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ASIANS RESIST NUCLEAR THREAT

Many in the United States have been alarmed at Reagan's casual talk of limited nuclear war in Europe and have drawn reassurance from the massive European opposition to such talk. What is not so well understood is that Asians too are threatened by Pentagon schemes for limited nuclear war; they too are rising in opposition.

In October 1975, before Reagan began to talk about limited nuclear war in Europe, Defense Secretary Schlesinger opened up this prospect for the Korean peninsula, and in February 1980 Carter Administration officials did the same for the Mideast. Mr. Schlesinger said that nuclear weapons might be used in Korea should the North Koreans start to over-run the South Korean and U. S. forces there; Carter's defense officials said they might be used if Soviet forces started to over-run the Mideast. Then in March 1981 Secretary of State Haid said that "a change in the status quo" in the Mideast would be met with "the full range of U. S. power assets," suggesting that militant Mideastern nationalists who disturbed the status quo there might also be the targets of "the full range of U. S. power assets."

In fact it was the eruption of militant Mideastern nationalism in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran that seems to have provided the shock to powerful U. S. corporate and military interests that turned them decisively towards a more aggressive and reactionary foreign policy: the promulgation of nuclear threats, Cold War renewal, the organization of the Rapid Deployment Force, rampant interventionism in El Salvador, etc.

Be that as it may, Asian countries like Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and Guam would be directly affected by limited nuclear war in either the Mideast or the Korean peninsula. That is because the U. S. maintains nuclear installations and nuclear bases in each of these countries that would supply and service U. S. limited nuclear wars in either of these two areas.

In 1975 the Washington-based Center for Defense Information made a report on the number and disposition of U. S. tactical nuclear weapons that it has not since revised. This set the figure for 1,700 in Asia

ASIANS RESIST. 2.

and 1,500 on ships of the Pacific fleet. The countries named above together with South Korea and Hawaii account for the whereabouts of much of U. S. tactical nuclear weaponry in Asia and the Pacific. U. S. military bases and nuclear installations in Japan, the Philippines, Guam, and Australia form an interconnected system by which U. S. military activities, nuclear and otherwise, in Korea and the Mideast would be mounted and carried out.

U. S. military facilities in Japan and the Philippines constitute the two major nodal points of this system. There are some 46,000 U. S. troops now stationed in Japan and 119 U. S. military bases there, on the main islands and Okinawa. Japan is a forward base for the U. S. Navy as well. The port of Yokosuka is the homeport of the command ship Blue Ridge, the aircraft carrier Midway, and the 15th destroyer squadron of the 7th fleet, which comprise the main force of the U. S. Pacific fleet. Yokosuka has the largest facility in Asia for the repair and maintenance of ships and it is the base for 7th fleet operations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. U. S. Marines, the core of the Rapid Deployment Force as developed by Carter and carried forward by Reagan, use Okinawa as an operational base. Nowhere else outside the U. S. are they deployed on divisional scale. U. S. forces in Japan are equipped to engage in nuclear warfare. The aircraft carrier Midway carries some 100 nuclear weapons and the missiles carried on the warships of the 15th Destroyer Flotilla are for both nuclear and non-nuclear use. The Marine Wing Weapons Unit-1 is stationed at the Iwakuni air base in Japan. This Marine air wing is a specialized nuclear weapons unit (as revealed by a Defense Department official in 1981 Congressional hearings). The 203 mm howitzers of the U. S. Marine Corps are for either nuclear or non-nuclear use.

The U. S. keeps 15,000 sailors and 6,000 airmen stationed at Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Field in the Philippines. Subic Base is the largest naval supply depot in the world. In addition Subic has large ship repair plants, a communications station, an air station, and an

ASIANS RESIST. 3.

ammunition magazine. Both Subic Base and Clark Air Field are nuclear armed. The U. S. S. Sterett, a guided missile cruiser, puts up at Subic Bay, as does the aircraft carrier Midway. Clark Air Field, while serving as an air supply base for Subic, is at the same time the home of the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing with its 48 nuclear capable F4E fighter bombers.

