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## THE UNITED NATIONS AND OCEANIA: New Dimensions in the Cold War Refrain

*The strategic significance of oceans is a fact of modern history which underscores Mahan's classic analysis of the dependence on strategically located land bases for the effective exercise of seapower. This fact has not gone unnoticed by the Soviets who are making a sustained political assault on Western hegemony of the area through the U.N. The objective of this move is to deny the use of Pacific island areas to the United States and to make them ripe for Communist political subversion and exploitation.*

A research paper prepared by

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**Introduction.** Stretching from the west coasts of the Americas to the Asian mainland lies the earth's most formidable water barrier--the Pacific Ocean. This mammoth body of water comprises two-thirds of the ocean area of the world and a full one-third of the earth's surface. Interspersed throughout this vast area are literally thousands of islands, divided generally into the island chains of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Since Western man has navigated these waters, these islands of Oceania have been sought after jealously by the world's powers--first for the pleasure and sojourn they offered, then for their wealth, and finally for their strategic value. The peoples of these islands were extremely diverse in racial background, culture, and social customs and groupings. They had only one thing

in common. They were organized, if at all, into small, fragmented, premodern societies, with no effective capacity to resist domination by any power interested in exercising it.<sup>1</sup>

The resulting scramble for hegemony culminated in the late 1800's in large island groupings gradually becoming subject to the colonial administration of one or another of the Western powers. Since that time, as national powers have ebbed and flowed, sovereignty or control over most of these islands has undergone frequent change. This is particularly true of the islands of Micronesia which have been under the successive control of Spain, Germany, Japan, and now the United States. These Pacific outposts became, in the early days of World War II, "footholds"<sup>2</sup> for a militaristic Japanese expansion

southward toward Australia, and they formed "a series of great spider webs 'made to order' as one Japanese admiral said, to catch any unwary flies that tried to cross the Pacific."<sup>3</sup> Later they served the same purpose for the United States and its Allies in their successful efforts to choke off the exposed extensions of Japanese military power, and they provided successive rungs in the U.S. ladder constructed for assault on imperial Japan.

The strategic significance of Oceania is a fact of modern history which underscores Admiral Mahan's classic analysis of the dependence on strategically located land bases for the effective exercise of seapower.<sup>4</sup> Located as they are, athwart the maritime lines of communication from the Western Hemisphere to Southeast Asia, these islands have once-and could again-provide operating bases from which the sealanes supporting the projection of power into this area could be severed.

Such obvious strategic considerations have not gone unnoted in the Soviet Union, whose representatives are currently making significant efforts to recreate in the Pacific groupings of small, fragmented, polities, with no effective capacity to resist domination by a stronger power which is willing to risk adverse world opinion to exercise it-to create, once again, the very situation which existed in this area in the late 19th century. The modality of the Soviet approach is not the traditional exercise of military power, but rather a sustained political assault on Western hegemony through the medium of the United Nations and its "Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," commonly known as the "Special Committee of Twenty-four."

This paper will trace the historical antecedents of the "Special Committee of Twenty-four," and it will thereafter

present an analysis of the Committee's activities, which are seen to reflect an effective conversion by the Soviet Union of the international yearning for self-determination of peoples into an unrelenting cold war assault on Western presence in the Pacific Ocean area. The objective of this assault is felt to be: first, the denial to the Western Powers, principally the United States, of the use of these island areas; and second, to make them ripe for Communist political subversion and ultimately for Communist exploitation.

### **International Concern for Dependent Peoples: An Historical Sketch:**

a. **The Covenant of the League of Nations.** From the timid beginnings of article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the efforts of the international community to bring about a universal application of the principle of self-determination of peoples have assumed an ever-expanding scope. It will be remembered that in the aftermath of World War I the problem of the disposition of former enemy colonial possessions was resolved by the creation of the League Mandate system under which these territories were theoretically taken under international control. Such territories whose peoples were "... not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world" were entrusted to the tutelage of "more advanced nations" who were willing to accept the "sacred trust of civilization" and to provide for their "well-being and development."

Whatever defects may have existed in this system, and there were many,<sup>5</sup> it must be said that the very creation of a scheme of even tenuous international control over colonial areas represented a dramatic departure from prior practices. It assumes even greater significance when it is recognized that this was a voluntary act on the part of the Western nations whose past policies had been to extend their own individual imperial

control over widely dispersed colonial possessions.<sup>6</sup> While it may be true that the international control of the League was of the colonial powers' own design, it did signal the beginnings of a reform movement under which the entire international community would seek to oversee the transformation of dependent peoples toward self-determination.

