Chapter-II

CONVERGENCE AND CONFLICT OVER

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The impact of American defeat in Indochina was felt nowhere more accurately than in Indonesia. The collapse of American power came as a big shock. Indonesia considered that fateful event as highly improbable. A leading analyst of Jakarta's Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), an Organization which lays down the official policy line of Indonesia said, the impact of Indochina on Indonesia can frankly be summed up in one word, "panic". The panic was because Indonesia suddenly found itself vulnerable not only to external threats but also to internal subversion.¹ The progress of Vietnam war and the uncertainty of its outcome disturbed the Indonesians. The Indonesian leaders expressed concern over the issue because in their opinion, the American withdrawal would create a power vacuum in Southeast Asia which would be in turn filled in by two other hostile powers -- the People's Republic of China or Japan whose intentions were always suspected

in Indonesia. Therefore, the feeling of complacency caused by the American military presence soon disappeared with Hanoi's success. It was concerned over the possible threat posed by a militant and expansionist Vietnam that would export revolution to its neighbours and China would cash-in to seize the advantage of that situation by encouraging the local insurgents clandestinely. For that reason American withdrawal from Southeast Asia was not happily accepted in Indonesia and they requested the Americans to stay there. In the words of a CSIS analyst, "we will want the American military presence to stay. There is no question of our giving bases to the Americans, but all we want them to do now is to stay in the region, somewhere close by so that in case of any trouble they will be in call".

The Indonesian leaders were of the opinion that the continued US military presence would avoid any power vacuum in the region and neither Vietnam nor the Chinese would get an opportunity to exploit the situation. Above

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3The Indonesian News (Jakarta), 2 May 1975.
all, in case of any problem the Americans would be called on immediately to address it.  

Having been aware of the fact that the countries of Southeast Asia including Indonesia would express concern over the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of American military forces from Southeast Asia, the American foreign policy makers had already started taking steps to deal with the post Vietnam war realities.  

Their determination to continue to play an active role in the area was evident from a speech delivered by the US Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger. In a policy address, directed to Asian allies, delivered before the Japanese Society in New York, Kissinger asserted that:

The US will not turn away from Asia and will continue to oppose the efforts of any country or group of countries to impose their will on Asia by a preponderance of power or blackmail. We will permit no question to arise about the firmness of our treaty commitments. Our support and assistance will be available where it has been promised. We


will maintain our treaty obligations throughout Asia and the Pacific."

Similarly, in order to remove doubts from the minds of the Southeast Asian counties and to reaffirm the US role in Southeast Asia, President Gerald R. Ford announced the famous "Pacific Doctrine". In the midst of suspicion and disenchantment among the non-Communist countries of Southeast Asia about the nature and credibility of the American security commitment, President Ford went on a ten-day Asian trip in December 1975. Towards the end of his tour, while speaking at Honolulu on 7 December 1975, the US President proclaimed a new Pacific Doctrine of Peace with all and hostility towards none. He stated:

America, a nation of the Pacific Basin, has a vital stake in Asia and a responsibility to take a leading part in lessening tension, preventing hostilities and preserving peace. World stability and our own security depends upon our Asian commitments. He further added, the United States has a continuing stake in the stability and security of Southeast Asia.7

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The statements were intended to assure the pro-Western countries in Asia Pacific that the end of Vietnam war did not terminate but only altered the American commitment in the region and that the United States still considered the region as very important. The US President repeatedly emphasized wherever he went in the region that the end of fighting in Indochina would allow the Americans to devote more attention to multilateral social and economic problems and the countries of Southeast Asia should not express their concern over the American withdrawal from the region.⁸

In Jakarta, President Ford pledged a continuing active US role in the region and gave firm assurances that Indonesia and other American allies in the area can count on a continued US presence. He tried to reassure President Suharto by saying that, "the Communist takeover in South Vietnam and Cambodia have increased rather than lessened American determination to seek stability in Southeast Asia".⁹


He told another meeting in Jakarta:

The fact that we had a recent tragedy in Indochina actually should redouble our interest in the stability of Southeast Asia. The US as you know regards itself as a Pacific Nation. No area in the world is more important to us than Asia. We remain firmly committed to the peace and security of Southeast Asia and throughout the world. We see our own prosperity and progress linked with the vast populations, the dynamic economies, the abundant resources, and rich cultures of this region - I have come here because of America's continuing interest in your country's security and well-being.  

The speeches expressed the US concern to give an assurance of its friendship to nations in the region.