It is commonly assumed that where nuclear capable planes and ships are lodged there nuclear bombs are stored as well, so that almost certainly both Japan and the Philippines are repositories of such weapons.

The 43,000 U. S. troops and the U. S. tactical air force in South Korea would carry the brunt of any limited nuclear war in Korea as far as U. S. forces are concerned. These troops have over 600 tactical nuclear weapons at their disposal, located mainly along the DMZ or dividing line between North and South Korea.

But U. S. Air Force, Naval, and Marine bases located in Japan would be used as strategic and tactical staging areas for action in Korea. The close war-time coordination of the U. S. forces in Japan with the South Korean military and the U. S. military in Korea is prepared annually in joint exercises called Operation Team Spirit that take place in the spring.

It is more than likely that the nuclear-capable F4Es located at Clark Air Field would be slated for action in Korea. Fighter bombers from Clark Air Field saw action in the Korean War of the '50s.

U. S. installations in Japan and the Philippines would play important roles in any U. S. war in the Mideast. At the time of the promulgation of the Carter doctrine for the Mideast the press reported that U. S. Marines at Okinawa would spearhead a Rapid Deployment Force incursion into the Mideast from the Pacific, and, as we know, these Marines are nuclear armed. It would be from Subic Bay in the Philippines that such Marines would jump off for the Indian Ocean and the Mideast. Subic Base would be the main logistical or supply base for any such war in the Mideast, as it is now for the greatly expanded U. S. military force in that area.

ASIANS RESIST. 4.

The point of concern in all this for the peoples of Japan and the Philippines rests on the following considerations: if, as most authorities think likely, a limited nuclear war in either the Mideast or Kroea were to escalate into a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union, U. S. military bases and nuclear installations in Japan and the Philippines would be prime targets for nuclear reprisal on the part of the Soviet Union, with consequences that could be disastrous for the peoples of both countries.

The Soviet Union has 24 nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines in the Pacific and 8 non-nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines. These operate out of the Soviet port of Petropavlovsk with less than 1/5 of their number in the field at any one time. It would, in all probability, be these missile-firing Soviet submarines that would knock out U. S. naval, military, and air installations in Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines.

Besides these nuclear-weaponed submarines in Asian waters the Soviet Union has about 26 ballistic missile fields running North and South along the line of the Trans-Siberian railway. Much of this missile strength is targetted at China.

While the Soviet Union has the use of certain basing facilities at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and occupies islands in the Kuriles chain over Japanese objection, there has been no claim that these facilities and bases are of a nuclear character.

In general, it can be said that the U. S. nuclear forces in Asia make advanced dispositions on bases and installations on foreign soil, whereas the Soviet nuclear forces are concentrated on home-front dispositions. In this regard the U. S.-Soviet structure of nuclear war potential in Asia is asymmetrical, as many Asians are aware. That is why for peoples of the Pacific concern over the question of nuclear war is specially connected with concern over U. S. nuclear policies and installations.

It is the presence of U. S. nuclear weapons and installations in

ASIANS RESIST, 5.

Japan and the Philippines, making these countries magnets for nuclear attack, that has aroused and continues to arouse public opinion in those countries. It is the threat of the consequences in Asia of the Pentagon policy of limited nuclear war that sets the teeth of Asians on edge, as is done in Europe with Europeans.

Opposition to U. S. nuclear weapons and U. S. nuclear policy can be observed in all of the Asian countries touched by U. S. nuclear arms, but the most powerful movement against nuclear war and nuclear weapons is to be found in Japan. It is Japan that experienced the horror of atomic war at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and it is U. S. military installations on Japanese soil that constitute today the main pillar supporting U. S. military policy in Asia. A tremendous movement against nuclear weapons has developed in Japan. This movement has been distinguished by its feeling of international responsibility. Every year since the mid-'50s the Japanese have held international conferences against nuclear weapons, attended by delegates from all over the world. The Japanese movement was especially outstanding in the work of the 1st Special Session of the UN on Disarmament, sending to it 500 delegates from all walks of life and a petition with 20 million signatures calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In 1982 the Japanese plan to send 1,000 delegates to the Second Special Session of the UN on Disarmament and 30 million signatures to a petition against the bomb. Up till now the Japanese peace movement has not secured adequate recognition from public opinion in the U. S., perhaps in part because of bad press. In 1978, for example, the New York Times reported that the Japanese brought 20 thousand signatures to the UN, not 20 million. This past March, when 200,000 demonstrated against nuclear weapons in Hiroshima, the Times reported 90,000.

