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## A Peacetime Strategy for the Pacific

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Admiral James A. Lyons, Jr., U.S. Navy

**W**hile the subject of my address is the Pacific, my initial comments will center on Europe. I realize that I state the obvious when contrasting the geography of the Pacific and Europe, and the comparative economic and cultural cohesiveness of the two areas. Continental Europe is, in relative terms, small and cohesive. It is about 1,260 miles from Madrid to Oslo, about half the distance from my headquarters to Seattle. Much more important is the common historical, cultural, political and economic underpinning which underlies the European community. To be sure there are differences but, when compared to the Pacific, these differences are as narrow as the geographic distances involved.

The Pacific Ocean area features vast distances, diverse cultures, and economies that range from the world's first and second largest GNPs to some of the smallest. No commonly agreed military structure guarantees the peace as NATO does in Europe. Given the great diversity of the region, such an arrangement is not practical, nor do I believe necessary. A more dynamic and flexible strategy, recognizing regional diversity, is required in the Pacific. Make no mistake, however, it is a coalition strategy that is required. Today the world is even more interdependent than before World War II, certainly the Pacific has become more interdependent and, therefore, I think it is only prudent to look at these interdependencies.

This point deserves emphasis because from the outset of these discussions I have detected an undercurrent, a theme that suggests that the Pacific is still less vital than Europe. Such thinking continues to see warfighting in the Pacific in terms of how the Pacific can affect the Central Front. In my view we can, but the view that the Pacific is less vital than Europe is flat-out wrong! Presently the more advanced nations of the Pacific region—Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan—have become extensions of the U.S. economy. You have all heard of the domino theory. Well, today, I would like to introduce a new twist to domino dynamics. The U.S. industry that builds the smart weapons we depend upon to make the difference in conflict, also utilizes the semiconductors, the specialty metals, and the ball bearings made in East Asia.

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Admiral Lyons is Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Last year we imported \$1.2 billion worth of semiconductors, \$120 million worth of chips and over a half billion dollars worth of ball bearings from Japan alone. An interesting study done at the War College illustrates the interdependency. As an example, major components of the Sparrow Missile Guidance and Control System come from across the Pacific. The F/A-18, and the SQQ/53 sonobuoy are also dependent on components made in East Asia—as are fleet SATCOM, DISCIS, JTIDS, our military computers, the Air Force's F-16, and the Army's M-1 tank. I could continue but the point is that East Asia's industries are an important part of our essential defense industry. Ninety-five percent of all microelectronics are assembled and tested in the Pacific rimlands—Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, etc. Coupled with this is the fact that emerging technologies such as computers, artificial intelligence, information systems, robotics and biogenetics are being spawned on the far side of the Pacific basin. These technologies will form the basis of our next generation of weaponry. A reasonable conclusion is that this essential interdependence gives new meaning to the domino theory.

In certain of these areas we need to reassess our dependency on these critical elements. One solution is to stockpile some things. On the other hand, we also could learn to compete better by making the capital investment in our critical industries to take advantage of automation, robotics, etc. But this does not change the basic argument: we are fundamentally interdependent and will most likely continue to remain so for the foreseeable future.

For years the Pacific has been looked at as a subsidiary theater, secondary to our Nation's interest in Europe. There are, of course, historical reasons for this. While those reasons may have been valid in their day, they are no longer. We are now on the verge of the "Age of the Pacific."

- The economies of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have had unprecedented growth for the past 10 years.
- Since 1980, trade with the Pacific East Asia region has outstripped trade with the European community; \$185 billion in two-way trade last year.
- Roughly 62 percent of the people in the world will live in the Pacific region which accounts for 60 percent of the world's gross national product.
- Return on investment in the region is on the average higher than anywhere else in the world, and the Pacific has vast potential markets and large resources.

I fully support Mike Mansfield's assessment that the next 100 years will be the century of the Pacific. Prime Minister Nakasone best summed it up when he stated: "History teaches us that civilizations shift gradually toward the periphery, creating new civilizations as they move. Flourishing civilizations have constantly moved toward the frontier: from Greece, to Rome, from Rome to England, France and Germany, and from Europe to the American Colonies. Even within America itself, the torch of civilization advanced westward from the Atlantic to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. The compass

need of history has swung from Mediterranean to Atlantic civilizations. Now it is pointing toward the Pacific. Today there can be no doubt that we are on the verge of a new economic and cultural sphere that, while centered on Japan and the United States, will encompass the Pacific shores in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres . . . the Pacific Ocean is becoming the new and historic stage for the drama of human interaction and development.”

I am convinced the Soviets recognize these facts. They understand the economic contribution of the Pacific to Western strength in peace and war. They understand the great contribution that allies like Australia, Japan, and Thailand make to deterrence. Mikhail Gorbachev spent more time discussing the Asia-Pacific region than Europe in his report to the CPSU Central Committee early this year.