The new Carter Administration was equally interested in strengthening political and military cooperation with the countries of the Southeast Asian region. The American intention to stand firm in its policy towards the region was symbolized by the visit of the US Vice-President Walter P. Mondale in 1977. He spoke at a news conference in Tokyo, "We should and will remain an Asian-Pacific Power. We will preserve a

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balanced and flexible military strength in the Pacific, and we will continue our interests in Southeast Asia."

Similar statements were made by the US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, before the Asia Society in New York on June 29, 1977. He stated:

To people of Asia I say tonight without qualification that our nation has recovered its self-confidence at home. And we have not abandoned our interest in Asia. The United States will pursue its relations with the nations of Asia with an open mind. We will continue to work closely with allies and friends. The United States recognizes the importance of its continuing contribution to Asian security. We will maintain a strong military presence in the area. He further said, the United States is and will remain an Asian and Pacific power. The US will continue its key role in contribution to peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific.

A year later, the US Secretary of Defence Harold Brown spoke in a similar vein before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on February 20, 1978 that "we are and will remain a major force in the Pacific. It can not be otherwise. We were involved in Asia, even when two hundred years ago. We will continue to have deep and extensive political, economic, security and cultural ties with Asia." American desire to play an active

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14Ibid., Document No. 487, p.916.
role in Southeast Asia was also evident from a speech delivered by the US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Conference at Bali, Indonesia on 2 July 1979. He stated,

The United States is a Pacific power. We will defend our interests and stand by our commitments in the region. Central to the role we are playing is our strong commitment to build upon the growing cooperation between the US and ASEAN. Southeast Asia is important to the US and to our security, and we see our cooperation as vital to the peace, prosperity and stability in Southeast Asia. 15

Such reassuring statements, however, could eradicate only to some extent the existing doubts and uncertainty from the minds of the Southeast Asian countries. Publicly they expressed satisfaction over the fact that the US interest in the region had not declined and in case of any trouble, the countries of this region would be provided with all help and assistance.

The changing international scenario of the new decade of the eighties forced the incoming President Ronald P. Reagan to maintain the position of the United States as a major Pacific power. The US determination to challenge the Soviet Union on almost every front enhanced its interest in the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, the new administration continued the policy

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14 Ibid., Document No. 487, p. 916.

pursued by its predecessors. In a major foreign policy speech, the US Vice-President George Bush stated,

The US is both historically and geographically a Pacific Power and we intend to remain one. We do have a useful role to play in the Pacific and we intend to fulfil that role. Our administration has embarked on a major strengthening of our military forces, including our naval forces in the Pacific — we are going to remain faithful to our treaty commitments. The US is keenly aware that the nations of the Pacific want to strengthen their own defence capabilities and we are prepared to help in that.16

The United States also made special efforts to reassure the countries of Southeast Asia that in case of any danger they can always rely on the United States. This was evident from the statement delivered by the US Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, in Jakarta in 1982.

In order to reaffirm the continuing US interest in Southeast Asia, Casper Weinberger, made a five-nation tour through Asia — including stops in Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia in August-September 1982. The US Defence Secretary promised American military support to Asia in the face of the increasing Soviet threat throughout Vietnam. He stated, "the US will provide whatever assistance it can in the case of any intervention or violation against Indonesia’s

sovereignty. The US will increase its defence assistance program for Indonesia and hopes to continue to do that".\textsuperscript{17}

In addition to repeated assurances given by various top US officials that the countries of Southeast Asia should not feel concerned over the reduced American role in the region, the United States also supported the ASEAN countries' efforts to solve the Kampuchean conflict, one of the most difficult problems of the region and especially Indonesia's role in arriving at a peaceful solution.

\textbf{United States Co-Operation on Kampuchea:}

Since the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in December 1978, the United States co-operated closely with ASEAN in an effort to achieve the withdrawal of Vietnamese military forces, establishment of a government, acceptable to the Kampuchean people, and an end to outside interference in Kampuchea.\textsuperscript{18} With US encouragement, the ASEAN nations adopted a strongly unified stand on the Kampuchean issue and achieved considerable success in building international pressure


on Vietnam, to agree to a peaceful settlement. This included two U.N. General Assembly resolutions calling for Vietnamese withdrawal, and organization of an International conference on Kampuchea, in July 1981,19 attended by 93 countries, which proposed a plan for a political resolution of the Kampuchean situation. The United States strongly supported these ASEAN initiatives and assured that it would provide no military assistance to the Khmer Rouge.20