**b. The Charter of the United Nations.** The Second World War gave additional impetus to international concern over the problems of dependent peoples. Particularly was this true in the United States where almost all responsible officials, including the President, were of the view that the days of colonialism were past and that in the new postwar order there should be a comprehensive trusteeship system embracing *all* dependent people.<sup>7</sup> Although no such all-pervasive system developed, there were significant advances made toward more effective international supervision. Again, it seems important to note that these steps were taken by the victorious mandatory and colonial powers on their own initiative and despite strong opposition of some<sup>8</sup> because of their recognition of "the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live . . ."<sup>9</sup>

This new order for dependent peoples was to be structured on two basic concepts: first, an expanded and improved international trusteeship system with a view toward the ultimate "self-government or independence" of the trust territories;<sup>10</sup> and second, a declaration by the colonial powers of their duties toward, and the rights of, the dependent peoples of all territories who "have not yet attained a full measure of self government."<sup>11</sup>

**(1) The Trusteeship System.** The newly created trusteeship system functioned under an institutionalized Trusteeship Council composed equally of administering and nonadministering

powers.<sup>12</sup> To be placed under this system were the territories formerly held under League Mandate, those detached from enemy control as a result of World War II, and those territories which might be voluntarily placed under the system by any of the colonial powers.<sup>13</sup> Only 10 of the formerly mandated territories plus Somaliland were placed under Trusteeship Council supervision.<sup>14</sup> In the Pacific area these included the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, formerly mandated to Japan but now under the administration of the United States; the Trust Territory of New Guinea under Australian administration; and Western Samoa and Nauru under New Zealand and Australian administration, respectively.

Specific trusteeship agreements were entered into with the administering powers stating specifically the terms under which the trust was to be exercised. The Trusteeship Council was invested with significant powers to oversee the exercise of these trust agreements. It was given authority to consider reports to be submitted regularly by the administering powers, to receive and examine petitions from inhabitants of the territories, and to conduct visits to and inspections of the territories themselves.<sup>15</sup>

It seems important to note at this juncture that through the operation of this system all of the original trust territories, with the exception of New Guinea and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, had gained their independence by early 1968.

**(2) The Charter Declaration of the Rights of Dependent Peoples.** While the U.N. trusteeship system was essentially an improved version of the League Mandates, the truly "striking innovation"<sup>16</sup> in this area affected by the charter was the provisions of chapter XI and, more specifically, the provisions of article 73. In this article the members of the United Nations, including those

administering dependent territories, committed themselves to the proposition that the "interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount," and accepted as

... a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost... the well-being of the inhabitants... to develop self government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its people...

The administering powers further agreed to transmit regularly to the Secretary General statistical reports on the economic, social, and educational conditions in their respective dependent territories.

The covenant's "sacred trust" was thus proclaimed to embrace not only the people of former enemy territories but, indeed, to embrace the people of all dependent territories. The colonial powers had stated their formal recognition of the principle that their own, long-held colonial possessions were now wards of the international community as a whole and that the objective of their administrations, at least in the eyes of the international community, was to provide these people with such assistance as might be required for their ultimate exercise of the right of self-determination. Significantly absent, however, was any institutionalized system to oversee the exercise of this "sacred trust" with respect to any of the nontrusteeship territories.

c. The "Magna Carta" of Anti-colonialism. As noted above, the United Nations trusteeship system has functioned so effectively that all but two of the original 11 trust territories have now gained their independence. Many explanations could be given for this, not the least of which could be that the territories involved were not long-term historical possessions of the adminis-

tering powers but, rather, were former enemy territories of relatively recent acquisition. Also, it is obvious that the machinery of the charter gave the international community as a whole a rather significant influence over these territories through the powers legislated to the Trusteeship Council.

