, and in the long-term there is the growth of Chinese influence in the region to be feared. For the United States the costs are both tangible and intangible - withdrawal would mean a decline in its influence, but above all there is the openly expressed fear that the credibility of U.S. commitments elsewhere would be undermined. However, it would appear possible that domestic benefits would outweigh, and have outweighed, such considerations. America's continued military and economic aid to the region might well off-set the undermining of its political influence - but here it might yet have to enter into competition with the other Great Powers and the American Congress might veto the indefinite continuation of such aid. This whole question of economic aid to a neutral Southeast Asia raises the issue of what constitutes 'interference' in internal affairs, but this rather tangled question will not be dealt with here.

It may be seen that the benefits are chiefly derived from the successful realization of neutralization, whereas the costs are mainly entailed in the agreement to implement the proposal. This inevitably leads to the question - but if the scheme fails, what then? And even more relevant to the Great Powers, the query, what do we lose in the process? Furthermore, caution gives rise to the vicious circle as to which should come first - the withdrawal of American bases from Southeast Asia or the proof that neutralization will work. A legion of 'ifs' and 'buts' confront the proposal which makes the ambiguous attitudes of the Great Powers almost understandable.

The Chinese have - with good reason - been the most open in their support for neutralization of the region, repeating a number of times that not only will China never seek hegemony over the region, but that it will oppose
efforts by other powers to establish such hegemony. (1) The Soviet Union has been less outspokenly in favour of neutralization as its attention was rather taken up with its own proposal for a collective security system for Asia. As pointed out already the Soviet attitude has become quite moderate both with regard to ASEAN and the neutralization proposal. Lack of acceptance of the collective security plan in Southeast Asia would appear to have prompted the Soviet Union to equate collective security with neutralization for Southeast Asian consumption in the hope that the former would gain greater acceptability. Nevertheless, governments of the region have made it clear that for them their indigenous plan is preferable, and if the equating of the two is in fact a tacit approval of the latter, then so be it. Such approval may also be seen in the Polish support for neutralization. As the country with the most to lose from the arrangement, it is natural that the United States would be the most ambiguous in its attitude to the proposal. On 10 November, 1971, an United States State Department spokesman said that the United States had not agreed in principle to the neutralization of Southeast Asia (2), and by the end of 1974, private correspondence from the U.S. Embassy in Canberra (Australia), still declared that:

"Pending a clarification of the extent and purposes of the Zone (of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality) the United States has taken no position on it."

This being a similar stand to those taken in the intervening years. (4) The most positive official statements were those which designated neutralization as 'a worthy long-term goal'. On the negative side, the United States Ambassador to the Philippines, Mr. W. Sullivan, said that Peking and Moscow were manoeuvring to draw into their camps one or another of the states in Asia, hence:

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*Straits Times*, 31 March, 1973


"Neutralization in the sense of Switzerland is something that is almost impossible for nations in Southeast Asia to contemplate. In my judgement, even attempting to make a sort of tropical Scandinavia out of Southeast Asia will probably not also be in the cards." (5)

However, more flexibility is perceived in less obvious statements - the communique signed between the United States and North Vietnam on the occasion of Dr. Kissinger's visit to Hanoi, on 4 February, 1973, declared that complete and serious fulfillment of the Paris agreement on a ceasefire would make a positive contribution to peace in Southeast Asia 'on the basis of full respect for the independence and neutrality of the countries of that region'. (6) Although Indo China was the region referred to it is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. Furthermore, acceptance of neutralization by the other two Powers and pressure for it from the Southeast Asian states would also have an impact on the American attitude - an attitude that given the Nixon Doctrine may be open to change on the issue in any case.