Representing the United States at the post-Ministerial consultations of the ASEAN nations in Singapore, the Deputy Secretary of State, Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., stated on 18 June, 1982 that, "we strongly favour a comprehensive political settlement. In both public, and private sessions of the ASEAN ministers, we express clear appreciation for the firm political support from the United States on the Kampuchean issue".21 He welcomed the agreement on a coalition and reiterated that the United States would continue to provide political and moral support for the


20Ibid., 38th Session, 5th Plenary Meeting, 26 September 1983.

non-Communist Khmer resistance and promised to consult closely with ASEAN on how the US would be of further help. Stoessel, Jr., said that, in any event, the United States would provide no military assistance. He emphatically ruled out aid to, or contact with the Khmer Rouge.

A similar view was expressed by the US Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Mr. John H. Holdridge. In a statement before the sub-committee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 8 June 1982, he said, "We will reassure the ASEAN states that they can rely on our firm support for their efforts to promote a Kampuchean settlement based on the declaration of the international conference on Kampuchea. We believe ASEAN governments should continue to take the lead on this issue because of their demonstrated success in marshalling international support and because of their sound approach to the problems involved."\(^2\)

Apart from securing a seat for the Kampuchean government in UN, the ASEAN members met with the representatives of Democratic Kampuchea in early April 1986, and extended full support to the new Kampuchean

\(^2\)Ibid., vol.82, No.2065, August 1982, p.59.
proposal which they thought, if accepted, would be conducive to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

Besides this, the ASEAN has had many successes in carrying out its strategy on Kampuchea. Important among them were the well attended International Conference in Kampuchea in New York and the arrangements of direct talks between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Prime Minister Hun Sen in Paris, first in December 1987 and then in January 1988.

The most important step taken by the ASEAN countries in this respect was the holding of the Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM) in July 1988.\textsuperscript{2} Both the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia Ali Alatas (present), and Mochtar Kusumaatmadja (outgoing) contributed a great deal to the holding of this meeting. One of the major achievements of the JIM was that for the first time a way through which all the directly involved parties as well as other concerned counties could sit around the table to and discuss their views and a possible solution was found. The Indonesian effort for an early and peaceful solution of the Kampuchean problem was highly lauded by the United States.

\textsuperscript{2}The Indonesian News, 12 July 1988.
The US Secretary of State George P. Shultz stated, "the US welcomes the Indonesian initiative and its continuing efforts for convening the Jakarta Informal Meeting for seeking a just and peaceful solution of the nine year old conflict in Kampuchea". He said, that he was greatly impressed by the tremendous achievements of the JIM.

The speech clearly envisaged the US support for the ASEAN countries efforts for a peaceful solution of the Kampuchean problem.

**US Support to Indonesia Through Military Assistance:**

Apart from supporting Indonesia on various important international issues, the United States, looking at the country’s poor military strength intended to modestly increase its security assistance to that country. The aid to Indonesia were granted with the following objectives. In the first place, the American aid would help to ensure stability and prosperity of Indonesia, one of the lynch-pins of a stable Southeast Asia. Secondly, it would provide a measure of US access to the key Indonesian decision makers, and thirdly, the assistance being a concrete manifestation of the humanitarian concerns which underlie the American policy

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would persuade Indonesia to accept the assistance without any hesitation which in return would help the United States to increase its influence in Indonesia and by influencing the pivot of ASEAN, the US would gradually increase its influence over the whole of Southeast Asia. Thus, keeping this objective in mind the United States provided security assistance to Indonesia through various programmes. Important among them were the FMS (Foreign Military Sales) credits and the IMET (International Military Training and Education) Programme. According to one report, the US military aid provided to Indonesia during 1979-1988 in the form of loans and grants amounted to $168.6 million and $22.7 million respectively. Another report revealed, the US arms transfer to Indonesia during 1975-88 amounted to $200 million. Among the important weapons acquired by Indonesia through the US Foreign Military Sales and Credits Programmes were 5 RGM - 84 AL Shshm launchers, 72 RGM-84A Harpoon Shshm, 4 Hydrofoil FAC, 29 Major Surface combatants. The Foreign Military sales


credits were used by Indonesia to finance a small portion of Indonesia’s military modernization including the purchase of M-101 howitzers, MK-46 torpedoes, ship overhaul capabilities, and possible aircraft acquisitions.