In the first 15 years of the United Nations' operations, some 34 dependent territories, including eight trusteeship and 22 nontrusteeship territories, had gained their independence.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, there remained at the end of 1960, 64 dependent territories under the administration of colonial powers.<sup>18</sup> While, therefore, there had been major progress toward decolonization, it is quite apparent that with respect to the nontrusteeship dependencies the progress was measurably slower than was the case with those under Trusteeship Council supervision. It was to speed up this process that the United Nations, augmented in 1960 with the admission to membership of 17 ex-colonial states, took such significant action that this year must be described as the watershed in the "rising tide of decolonization."<sup>19</sup>

In a dramatic address before the General Assembly on 23 September 1960, Nikita S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., stated that the time had come for the "complete and final abolition of the colonial system in all its forms and manifestations," and he submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly a draft declaration calling for the granting of immediate independence to all trust and nonself-governing territories.<sup>20</sup> A modified Soviet proposal later submitted proclaimed that in the colonial territories "the swish of the overseer's lash is heard... [that]... heads fall under the executioner's axe," that all colonial countries must be granted their independence forthwith "and that all foreign bases in other states must be eliminated."<sup>21</sup> Throughout the debates which followed, Soviet

spokesmen continued this type of vitriolic attack on all forms of "Western colonialism," giving particular and strident verbal attention to the subject of Western military bases in foreign countries and Western military alliances. Western spokesmen answered these attacks by accusing the Soviet Union, itself, of adopting a new form of colonialism which "had been imposed by force on people who had been free for centuries." They also made a specific point of stating their recognition of the aspirations of all people who did not presently enjoy a full measure of self-government and expressed a profound regret that the Soviet Union would undertake to "pervert for its own purposes the deep and genuine desires" of these peoples.<sup>22</sup>

Recognizing the urgent need for a resolution more moderate in tone than that submitted by the Soviet Union, and perhaps recognizing also the urgent need to attempt to remove U.N. decolonization efforts from the center of the East-West cold war struggle where it had been cast by the Soviets, 43 Afro-Asian nations collaborated in drafting a compromise resolution on this subject. This resolution was submitted to the General Assembly by Cambodia, and it was adopted on 19 December 1960, as General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV), by a vote of 89 to 0 with nine nations, including all of the Western colonial powers, abstaining.<sup>23</sup>

This declaration has been variously described as a "capstone to the U.N.'s efforts to supervise colonial regimes,"<sup>24</sup> as a kind of anticolonialism "magna carta,"<sup>25</sup> and as "almost an amendment to the charter."<sup>26</sup> Certainly, all of these descriptions are accurate, since the resolution itself<sup>27</sup> speaks in broader and yet more definite terms than has any similar document in history. In its operative paragraphs it declared:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human

rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

2. All people have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.

4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease . . .

5. Immediate steps shall be taken . . . to transfer all powers to the peoples of these territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, . . . in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.

6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the present Declaration on the basis of equality, respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

Without a single dissenting vote, the General Assembly thus proclaimed what must be regarded as an overwhelming international consensus that the era of colonialism was past and that all of its remnants must give way to the right of all people to self-determination.

While it is true that the General Assembly is not a lawmaking body, that it can only recommend and not legislate, the overwhelming majority by which this resolution was adopted and the fact that not even the colonial powers against whom it was primarily directed dared vote against it indicate

the persuasive moral force that underlay it. Thus it must be said that, technical legal arguments notwithstanding, the international community regards it as a morally, and perhaps legally, defensible proposition that all peoples have a right to self-determination, which "demands the speediest possible ending of all colonial relationships, and condemns utterly any extension or reestablishment of colonial rule."<sup>28</sup>

The political lessons long taught by Western philosophers and statesmen had thus come back full circle, and the former pupils, now possessed of organized moral and political strength in an international setting, were reminding their former tutors in forceful terms of the lessons learned. It does seem ironic, however, that the Western nations have appeared to abdicate their leading role in this effort to their cold war adversaries in the Soviet Union.

**d. The Committee of Twenty-four.** Seizing the initiative again in the next session of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union on 26 September 1961 complained that, despite the 1960 declaration, some 88 territories still remained under colonial domination, that no steps had been taken to transfer administration to the indigenous peoples, and that, further, "the colonialist powers' network of bases on foreign soil was being used to hamper the liberation of colonial peoples and jeopardize the independence of newly independent countries." The Soviets again submitted a draft resolution for consideration,<sup>29</sup> and, again, it was vitriolic and vituperative in tone. It called, in part, for the final and unconditional liquidation of colonialism by not later than the end of 1962 and for the establishment of a special commission to inquire into the situation with regard to the implementation of the 1960 declaration. A compromise resolution was again proposed by a grouping of Afro-Asian states, which, after con-

siderable discussions repeating the acrimony of the 1960 debates, was adopted by an overwhelming vote of 97 to 0 with only four abstentions.