In general terms, Soviet goals in the Pacific are to neutralize U.S. influence. To accomplish this they seek to disengage China from the West, and hope to push Japan and ASEAN, as well as Australia and New Zealand, toward neutralism. They are actively seeking influence in the South Pacific and are ready to capitalize on alliance differences and any aspect of U.S. neglect in the region.

The Soviets main entrée at the international table is their raw military power, and they have not been hesitant to use it, as witnessed in Afghanistan and in Aden. We have seen them established at Dahlak in the Red Sea, on the island of Socotra and at Cam Ranh Bay. Experience has demonstrated that they are not in the least hesitant about usurping host nation sovereignty at these bases.

Despite their success in establishing bases and presence in the Indian Ocean region, the Soviets have not been too successful in their attempts to influence the nations of the Pacific rim. But the past is not the future and the Soviets recognize that the future is in the Pacific. In the words of an earlier speaker, “their military build-up in the Pacific adds up to an exercise in coercive diplomacy typical of a power which relies on long-term effects of fear to achieve its ends”; the most immediate of which is to intimidate regional states into distancing themselves from the United States. We cannot afford, through inattention or indifference, to cede any advantage, territory, or issue. We must tend our existing alliances and friendships with renewed vigor.

**O**ur Pacific peacetime strategy need not be exotic. What is required is a strategy of active deterrence that deals with applicable military, economic, and political factors. Deterrence creates a security environment that translates to peace. Most fundamentally it rests on an understanding of the threat and a shared appreciation of the need for long-term stability in the Pacific. But, and I wish to emphasize this point, *to have deterrence you must have a recognized warfighting capability and the will to use it!*

Our peacetime strategy is not a single prescription for success but rather a series of actions which support and build on existing pillars of national policy. The Pacific Fleet is a key player but not the only key player. The prescription begins with our traditional pillars of peacetime defense policy enumerated by Secretary Weinberger some years ago. These are: our determination to remain a Pacific power; our key security relationship with Japan; our commitment to stability on the Korean peninsula; our efforts to build an enduring relationship with China; and, our support for the political and economic vitality of ASEAN and, bilaterally, for the self-defense efforts of its members, and a sound, workable relationship with Australia. Our peacetime strategy must address the important issues which could weaken deterrence and destabilize the Pacific rim. It must address regional problems and issues which heretofore have been largely subsumed.

In my view, the single most important challenge to a Pacific peacetime strategy today is ensuring a favorable outcome of the events that recently took place in the Philippines. The new government and armed forces of the Philippines face an immense task. The Philippines has little capability in which to deal with a serious outside threat. The economy is in a shambles and the insurgency, New People's Army (NPA), is more serious today than when the government took over in February. Since the election the NPA has redoubled their efforts and have killed over 1,000 military and civilians. The Soviets are not sitting on the sidelines—their embassy is actively courting the new government and their people are establishing ties to the left, and to front organizations of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The most dramatic change to the strategic equation in the Western Pacific would be if the Philippines were to fall. Its impact on the other states in Asia would be incalculable. Without our existing facilities in the Philippines, the U.S. Pacific Fleet would need two to three times the existing forces to continue to maintain presence in the region. The Pacific Fleet is simply not going to get those resources; the American people cannot afford it. That is why aid and assistance now to the Philippines is important. We have a moral and historic commitment to the Philippine people and, more fundamentally, we have a historic challenge to the bedrock of support for regional stability. The loss of the Philippines, and/or basing rights would seriously damage our Pacific deterrence strategy.

The President has proposed a program that is a good start. Given the transition of power in February and the state of euphoria that existed, expectations were very high that dramatic changes in the economy and other problem areas would quickly follow—the people were going to have a better life. As you know, this is a difficult and complex undertaking which will take time. Nonetheless, Mrs. Aquino's government cannot wait. It needs a success *now* if euphoria is not going to change to despair. And we have the expertise to contribute to a viable assistance program. If the United States makes the

commitment, and the Philippines wants it, i.e., is organized to take advantage of it, then a much needed climate for investment can be created there.

There are several key elements that come into play when managing the Philippine problem. First, it is a regional and not just a U.S. problem. Other countries *must* get involved, especially Japan, as the Philippines are a key to Japan's security and economic prosperity. The point being, I do not think the fact that it is a regional problem can be overemphasized. The insurgency must be addressed and while there are signs of progress in the Philippine Armed Forces, there is still much to be accomplished. Finally, this commitment must be long-term as there are simply no quick solutions. The urgency in the Philippines is as great as that in post-World War II Europe, which was addressed by the Marshall Plan. And, in my opinion, the impact on security and deterrence in the Pacific will be as significant as it was in Europe.

