

What Happens After



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THE answer to the question, "What happens after Vietnam?" should determine, to a large extent, the outcome of the war. The solution for the Vietnam war should be consistent with what we expect and want to happen after that war. If our national objectives are to be achieved, we must be certain that the Vietnam war settlement advances us toward attainment of long-range foreign policy goals. Karl von Clausewitz's observation that "war is the continuation of politics by other means" was never more applicable.

This emphasizes the need for delineation of our long-range objectives in Asia. The domestic and international turmoil surrounding US involvement in Vietnam dramatizes the lack of agreement on what the US's role and objectives are or ought to be in Asia. If the US goals in Asia could be agreed upon domestically, then the arguments concerning the Vietnam war itself could be narrowed drastically. It is important, therefore, to determine our national goals and strategy in Asia and direct our actions in Vietnam accordingly.

First Step

The first step in such an appraisal is to determine our interests and evaluate the threat to them. Do we have vital national interests in Asia? If so, how are they jeopardized and by whom?

There is no shortage of opinions bearing on this issue. It is difficult, for example, to ignore the views of such prominent scholars and diplomats as Edwin O. Reischauer, former Ambassador to Japan, who has suggested that the Orient is not immediately vital to American interests.

Although Ambassador Reischauer

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is far from alone in holding this view, the overwhelming evidence is that we do, indeed, have vital interests in Asia. Our history of involvement in Asia long before Pearl Harbor is proof enough. Vietnam is only the most recent dramatic demonstration of the conviction of several administrations that our security is interlinked with other nations of the Pacific. It has been affirmed again and again by Government officials.

The debate becomes most intense upon the point of how and by whom our interests in Asia are jeopardized. For the most part, it rages about whether China is or is not a threat. Many feel that the dangers of Chinese communism have been exaggerated, that nationalism is a more powerful force in Asia. Ambassador Reischauer went so far as to say that a Communist-dominated Vietnam would have been independent and not a menace to her neighbors or to world peace.

Opposing View

The opposing view is heard more frequently and is more logically persuasive. Secretary of State Dean Rusk recently raised the specter of "a billion Chinese on the mainland, armed with nuclear weapons." India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi not long ago reminded her countrymen:

Whatever else has changed in the last five years, China's aggressive posture has not stopped. Indeed, China has continued to show hostility to India. . . . Let us be on guard against this continuing menace.

Recognition of the direct threat of China's growing nuclear power to the United States is amply demonstrated by the decision to deploy a thin anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system as defense against Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's).

The belatedness of the public debate and the sudden interest are indicative of how little the US public has appreciated the power and danger of Communist China as they relate to the United States. It is upon this point—the threat of China to the

The best evidence points to the simple fact that Communist China does constitute a threat not only to Asia now, but to the United States in the future. It would be unwise and possibly fatally imprudent to assume otherwise. The threat to the United



Communist Chinese actions give every indication of expansionist ambitions and aggressive plans

United States, to Asia, and to the world balance of power—that our Asian policy hinges. If China has no ambitions beyond her borders, either nationalistic or ideological, then the US strategy toward Asia can be simply formulated. If, on the other hand, China has ambitions and aggressive plans, then our strategy must take a different form and direction.

States consists of the consequences of a shifting balance of power in favor of the Chinese and the potential use of ICBM-transported nuclear weapons in a strategic attack upon the US homeland.

Under most conceivable circumstances, an attack by the Chinese upon the continental United States with nuclear weapons—or any weapons for

that matter—would seem to be an irrational action certain to bring about devastation of China's population centers, industry, and economy. Our strategic retaliatory forces are overwhelming, and our forthcoming ABM system should provide adequate defense of US cities against a Chinese nuclear attack.

Resources and Resolve

The more difficult problem is that of maintaining the balance of power in Asia and, to a larger extent, throughout the world. What this amounts to is basically a strategy of containment. This strategy served the Free World well in Europe where the USSR was contained while the Russian Communists underwent a transformation toward more moderate views regarding expansion and the use of military force. Two important ingredients are required to make the strategy successful—resources and resolve.