Resolution 1654(XVI) of 27 November 1961 reaffirmed the provisions of the declaration and called upon all states to take action "without further delay" to implement it. The resolution also established a special committee of 17 members, to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly, to inquire into the situation regarding implementation of the declaration and to make appropriate recommendations and suggestions.<sup>30</sup> In 1963, with the addition to its competence of matters involving the trust territories, this committee became the only U.N. body under the General Assembly which was concerned generally with all nonself-governing territories.<sup>31</sup>

In early 1962 the President of the General Assembly appointed the following states as members of the Special Committee: Australia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Italy, Madagascar, Mali, Poland, Syria, Tanganyika, Tunisia, the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup> At the 17th session of the General Assembly, the membership of the Committee was expanded to a total of 24 by the addition of Bulgaria, Chile, Denmark, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone.<sup>33</sup>

With this composition it takes little imagination to envisage the philosophy which the Committee was to adopt and the course of action it was to follow. It does seem worthy of note that the Committee, from its outset, was weighed heavily against those powers which administered dependent territories. Of the 24 Committee members, 12 were ex-colonial territories, four were Soviet oriented, and only three administering powers—Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—were members. New Zealand, which at

the time continued to administer the Cook Islands and Niue and Tokelau Islands, was not even represented; nor were France and Portugal, both of whom continued to administer several dependent territories.

**The Committee of Twenty-four and the Pacific Islands.**

**a. Initial Consideration--Conflict with the Trusteeship Council.** As would be expected from the membership of the Special Committee, it gave its initial attention to the African dependent territories, and it would be fair to say that the problems of these African dependencies have continued to be foremost in the Committee's considerations. Beginning in 1964, however, with the formation of special subcommittees<sup>34</sup> to study and report on nonself-governing territories in specific geographical areas, the Committee significantly broadened its activities. It was in this year that it first began to study closely the Pacific Island dependencies. Some 16 Pacific Island areas were considered.<sup>35</sup> These areas were dispersed throughout the central and western Pacific, both above and below the equator, and comprised literally thousands of islands--from Pitcairn with a land area of only 4 square miles and a population of only 126, to Papua and New Guinea with land areas of over 180,000 square miles and a combined population in excess of 2 million. The Committee's task was further complicated by the fact that these island areas were administered by six separate administering powers--the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Portugal.

The Committee met almost continuously during 1964, considering most of the nonself-governing territories in Pacific in some detail. Reports were submitted to the General Assembly covering each of the territories considered, and recommendations were made concerning each territory. Al-

though these differed in detail one from the other, the same general thread ran through them all--the Committee's insistence that progress toward self-determination in all of the territories was too slow and that the people of each of these areas should be given the earliest opportunity to express their wishes with regard to their future status "in accordance with well established democratic processes under United Nations supervision." The reports were generally accompanied by reservations from the administering powers who felt either that they did not accurately reflect the conditions in the territory, that proposed visits to some of the territories were outside the Committee's competence, or that progress toward self-determination was entirely consistent with the needs and desires of the local populations.<sup>36</sup>

Two aspects of the 1964 Committee reports deserve special consideration: (1) the apparent conflict between the Trusteeship Council and the heavily oriented anticolonialism of the Special Committee; and (2) the growing determination of the Special Committee that complete independence must be the goal sought for all dependent peoples, regardless of their own needs or of their possible future independent viability.

Concerning the first of these, the Trusteeship Council's reports to the General Assembly, while urging the administering powers to continue their efforts leading toward self-determination in their respective territories, did express general satisfaction with the political procedures being implemented in each of them.<sup>37</sup> With respect to the U.S.-administered Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Council took special note of the report of its visiting mission that "no fully matured opinions" had yet developed in the territory concerning its political future. Further, it expressed the hope that the "future Congress of Micronesia would direct its



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attention to all the possibilities--from independence to all other options--which lay open for the future of the Territory."<sup>38</sup>

The Trusteeship Council's reports were in marked contrast to the findings of the Committee of Twenty-four that the progress toward self-determination in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands "did not fully meet the requirements of the Charter" and of the 1960 declaration and that progress in New Guinea and Nauru "had been slow and adequate steps had not yet been taken."<sup>39</sup>