However, the states of Southeast Asia have not always been applying pressure for identical ends, although recent years have seen increasing agreement, with Singapore being the notable exception. Although this agreement on neutralization remains, as yet, in the realm of theory, there has been a degree of harmonization of economic and political interests through ASEAN. Furthermore, the latter has been active and effective in defusing internal disputes between members. These developments augur well on the basis that the realization of long-term gain may yet prevail over the short-term. Even granted this increasing agreement, however, it may be argued that countries in Southeast Asia have little bargaining power in their relations with the Great Powers. As against this, weakness - as Thomas Schelling has observed - can often prove an asset in international political 'bargaining', often a better one than bluffing strength. (7)

This, indeed, has been borne out by Asian governments playing on threats arising from their proximity to conflicts in Indo China, as well as the dangers of their internal insurgents, to extract aid from the United States. It is true that it requires

(5) Straits Times, 26 September, 1973
(6) Girling - Op. Cit. - p. 130
more complicated diplomacy to maintain relations with three Great Powers at once - but the latter situation also provides an element of flexibility that was lost in the first. Suspicion about the reliability of all the major powers makes this element of flexibility in relations an invaluable asset to Southeast Asian governments. Furthermore, close links with one or other of the major powers not only does not guarantee security, but they invite opposition from those other powers that are not favoured. Hence, Thanat Khoman’s suggestion that close links with the United States might even become a ‘liability.

It is true that formal neutralization - as discussed in the Introduction - might invite a reassertion of rigidity since it would entail obligations being placed on the guarantors to come to the assistance of the neutralized region if the latter was violated by outside aggression. As illustrated in history, however, the interpretation by the guarantors of their obligations is not above dispute - depending on the national interests of the latter. In the case of neutralized Belgium (neutralized in 1839) the British Prime Minister, Derby, stated that ‘a collective guarantee is one that is binding on all parties collectively, but which if any difference of opinion should arise, no one of them should be called upon to take it upon itself the task of vindicating through force of arms’. (8) Prussia, on the other hand, interpreted the guarantees involved in the neutralization of Belgium as unconditionally binding upon each of the signatories, and this it believed had been secured by the treaty. It is true that such ambiguities can be catered for, but even the best formal agreement is subject to loopholes being found or differing interpretations being taken. Hence, formal neutralization could well mean increased Great Power involvement and conflict in Southeast Asia, particularly as it raises problems of maintenance and enforcement - both of which would be more difficult as the area under discussion is a region rather than a single national entity. In short, formal neutralization can only be successfully realized if the interests of the states concerned are sufficiently convergent, and if the participants include other states than those with vested interests in the neutralized area.

Since the initial Malaysian proposal, the emphasis has shifted somewhat to the "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality", even though the 1971

Declaration did appear to view neutralization as the ultimate goal. This was later changed - in July 1972 - to neutralization being "as means of establishing Southeast Asia as a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality'", and only one of the means to be considered at that. This more flexible concept is envisaged as being realized through Great Power agreement, but without necessarily having these Great Powers as guarantors. Hence the regional states would be considerably freer to define their own terms as they have hitherto been doing in the field of theory. From such definitions the status coveted would appear similar to that of Switzerland (9), and a guarantee of both independence and inviolability of territory - although this is not necessary and might slow down the process of neutrality until territorial disputes such as the Sabah question are resolved, if they will be. Furthermore, Southeast Asian governments would undoubtedly agree with the Swiss reply to a note received in 1917, in which the governments of France, the United States and Britain had attached certain conditions to Swiss neutrality and the inviolability of Swiss territory. The Swiss said:

"The Confederation claims the sole right of deciding whether, and on what terms, it will recognize the necessity of calling in the help of foreign powers." (10)

However, this may only be a grace granted to the old man of neutrality and in newer adherents may be considered an impudence.

Significant steps have been taken in pursuit of this less formal approach - including during the third meeting of the Neutralization Committee, the suggestion that instead of seeking iron-clad guarantees from external powers on the proposed zone of neutrality, these powers could be allowed to recognize and respect the zone. In other words that a specific blueprint would be drafted embodying the neutrality proposals which could then be shown and agreed to by the Great Powers. Undoubtedly there would have to be some bargaining to achieve a blueprint acceptable to all, but this is only to be expected. If such developments occurred it is apparent to all that the American forces would have to be removed from Southeast Asia, as would all external forces. However,

(9) Neutrality as a Principle of Swiss Foreign Policy, W. Hofer (Schweizer Spiegel Verlag, 1957) - Hofer claims that Swiss literature on the subject, not surprisingly, argue that there was a guarantee. However, strictly speaking there was only a recognition.