More recently an anti-nuclear weapons anti-nuclear bases movement of popular dimensions has begun to develop in the Philippines. For years the

ASISANS RESIST. 6.

Civil Liberties Union of the Philippines has warned of the danger the U. S. nuclear presence brought to their country, but while the Civil Liberties Union has much influence and prestige it is not a mass organization. In January 1981, however, a Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Philippines was formed, composed of representatives from church, labor, women's and academic groups. Last year also a first Philippine conference on peace and disarmament was held. More recently the Peoples Democratic Party, a new oppositionist group of an elite character, has been formed with the demand for the withdrawal of U. S. nuclear weapons prominent in its platform. On March 7th of this year several thousand peasant or farm women came into Manila from the surrounding countryside to demonstrate for peace and against nuclear weapons only to find that dictator Marcos had banned their meeting.

In Guam the U. S. has ^{AT} its base there one squadron of B52 bombers equipped with 100 strategic nuclear bombs. The Australian government has in the recent past given these same B52s the right to land on Australian soil on their way to the Indian Ocean and the Mideast. *AT BELAU* in Micronesia the Pentagon wants to construct a base for the new nuclear armed Trident submarine designed to replace the Polaris and Poseidon models now being phased out.

In all of these last countries peace movements against nuclear bombs and arms have arisen. Most interesting, perhaps, is the case of Belau. This tiny country of 15,000 people is the first in the world to adopt a constitution that forbids nuclear weapons on its soil. Anxious to establish the Trident base there, the U. S. government has twice pressured the government of Belau to hold a popular referendum on the issue. Each time the people of Belau have voted to uphold the constitution and its ban on nuclear weapons.

Supporters of peace in Japan, the Philippines, Guam, Belau, Australia and New Zealand have joined together in a movement for a Nuclear Free

ASIANS RESIST, 7.

Pacific. Peace activists in Hawaii, a huge repository of U. S. nuclear weapons, have joined this movement as well.

In the Philippines opposition to the U. S.-supported Marcos dictatorship tends to coincide with opposition to the U. S. nuclear presence, since it is the Marcos dictatorship that acquiesces in that presence. While overt anti-nuclear weapons activity has not yet surfaced in South Korea, sentiment against U. S. support for the Chun Doo Hwan dictatorship is growing. In March this year the U. S. Cultural Center in Pusan was firebombed, the first such anti-U. S. action to occur in years.

Korea is a tinder-box. On April 22 this year the New York Times reported yet another violent incident between the military forces of the North and the South at the DMZ or dividing line. The Mideast crackles with conflict, between Israel and the Palestinians, between Israel and the other Arab states. With the approaching victory of Iran over Iraq talk of destabilization of the Iranian government by the more conservative Mideastern states again begins to be heard. Such destabilization would have unpredictable results. Accumulating tensions in Korea and the Mideast raise anew the specter of limited nuclear war in these areas.

The nuclear holocaust that could result from such limited nuclear wars would bring death in the hundreds of millions to the United States and the Soviet Union. On the other hand withdrawal of U. S. nuclear weapons and installations from Japanese and Philippine soil, from Guam and Australia, would make it more difficult for the Pentagon to organize such nuclear adventures and would increase the security of the people of the United States and their chances for survival. In 1975 Admiral La Rocque's Defense Monitor put forward the demand for the removal of U. S. nuclear weapons from Asia. It is time that the developing anti-nuclear war movement in the United States adopted this demand as its own.

Meanwhile supporters of peace and nuclear disarmament in the United States can take additional hope from the growing resistance of Asian peoples to nuclear war and weapons.

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