Another area of conflict arose in the Special Committee's proposal to send its own visiting mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. A strenuous U.S. objection was voiced to such a visit since it was considered that visiting missions to trust territories were the peculiar province of the Trusteeship Council and, were, hence, outside the competence of the Special Committee. This objection was overruled by the Committee by what has now become an almost characteristic voting pattern of 16 to 5 with 2 abstentions.<sup>40</sup>

It is worth noting, also, that in its 1964 report on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Trusteeship Council expressed an approval of several possibilities of an ultimate status for a dependent territory extending from "independence to all other options." The Special Committee, on the other hand, had from the beginning steadfastly opted for complete independence as the only acceptable goal. While this may not be readily apparent on the face of the Committee's reports, it does become clear when one notes that the Committee consistently refers only to the 1960 declaration which speaks in terms of "complete independence." The two bodies consistently ignored one another, and perhaps more pertinent the General Assembly Resolution which proclaims the Assembly's understanding of the term "self-determination." On 15

December 1960, only 1 day after the 1960 declaration was adopted, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 1541(XV), which provides in pertinent parts as follows:<sup>41</sup> "A Non-Self-Governing Territory can be said to have reached a full measure of self-government by: (a) Emergence as a sovereign independent state; (b) Free association with an independent state; or (c) Integration with an independent state." By ignoring this resolution in its entirety and by consistently reiterating only the theme of the 1960 declaration, the Committee clearly indicated an unwillingness to accept any status short of "complete independence" as a satisfactory conclusion of the self-determination process. That such a proposition would not be permitted to prevail over the freely expressed desires of a local population for political association with its administering power fortunately was demonstrated by the 1965 resolution of the General Assembly, GA RES 2064(XX), approving the results of a plebiscite in which the Cook Islanders elected free association with New Zealand rather than complete independence.<sup>42</sup>

Another questionable activity of the Committee, which first became apparent in 1964, is its announced determination to carry another of the declaration's principles to extreme lengths, that no reason--smallness, isolation, inadequate political, economic, social, or educational preparation--should impede the granting of independence. In its 1964 reports on the small island territories, the Committee declared that, regardless of their size, the "provisions of the Declaration were fully applicable to . . . [them] . . . and that appropriate measures to this end should be taken without delay."

The absurd situation which this sort of thinking can bring about is illustrated by the fact that in January 1968 the Territory of Nauru, with a land area of only 8 square miles and a total popula-

tion of only 4000 persons, became an independent, sovereign state.<sup>43</sup>

**b. Renewed conflict and the Military Bases Issue.** The Committee's 1965 proceedings brought forth once again what was now becoming a familiar refrain. The Soviet Union, supported by its Communist friends and by most of the former colonial states, continued to urge and condemn the slowness of the pace toward independence, and for the first time the Soviet Union specifically went on record as opposing any sort of merger between the administering powers and their dependent territories.<sup>44</sup> More significantly, however, the U.S.S.R. used the Committee as a vehicle to continue its cold war assault on Western military bases on foreign soil, and particularly to condemn those located in dependent territories. As a result of the Committee's recommendations, a draft resolution was adopted by the General Assembly's Fourth Committee which stated that the existence of military bases in dependent territories "constituted an obstacle to the freedom and independence of these territories" and called upon the administering powers to dismantle them. When presented to the General Assembly, although these provisions received a 48 to 37 affirmative vote, they were held to have been rejected since they did not receive the two-thirds majority required for an "important question," which the President of the Assembly considered them to be. This procedural ruling was to obtain for less than 1 month, however, and on 20 December 1965 a U.S. objection based on this point was overruled; and by a simple majority the General Assembly adopted Resolution 2105(XX), requesting the "colonial Powers to dismantle their military bases in colonial Territories and to refrain from establishing new ones."<sup>45</sup>

The conflict between the Special Committee and the Trusteeship Council became more obvious in 1965. With

respect to all the three remaining trust territories, the Trusteeship Council again indicated general satisfaction with the progress being made. In coming to these conclusions, the Council had specifically rejected Soviet proposals which would have condemned the administering powers' discharge of their trusts.<sup>46</sup> The Special Committee, however, reported to the General Assembly in almost the same critical terms which had been rejected by the Trusteeship Council. The voting strength of the anticolonialist bloc in the General Assembly was clearly illustrated by the resolutions adopted in which, on two of these territories,<sup>47</sup> the General Assembly only took note of the conclusions of the Trusteeship Council while affirmatively endorsing "the recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee."