(10) Ibid. This was to be confirmed in Art. 435 of the Treaty of Versailles.
the build-up of an American presence in the West Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the waters off Southeast Asia would suggest that the United States is preparing an alternative—a particularly effective alternative as the nuclear balance with the Soviet Union is now primarily operated by missile-carrying submarines. It is also possible that a continued limited American presence in such places as Ramasun, or even a naval base of reduced size in the Philippines, could be bartered for the final demise of SEATO—which may indeed have been maintained to be used as just such a bargaining card for either the United States or its two Asian members. Taking into account the aims of the cornerstones of the Asian triangular balance, China's present interest in preventing U.S. isolationism due to fear of Soviet expansion could be equally well realized by an American maritime presence in the region; whilst, the withdrawal of U.S. territorial forces would increase Chinese ideological prestige and, at the same time, would increase the opportunities for Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. The Soviet ambition to prevent an over-close Sino-American collusion would be aided by the reduced American presence and interest in Asia, and the likely growth of Sino-American competition for influence and economic gain in Southeast Asia. The United States, on the other hand, could maintain its role as 'balancer' in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Outside these three powers, Japan, for economic reasons should be quite satisfied to see Southeast Asia removed from the arena of Great Power conflict—although an increased self-confidence and sense of autonomy in the region would undoubtedly force Japan to change its approach, due to the obvious resentment caused by the latter. The argument that a less formal agreement, such as is proposed, would be less secure than a formal neutralization treaty is doubtful when the perceived national interests of the Great Powers are involved—as they are here. After all the discussion, whether it will be possible to achieve such an agreement is another question. It is in the interest of each of the Great Powers that neither of the others attain hegemony in the region, but the crucial question still stands—are they each prepared to exercise the self-restraint that is demanded?

The same question could be applied to the Southeast Asian states themselves, as intense intraregional conflict merely invites Great Power intervention. It is necessary for effective regional machinery to regulate such
disputes to be established, but there is also a need for a psychological change as the historical records show that most Southeast Asian governments facing domestic crises turn for aid to foreign powers, thus involving the latter automatically.

(I1) If Southeast Asia is to become a region of neutrality in a real sense this almost structurally dependent relationship with the Great Powers will have to be changed. In its stead emphasis should be placed on the structuring of viable national entities - a task that has not been well accomplished in this region.

When the term 'mousedeer' was used above it was generally in the context of the governments of Southeast Asia, as against the 'elephants' who represented the Great Power governments. This was justified on the grounds that it is, in fact, the governments of the region - and often only a small elite within these governments - that are negotiating their 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' with the Great Power governments. However, the eventual success of this concept - if it is given the opportunity to succeed will depend on the total mousedeer, government and people. Given the conditions of many of the latter internal stability would not appear realistic where the only answer provided by their governments to legitimate grievances is further repression. Relating this situation to the question of security that so obsesses these same governments and has, in part, prompted them into investigating such solutions as the proposed 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality', that timeless realist, Machiavelli should be given the last word:-

"The Prince who is more afraid of his own people than of foreign interference should build fortresses; but the Prince who fears foreign interference more than his own people should forget about them... (For) the best fortress that exists is to avoid being hated by the people. If you have fortresses and yet the people hate you they will not save you...." (12)

APPENDIX I

MEETING OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS
OF ASEAN
MEMBER COUNTRIES

DECLARATION AND
JOINT COMMUNIQUE

26th - 27th NOVEMBER, 1971
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
DECLARATION

WE, the Foreign Ministers of

INDONESIA
MALAYSIA
THE PHILIPPINES
SINGAPORE
And the Special Envoy of the
National Executive Council of
THAILAND:

FIRMLY BELIEVING in the merits of regional co-operation which has
donned our countries to co-operate together in the economic,
social and cultural fields in the Association of Southeast Asian
Nations;