**T**here are other factors affecting deterrence in the Pacific. New Zealand has adopted a myopic approach. Prime Minister Lange appears to believe that his country can somehow withdraw from the world. I have read with interest his recent speeches and can only conclude that he is setting his country on a path towards neutralism. The heart of the issue, which Mr. Lange ignores, is that global and regional stability in the nuclear age is sustainable only through the deterrence of Soviet adventurism by strong, committed allies standing together. Alliances are a key element in the deterrence equation. All of us in the Pacific must act to convince the New Zealanders that they cannot hide from the realities of the world and shirk their responsibilities.

How do the prospects for deterrence look in the Pacific when one introduces the People's Republic of China into the equation? I believe we have a made good start in developing an enduring relationship with the PRC. Beijing's appreciation of common interests with the United States and the Pacific rim states has led to cooperation in the military area which will lead to improvements in China's defensive capabilities. I have met the Commander in Chief of the Chinese Navy, Liu Huaqing, and his Chief of Staff, Yang Dezhi. Both of them have a realistic appreciation for the threat and a genuine desire to have closer relations with us. Although U.S. and Chinese interests which serve the promotion of peace and progress in the Pacific are not necessarily identical, they are in many ways parallel and I believe the Chinese can play an important role in maintaining regional stability.

However, nowhere in the Pacific is the peacetime strategy of deterrence more necessary than in Northeast Asia. Developments in this area have the potential to directly affect the global balance of power, and it is here that our relationship with Japan plays such a major role. I think Ambassador Mansfield is correct when he calls this relationship the most important bilateral relationship in the world (thirty percent of the world's output is produced by

these two powers.) The five-year midterm defense plan adopted by Tokyo last September outlines a program which will go a long way toward Japan's gaining the capability to defend her SLOCs. Japan makes a substantial contribution to developmental assistance aid to the Pacific/Asian region, contributing over \$2 billion in 1984.

While one can argue that Japan should and can do more for its defense and security interests, the fact is that its contribution is substantial. I find it more instructive to consider the why and value of Japan's present contribution. Japan sits as vulnerable as any nation to direct Soviet military threat. Because of this proximity there are those in Japan who argue for neutrality as a viable option. Those voices have never been influential because Japanese confidence has been bolstered by the strength of the U.S. commitment. As long as that commitment does not wane, that confidence will continue.

In considering our relationship with Japan we must be careful how we handle the trade relationship that is seriously out of balance. It must, and is being addressed. How we handle it is most important to our relationship, and to deterrence. A retreat to protectionism will not only destabilize the U.S.-Japanese relationship, but the economy of the Pacific region.

Across the Tsushima Strait, South Korea faces a critical period over the next few years. In stark terms the military threat from the North has never been greater. The North has deployed its forces forward and warning time is measured in hours not days. North Korea's economy continues to sag while the South's continues to grow. As North Korea's aging Kim Il Sung sees the differences continuing to grow, he might well conclude that he has little time left to perpetrate his dream of a reunified country on his terms.

A continuing concern is the development and strengthening of the democratic processes in the South. A key element in this process will be the transfer of leadership when President Chun completes his term in 1988—the year of the Seoul Summer Olympics. Confrontation and internal discord over this process would have serious consequences for the democratic process and for the stability necessary to deter the North. It appears to me that an issue which is crucial to democratic development and stability is the constitutional revision prior to the elections. This issue could lead to confrontation and instability, and I am pleased that President Chun has agreed to work with the opposition parties on it. It is my hope that all parties concerned in this process will work together and avoid confrontation. As South Korea prepares for this year's Asian games and the 1988 Summer Olympics, events on the peninsula will be a key indicator of the success of the peacetime strategy.

Two areas of the Pacific which have been largely ignored are the South Pacific island countries and Antarctica. The small island nations of the South Pacific region have long been pro-Western in outlook and supportive of the United States. We in turn have depended on this goodwill, and the efforts of Australia and New Zealand, to protect our interests in this vast region.

Policymakers and defense officials at all levels have a greater awareness of the importance of the South Pacific region and view it as a dynamic region which demands closer U.S. attention. The island nations are financially strapped and face rising expectations and declining revenues. Over the past few years the Soviets have tried to exploit opportunities posed by the needs of these nations. They have made offers of developmental assistance and attempted to purchase fishing rights. They were rebuffed until last year when Kiribati signed a fishing agreement. They are negotiating now with Vanuatu for similar arrangements and, in my view, it is past neglect that has resulted in this entrée.

Increased interest in this area has stimulated our efforts to work on a regional fishing agreement between the U.S. tuna industry and the South Pacific States. This year is the first time that the United States provided direct aid to a regional state, Fiji. I recently sent the U.S.S. *Badger*, supported by Seabees, on a goodwill and humanitarian visit to several island nations. While the cruise was a highly successful diplomatic effort, it is not enough.