This vote left little doubt that, at least as far as the General Assembly was concerned, the Special Committee, with its strong anticolonialist bias reflecting that of the General Assembly, would thereafter be considered the U.N.'s principal anticolonialist tool, regardless of the provisions of the charter.

This has certainly been the case since 1965. A procedure seems to have been adopted under which subcommittees, without even "token representation" of the administering powers, will provide critical reports to the Committee which will then, almost *in haec verba*, endorse the subcommittee's criticism and forward it to the General Assembly which will do likewise. This has resulted in General Assembly resolutions during both 1966 and 1967<sup>48</sup> which have, in ever more strident language, condemned the "negative attitude" of the administering powers and their "repression of colonial peoples"; reasserted that colonialism is "incompatible with the Charter"; reiterated that "the establishment of military bases and installations in these territories is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the

Charter . . . and of General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV)"; requested that existing military installations be dismantled; and, finally, deplored the refusal of the administering powers to admit Committee missions to the dependent territories and requested that such missions be accepted.

c. **Conversion of the Anticolonialist Cause into a Second Cold War: the Military Bases Issue Crystallized.** Both the Committee and the General Assembly debates which preceded the above resolutions demonstrate that the former colonial states, to which "no issue exceeds in importance their commitment to securing a speedy and complete end of Western colonialism,"<sup>49</sup> have permitted themselves to be drawn by the U.S.S.R. into vituperative attacks on the Western states and particularly on the United States. Thus, their initial reluctance to enter this "second cold war"<sup>50</sup> has long since passed. The debates on the military bases issue provide clear evidence of this. At the beginning of its 1967 sessions the Committee heard the Soviet Representative, supported by many other members, condemn the existence of military bases in all dependent territories and state that "the utilization of military bases on Guam . . . showed that they created an obstacle to independence."<sup>51</sup> The Soviet Union also used the Committee forum in 1967 to urge that the United States should be requested to dismantle its military bases in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the provisions of the strategic trusteeship agreement notwithstanding.<sup>52</sup>

In May of 1967 letters were dispatched to each of the administering powers asking for information on their military activities in the territories under their administration. In July and August 1967 replies were received from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. None were willing to provide such informa-

tion, contending that their obligation to provide information on their territories was subject to security limitations and that the subcommittee had no right to ask for this type of information from them. As might be expected, this brought forth a rash of criticism of the Western Powers who, it was said, had the temerity to "challenge the Committees' right to information" and whose real purpose was to use their military bases "against freedom loving people."<sup>53</sup>

Although no more specific condemnation of military bases in the Pacific territories emerged from the Committee's 1967 sessions than the relatively mild recommendation that the military activity of the United States on Guam should be reduced,<sup>54</sup> the mere fact that this recommendation was made, based as it was on Soviet complaints that Guam was being used as a base for U.S. aggression in Vietnam, lends credence to the proposition that the force of a clear majority of the Committee's members has been enlisted in the Soviet cold war camp.

d. **Crisis.** The Committee's continued insistence on immediate implementation of the 1960 declaration and their continued rejection of any attempts by the administering powers to demonstrate that progress toward self-determination in their respective territories was in the best interests of the local population led the U.S. Representative to complain bitterly in early 1968<sup>55</sup> about what were termed "serious defects in the Committee's methods of work." He stated that the stereotyped and persistent call for immediate independence was improper since "it was doubtful if independence was feasible" for all of them. He also "deplored the breakdown" in communications within the Committee which frequently led to the exclusion of Representatives of the administering powers when resolutions were being drafted which were of par-

ticular concern to them. He ended his presentation with the startling announcement that

... [In] view of the Committee's methods of work and the difficulties they have created for his delegation, the United States questioned whether any purpose would be achieved by further participation in the work of the Committee and was considering withdrawal. After consulting with other delegations, however, his delegation had decided to defer its decision on that question.