There can be no doubt that the strategy is but a hollow bluff if we are not determined to expend our national blood and economic wealth to validate it. We must be willing to commit the resources—men, material, and money—and we must have the national will to persist in the commitment over a period of many years. Containing China will be no short-term proposition. It will require a trait of character not common to the US public—patience.

There are alternatives to containing China, but they have serious and unacceptable disadvantages. At opposite ends of the logic scale are the alternatives of abandoning Asia to the Chinese on one hand and destroying China as a world power on the other. The mind rebels somewhat at the thought of such actions, but it is in-

teresting to note that the United States has the capability and, in some circles, the inclination to do either. Furthermore, the frustrations and demands of persisting in the strategy of containment may, from time to time, tempt us to resort to such extremes.

Aggressive Intentions

Abandoning Asia to the Chinese would be tolerable only with the conviction that China has no major nationalistic or ideological expansionist aspirations, or that, if granted such aspirations, she lacked the capability to carry them out, or that, finally, an Asia dominated by China would not constitute an unfavorable shift in the world balance of power and a consequent threat to US national interests, especially security. It seems clear enough, however, that China does have aggressive intentions accompanied by formidable national power, and that a Chinese-controlled Asia would be inimical to US well being.

There is no more reason to accept an Asia dominated by China in the 1970's than there was to accept Japanese domination of the same area in the 1940's. Our national interests are surely as important there now as they were during World War II. US interests aside, our withdrawal would be a serious betrayal of free Asians, a rejection of moral responsibility unworthy of a great power.

If, at the other extreme, there is a conviction that China is inalterably determined to dominate Asia, that military might is growing steadily more dangerous, that the nature of Chinese leadership will grow ever more hostile rather than cordial, and, finally, therefore, that war is inevitable, then, perhaps, the United States should initiate preventive war before

the relative military power of the two nations increases in favor of China.

Without discussing the moral or pragmatic aspects, it is not credible that US public support, much less international sympathy, could be mustered in favor of preventive war, however beneficial to the United States or to the world such an act might be in the long run.

Lacking US willingness either to withdraw completely from Asia or to precipitate a war with China, we are left essentially with the policy of containment. An attendant problem is that of formulating a military strategy to implement the policy.

There are several approaches to the strategy which differ mainly in the extent of US withdrawal from Asia. Depending upon how tight containment is to be and the extent to which US forces are to be involved, withdrawal might be back to Hawaii, to some intermediate position such as Australia, to just off the mainland of Asia, or no farther than we are today.

Withdrawal to Hawaii

Withdrawal to Hawaii appeals to the isolationist mentality and implies that US interests are not deeply involved in Asia. A true containment policy under such a drastic withdrawal presupposes strong national forces, allied to the United States through multilateral or bilateral defense arrangement, capable temporarily of withholding Chinese expansionism, and probably backed by a massive retaliation strategy. The US role would be to provide the strategic nuclear forces—land, sea, and air—and no doubt considerable economic and military aid to many nations on China's periphery.

The advantages of the strategy are economy, freedom from involvement in

small wars, and the psychological benefit of not appearing to meddle in the internal affairs of Asian states. The great disadvantage is lack of credibility. Massive retaliation has proved to be less than convincing in the case of limited and "national liberation" wars—exactly the level of conflict to be expected in Asia. The plan also waivers on the requirement for strong national forces in Asia. There are few nations on China's borders which have the resources and courage to stand against overwhelming Chinese influence and power.

Intermediate Position

A plan to withdraw to an intermediate position such as Australia has few advantages and all the disadvantages over withdrawal to Hawaii. It does provide for a strong semiforward operational base in the Asian area and confines US military presence to the occidental area of the Pacific. US contribution would be the same as in the Hawaii withdrawal. Both plans ignore what would be a lack of confidence in US intentions in the Pacific on the part of all inclined toward the United States in a balance of power struggle.