DESIROUS of bringing about a relaxation of international tension
and of achieving a lasting peace in Southeast Asia;

INSPIRED by the worthy aims and objectives of the United Nations, in
particular by the principles of respect for the sovereignty and
territorial integrity of all States, abstention from the threat or
use of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, equal
rights and self-determination and non-interference in the internal
affairs of States;

BELIEVING in the continuing validity of the "Declaration on the Promotion
of World Peace and Co-operation" of the Bandung Conference of
1955, which, among others, enunciates the principles by which
States may co-exist peacefully;
RECOGNISING the right of every State, large or small, to lead its national existence free from outside interference in its internal affairs as this interference will adversely affect its freedom, independence and integrity;

DEDICATED to the maintenance of peace, freedom and independence unimpaired;

BELIEVING in the need to meet present challenges and new developments by co-operating with all peace and freedom loving nations, both within and outside the region, in the furtherance of world peace, stability and harmony;

COGNIZANT of the significant trend towards establishing nuclear-free zones, as in the "Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America" and the Lusaka Declaration proclaiming Africa a nuclear-free zone, for the purpose of promoting world peace and security by reducing the areas of international conflicts and tensions;

REITERATING our commitment to the principle in the Bangkok Declaration which established ASEAN in 1967, "that the countries of Southeast Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development, and that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples";
AGREEING that the neutralization of Southeast Asia is a desirable objective, and that we should explore ways and means of bringing about its realization, and

CONVINCED that the time is propitious for joint action to give effective expression to the deeply felt desire of the peoples of Southeast Asia to ensure the conditions of peace and stability indispensable to their independence and their economic and social well-being:

DO HEREBY STATE

(1) that Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for, Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers;

(2) that Southeast Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of co-operation which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.

Done at Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, the 27th November, 1971.

On behalf of the

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

(Adam Malik)
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On behalf of

MALAYSIA

(Tun Abdul Razak bin Dato Hussein)
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.
On behalf of the
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

(Carlos P. Romulo)
Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

On behalf of the
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

(S. Rajaratnam)
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On behalf of the
KINGDOM OF THAILAND

(Thanat Khoman)
Special Envoy of the National Executive Council.
JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Joint Communique issued at the end of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASEAN countries in Kuala Lumpur.

As agreed at their meeting in New York on 2nd October 1971, a Meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASEAN countries was held in Kuala Lumpur on 26th - 27th November 1971. The meeting was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia His Excellency Tun Adam Malik, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia His Excellency Tun Abdul Razak bin Dato Hussein, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines His Excellency Dr. Carlos P. Romulo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore His Excellency Mr. S. Rajaratnam and the Special Envoy of the National Executive Council of Thailand His Excellency Tun Thanat Khoman. The Foreign Ministers' Meeting was preceded by a meeting of their officials on the 25th - 26th November 1971.

The Meeting was held in a very informal and friendly atmosphere and was characterized by free and frank discussions in the spirit of regional co-operation and consultation among ASEAN member countries.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy exchanged views and discussed matters of mutual interest concerning recent developments in the international situation as they affect the region of Southeast Asia.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy agreed to continue to consult each other with a view to fostering an integrated approach on all matters and developments which affect the Southeast Asian region.

At the end of their deliberations, the Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy signed and issued a Declaration in which they stated their determination to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of and respect for Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers, and also stated that Southeast Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden
the areas of co-operation which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy agreed that their concern for peace and stability should be manifested through a meeting at the highest level. They accordingly agreed to recommend that a Summit Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the members of ASEAN be held in Manila at a date to be announced later.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy also agreed that they would bring the contents of their Declaration to the attention of the other countries of Southeast Asia and would encourage them to associate themselves with the aspirations and objectives expressed in the Declaration.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy also agreed to establish a Committee of Senior Officials initially of the ASEAN countries to study and consider what further necessary steps should be taken to bring about the realization of their objectives. The Committee would be convened in Malaysia.

The Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy expressed their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Malaysia for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them during the meeting.
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