What we need is a creative, comprehensive program that addresses the needs of these island nations. As I see it, such a comprehensive program must include aid, trade and tax incentives to promote development. By tripling the existing \$6 million aid to the region, we would be able to sustain a viable program. Existing programs promote such regional endeavors as South Pacific forum programs. While we need to continue this type of aid, we need to ensure its visibility; but we need to include a bilateral component to our efforts. I am *not* talking about supplanting Australia and New Zealand's considerable aid to the region. What I am talking about is complementing their approximately \$52 million in aid and by this process demonstrating our commitment to the region.

Antarctica remains a model of military nonproliferation and international scientific cooperation. The Antarctic Treaty has effectively put on hold numerous national claims over land areas of the continent. The treaty is open for reexamination in 1991. Should the treaty unravel at that time and if one or more parties withdraw from it, a land-grab could occur. The resulting destabilization of the continent could jeopardize our national interests. I need not point out to this audience the strategic importance of the continent. In the event of a general war, the Drake Passage around South America will be of vital importance. Therefore, it is essential to deterrence that the treaty be continued and it is necessary that the United States be in a position to rebut territorial claims should the treaty unravel.

Finally there is the issue of international terrorism. The Pacific has largely been free of this cancer. There is in the Pacific the potential for spillover of the type of extremism we have seen in the Middle East. There are those who seek to foment extremism—witness the efforts of Iran and Lybia. Fortunately, these movements have not gathered much of a following. They



must be quarantined and only a policy of firmness will prevent terrorism from destabilizing the Pacific. While this analysis is shared by virtually the entire Pacific community, Vanuatu has moved to recognize Lybia. I can only question their motives and objectives.

**I**n addition to its diplomatic and economic components, the peacetime strategy of deterrence must have a recognized component of war-fighting capability. Deterrence cannot be achieved by words alone. It requires demonstrative strength and a recognition of the will to use it. It also involves continually improving interoperability between our forces and those of various Pacific nations. I am happy to report that this aspect of the strategy is in good shape and growing better. Thus far this year, we have conducted exercises with the navies of 14 nations on 45 different occasions. These range from participation in the large-scale team spirit exercise in Korea to small-scale passing exercises such as the one we conducted with the Chinese this January. They have included integrating forces with the Philippine marines and sailors who protect our vital complex at Subic and Cubi. In the Mid-Pacific today we recently conducted our biannual RIMPAC exercise with units of the Japanese Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy and the Royal Navy. The results of this accrued interoperability are *impressive*. RIMPAC witnessed a large number of short no-notice weapons firings—the warning time is short and the ships must be able to react just as they would in war.

Peacetime deterrence requires that we continually hone our own warfighting capabilities. It means finding the best ways to utilize our resources. It means continuing to acquire the modern navy that Secretary Lehman and the President have fought so hard for. Peacetime deterrence also means paying more attention to our Pacific northern flank—Alaska and the Aleutians. Adak needs additional resources and protection. The Soviets, with some impunity, have been flying long-range strike and reconnaissance aircraft deep into the area. We need to demonstrate that this activity cannot go unchallenged. We need to streamline our command relations in this area. Presently, they are fragmented and complex. In Alaska we must organize and train in peacetime the way we would in war. That too is an element of deterrence.

**O**ur nation is faced with many difficult choices as we enter the “Era of the Pacific.” Deficit reduction is a fact. As we make these choices, we must understand the implications in the Pacific region of reductions in our military budget and aid programs. If the Pacific nations perceive our military capability as declining or our presence waning, they will reassess the situation. Resources must be available if we are to meet the Soviet challenge. Shortsighted decisions now can only lead to more difficult and expensive decisions later.

Carl Vinson understood this well, when he said, "The paucity of support we have received from Europe in the Persian Gulf in recent years, demonstrates that we cannot look to our NATO partners to assist in the defense of the common Western interests in the Pacific. Equitable burden sharing requires increased European assumption of responsibility for European defense to permit additional U.S. emphasis in the Pacific."

There are emerging signals that the Pacific countries are increasingly aware of the threat. They want to respond. They need encouragement and a catalyst for their efforts. The Pacific Fleet serves as such a catalyst, as do our economic and diplomatic efforts in the region. By presence and example we must help them do more, for the benefit of all.

Today the balance of power in the Pacific is in our favor—economically and militarily. But that balance is a very dynamic thing. It embodies many factors, clearly one of these is the contribution of the Pacific Fleet to the strategic deterrence equation. By and large the nations of the Pacific are also making large contributions to that equation. As the focus of world trade, commerce, and industry shifts to the Pacific, Soviet attention will also shift to the Pacific. All of us on the Pacific rim must be prepared to meet the Soviet threat in order to protect our gains and to ensure our future.

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This article is a version of a lecture delivered to the 1986 Current Strategy Forum at the Naval War College.