The United Kingdom also made strong complaints about the Committee's methods of work and provided suggestions for their change as well as for changes in the Committee's organization.<sup>56</sup>

The ensuing debates saw, not an attempt by the Committee to structure its activities with a purpose of achieving more progress towards its goal by diplomatic means, but, rather, a strident renewal of cold war invective. The Soviet Representative caustically attacked the United States as "relentlessly undermining the efforts of the United Nations to end oppression... [and]... attempting to crush the people of Vietnam under the force of arms." He accused the United States of occupying for many years "a number of Territories in the Pacific... and transforming them into air and naval bases and instruments of its struggle against dependent peoples."<sup>57</sup> Syria said that the United States and the United Kingdom were trying to "ridicule the Committee and discredit it." Yugoslavia and India contended that the real difficulty was not the Committee's methods, but the refusal on the part of the administering powers to cooperate. Bulgaria and Poland supported these criticisms and added their own charges of "perpetuating the colonialist yoke," "ruthless foreign exploitation," and the use of these small territories "as sites for military bases" through which to further their aggressive purposes. Finally, the

Representative of Mali echoed the Communist line by arguing that the "subtle attempts" to restrict the Committee's activities were "only an extension of the desperate... [death throes]... offensive unleashed by the coalition of reactionary neo-colonialist and imperialist forces."<sup>58</sup>

With these stinging and bitter accusations at the beginning of the 1968 Committee sessions, the Communist states, with support from the former colonial states, gave warning that they intended to utilize the anticolonialist cause to its full measure in their cold war attacks on the United States. It soon became clear, viewing the matter from strictly a Pacific Ocean perspective, that the Soviet Union had now launched a full-scale offensive against the U.S. military bases in the Pacific which were being used so effectively to support the extension of U.S. power into Southeast Asia and which obviously could be used in the future to support a continued and strong U.S. presence throughout the Pacific. The U.S. bases on Guam drew particularly extensive condemnation. It was contended that they were typical examples of how the existence of military installations were having a negative effect "not only on the liberation of their people but also on international relations in general," and that they were being used "for intervention and aggression against the people of Viet-Nam."<sup>59</sup> Guam was described as "nothing but a vast military base... [whose]... population had been inducted into the foreign army,"<sup>60</sup> and the United States was accused of using the islands of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as missile and airbases and of planning a further expansion of its military activities in that area. Australia was attacked for what was said to be "military preparations... [in Papua and New Guinea]... for the conduct of the aggressive war in Viet-Nam and for the direct induction of indigenous soldiers

into that war."<sup>6 1</sup>

During these 1968 proceedings the Representative of the Soviet Union spelled out succinctly what lay behind the Soviet offensive. In one of his most biting attacks to date, he said on 25 June 1968:<sup>6 2</sup>

The information before the Committee showed that the strategic significance of small Territories, especially islands, had increased, because they could be used for supporting far-reaching military operations. That was particularly true of the island of Guam, a United States Colony in the Pacific Ocean, which had been turned into a military fortress... [T]he military headquarters of the region, an American Naval base at Apra Harbour, the Agana naval air station and the Anderson Air Force Base were on Guam. Some 38,500 servicemen and their dependents had been attached to these bases in 1967. The Anderson Air Force Base was the staging point from which the B-52 bombers were used for the aggressive war against the Viet-Nameese people who were battling for their freedom and independence... and Guam was being used... for Polaris submarines which were patrolling Chinese waters.

This should have made it crystal clear, even to those who would not see it before, that the Soviets' true purpose is the conversion of the U.N.'s efforts toward self-determination into one of its principal cold war weapons. To deprive the United States of the strategic island bases from which its power can be effectively projected in aid of a small nation under Communist pressure or attack would be a major cold war victory indeed.

At the time of this writing no results of the Committee's studies on military activities in the dependent territories have been announced. It seems likely, however, that it will once again condemn the administering powers and that it will once again resolve that their military activities in these territories hinder progress towards self-determination and that they should cease. It is only to be hoped that the former

colonial members of the Committee will come to see how their desire for the self-determination of all peoples is being capitalized upon and used by the Communist states and that they will not permit the Committee's reports and recommendations to be further utilized as a source of international support of Communist cold war objectives. It does seem obvious, however, that the majority of the Committee has permitted its purpose to be converted from that of an international overseer of the self-determination process into that of a forum for propaganda assaults on the U.S. presence in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific Ocean area in general. Whether or not the United States will, or should, continue to participate in the Committee's work in the face of such unreasoning assaults is a matter which will have to be given careful consideration before the 1969 sessions begin.