A plan to withdraw to a line off the mainland of Asia satisfies many who are obsessed with the need to remove US military presence from contact with other forces on the Asian mainland. It has the compromise advantage of putting ocean water—and presumably an invincible barrier—between United States and Chinese forces and also restricting Chinese expansion to the mainland. US interest in the west Pacific, if not on the Asian mainland, would be emphasized by US presence.

The strategy would allow US theater and strategic forces to deploy along a line running from Japan to Taiwan to the Philippines and to Aus-

tralia. The resulting line of containment would be distinct and defensible, but the fate of Korea, India, Burma, Indonesia, and the nations of Southeast Asia would be uncertain. Those nations on the mainland might be sacrificed to Chinese domination, for it would be difficult, in the long run,

Thailand. Hopefully, it might be extended through Burma and to India. This tight line would form a distinct barrier against Chinese expansion. It would signal a hard-line foreign policy vis-a-vis Communist China and would carry the risk of involvement in limited wars and wars of "national



Army News Features

The *Sprint* is part of the antiballistic missile system expected to provide defense against a Red Chinese nuclear attack

to avoid a tacit agreement that the Asian mainland was in the Chinese sphere of influence.

The tightest line of containment, making practical allowances for present conditions and aiming at maintaining the *status quo*, would be drawn along the existing boundaries of United States and Chinese spheres of influence, running from South Korea through Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Vietnam to

liberation" which the Chinese are prone to support.

Nonetheless, this strategy of tight containment recommends itself over the others. It is in keeping with our past involvement, our present policies, our responsibilities to our own security, and to the independence of the Asian nations. It emphasizes most clearly our recognition of vital US interests in Asia and our perception of China as the primary threat.

Sizable US military forces might be required to man the line, although it should be noted that US personnel strengths in Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines were not great prior to the Vietnam war. An essential feature of this strategy would be to keep US feet in Asian mainland soil as "trip wire" and counterinsurgency forces. To make the strategy work, the United States would need an entree into limited and "national liberation" wars. Our forces would help provide security and stability against insurgency, terror, and subversion.

Selection of a strategy of tight containment dictates, to a large extent, what we should expect in the way of an outcome of the Vietnam war. It means that, as a minimum, the Republic of Vietnam Government should emerge democratic, strong and unchallenged, and closely allied with the United States. We cannot accept a coalition or neutralist government. There must be little chance of a Viet Cong overthrow in the future. If eventual withdrawal of US forces is necessary, there must be arrangements under which we can recommit forces when needed.

If this strategy is criticized on the basis of its putting the United States in the role of policing the world, of intruding in the affairs of others, or of committing ourselves where our national interests are not directly involved, then the reply is that we cannot afford to do less. For if the United States should reject the burden and responsibility, then who is to take it up? The painful fact is that unless we do, it will not be done at all.

But there is no reason for us to

shoulder the load alone. While we may be required to provide sizable forces, large amounts of economic and military aid, political leadership, and the nuclear umbrella under which the policy will operate, we should expect increasing assistance from our Asian partners.

For the time being, we should devote ourselves to strengthening non-Communist Asian nations in the path of Chinese expansionism. They are the frontline of containment; it will be their strength, backed by that of the United States, which will be tested. The mutual goal is military security which depends upon a foundation of political stability and economic well being. Such programs appeal to the dignity and pride of the people and to the nationalistic spirit which is running so strong in Asia.

The situation also suggests the need for regional security arrangements—a Pacific community along the lines of the Atlantic community which was so successful in the recovery of Western Europe and containment of the Soviet Union after World War II. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization was a step in the right direction, but it is inadequate to meet the challenge in Asia.

We must persevere in Asia, alone if need be. Our national goal should be to contain China along her present boundaries until such time as the Chinese cease to be a threat to Asia and to our own country. Hopefully, in time, Chinese external ambitions and aspirations may decline, perhaps, through a change in leadership, perhaps, otherwise through opportunities not yet foreseeable.