**Conclusion.** There is no question but that the yearning of the world's peoples for control over their own political destinies is a fact of 20th century life which must be intelligently dealt with by the present administering powers, the dependent peoples themselves, and the international community as a whole. There also seems to be little doubt that the activities by the United Nations, to date, both in the Trusteeship Council and in the Special Committee of Twenty-four, have given considerable momentum to the self-determination process. The independence of Nauru and the U.S. announcement of a planned 1972 plebiscite in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands<sup>6 3</sup> are only the most recent evidence of the effect of international pressure through these U.N. organs. What seems to be lacking in the process, however, at least as viewed by a majority of the members of the United Nations, is the realization that the continued insistence on "complete independence" as the only acceptable goal of the self-determination process can,

and undoubtedly will, lead to the same type of fragmented, nonviable, political picture in the Pacific as that which created world tensions in the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Certainly the anticolonialists are right when they describe the struggle for colonial empires as a source of world conflict which can lead to war, and if this type of conflict is to be avoided in the future, it seems essential that conditions should not be re-created which could lead to this same type of instability and struggle.

This is not to say that the peoples of any particular Pacific Island territory should not be enabled to opt for complete freedom, unassociated with any stronger power, if it is their desire to do so. It is to say that these people should not be pushed into such an option if it is really not in their best interests.

The smallness, the isolation, and the lack of adequate economic resources to make them self supporting, clearly dictate for almost all of these areas some sort of association—at least economic and defensive—with a stronger power which can provide continuing assistance to them. As political opinion in these areas matures, it should become obvious to the people that such an association, rather than complete freedom, will be most conducive to their long-term interests. It is therefore considered that given the time and the opportunity to develop their political maturity, self-determination in these small island territories will follow the lead of the Cook Islanders—a free association with the administering power which leaves the population in complete control over its internal processes but which continues the responsibility of the administering power over external affairs.

There is a very distinct danger existing, however, in the failure of the former colonial members of the United Nations, and more specifically those on the Committee of Twenty-four, to discern the real interests of the peoples of the Pacific Island dependencies. These nations have been led to commit their voice and their vote to the Soviet cold war cause, a cause which, although using self-determination as a banner, perverts that banner into a weapon through which it can attack the very nations that gave self-determination its start.

A crucial diplomatic problem for the United States today, and indeed for the people of the Pacific Island dependencies themselves, is to prevent this type of Communist distortion to so hasten the self-determination process in the Pacific so as to result in long-term, serious disadvantage to the local peoples by the re-creation of conditions which will make them ripe for a new scramble for hegemony.

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### BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Capt. William O. Miller, JAGC, U.S. Navy, did his undergraduate work at the University of South Carolina and holds a bachelor of laws degree from Atlanta University and a master of laws degree from The George Washington University. His numerous legal officer assignments include: duties with the Office of the Judge Advocate General as Appellate Counsel and in the International Law Division; Assistant Legal Officer, Headquarters 14th Naval District; and Assistant Legal Officer, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. Captain Miller is currently a student at the Naval War College, School of Naval Warfare.

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FOOTNOTES

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30. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
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32. *United Nations Yearbook 1960*, p. 51.
33. *United Nations Yearbook 1962*, p. 60.
34. The three subcommittees were established in 1964, generally for Africa and the eastern Indian Ocean, Asia and the Pacific Ocean, and the Atlantic and Caribbean areas. *The United Nations and Decolonization*, p. 10.
35. The following territories were brought under study:

Territory	Adm. Power	Area (sq. mi.)	Population
Timor	Portugal	7,332	500,000
Brunei	United Kingdom	2,226	104,000

Territory	Adm. Power	Area (sq. mi.)	Population
Fiji	United Kingdom	7,055	400,000
Cook Island	New Zealand	93	18,500
Niue	New Zealand	100	4,900
Tokelau	New Zealand	4	1,900
Nauru	Australia	8	4,000
Papua	Australia	87,540	500,000
New Guinea	Australia	93,000	1,500,000
American Samoa	United States	76	20,000
Guam	United States	209	50,000
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands	United States	687	90,000
New Hebrides	United Kingdom/France	5,700	60,000
Gilbert/Ellice	United Kingdom	369	47,000
Solomons	United Kingdom	11,500	130,000
Pitcairn	United Kingdom	2	126

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57. See note 55, *supra*.

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62. *Ibid.*

63. "Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 26 August 1968, p. 225.

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