The International Military Education and Training Programmes helped the Indonesian army officers to receive training in the United States. Indonesia’s military leaders regarded personnel training as a key element in their Force Modernization programme and US IMET programme as one of the most important aspects of their training efforts. The military Education and Training programme permitted about three hundred Indonesian middle and upper grade officers to travel to, and train in the United States. The United States also sent Mobile Training Teams to train additional hundreds of Indonesian officers in their own country. The US Security assistance helped Indonesia to build a strong military capability. The overall US efforts made considerable contribution to upgrade Indonesia’s managerial and technical capabilities in critical defence related fields and incidentally provided those officers who would be the backbone of their country’s future military and political leadership with an understanding and appreciation of the United States. The US assistance enabled Indonesia to sustain a number of
programmes like air craft maintenance, improvement of air and Sea defence system, the purchase of war reserve ammunitions and most importantly advanced professional training for Indonesian Army, Navy and Air Force. The funds provided by the United States also used by Indonesia in the procurement of country’s badly needed war reserve munitions and the overhauling of C-130 Aircrafts which were considered as essential to give the Indonesian Armed Forces a minimal capability to protect and defend the strategic sealanes surrounding the country.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the American aid and assistance raised the standard of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Without this help it would not have been possible for Indonesia to come out of its critical condition.

\textbf{Points of Disagreement}

Though the United States was active in extending support to Indonesia on several important issues certain of its activities created confusion in that country. Indonesia was disturbed over the fact that though the United States highly lauded Indonesia’s future responsible role in Southeast Asia and considered that country as a means through which it could exert influence over the whole region, there was no clear

\textsuperscript{28}Jane’s Defence Weekly (London), 2 May 1984, p. 56.
conception as to the United States' role, interests and policies towards Indonesia. US objectives in the region did not appear to be well defined and its behaviour was far from predictable. There were many issues over which the two countries differed in their approach. Therefore, instead of having very good relations some points of differences still existed among the two countries. Indonesia and the United States did not agree as to what posed immediate threat to the security of Southeast Asia. While Indonesia believed that China threatened the security of the countries in the region, the United States on the other believed that growing presence of the Soviet Union in the Southeast Asian region was the real menace. Indonesia's governing elites criticized the United States policy by declaring it as "confusing and ineffectual". When asked about why this was so, Dr. Yusuf Wawandi, Director of Indonesian Strategic Studies and Analysis, said, "one of the confusing thing is what your China policy is".

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Indonesia's Apprehension of the Growing Sino-US Ties:

Indonesia's military leaders had been both articulate and consistent in identifying China, much more than Vietnam or the Soviet Union, as their country's principal long-term threat. There was a strong perception in Jakarta that China was the most dangerous power in Southeast Asia and therefore it saw Peking as the major external threat to its security. They expressed this perception in different ways. Some said, "China presents the gravest long-term threat", others said, "China, in the concrete, may now be an ally, but, in the abstract, it remains a threat".  

One may ask why Indonesia considered China to be a far greater threat to its security than the one posed by the combination of the Soviet Union and Vietnam. It was due to the long and persistent history of Chinese involvement in the affairs of the countries of Southeast Asia. This was the historical dimension of Indonesia's perception of the Chinese threat. In the past centuries, not only Indonesia but also the entire Southeast Asian region was under the Chinese suzerainty. Whenever a strong and central authority arose in China, it attempted to extend its influence outwards and

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particularly towards this region. Consequently a system of tribute came to be introduced in Southeast Asia and the Kingdoms of the region were often treated as vassal state. This was a part of China's long historic memory and this historic association contributed to a feeling in China that Southeast Asia falls within its sphere of influence. Therefore, on that basis, the countries of the region including Indonesia anticipated a historical claim to rightful influence in the region.\textsuperscript{33}

Another reason was the history of Chinese involvement in the internal politics of Indonesia. It was suspected in Indonesia that China was involved in the famous "Gestapo" (the bloodiest ever communist coup, the country faced in its history) affairs of 30 September 1965 in which thousands of men including six army generals were brutally killed by the communist assassination squads secretly supported by China.\textsuperscript{34} The tragic event had left a deep imprint in President Suharto because the six generals who were killed during the coup happened to be his close associates. Therefore, soon after the coup, his government followed a staunchly


anti-communist policy at home and banned the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). All diplomatic relations with China were snapped and suspicion against Peking's policy persisted. Since then, the problem of alleged Chinese involvement in "Gestapo" affairs stood in the way of normalization of relations between the two, and Indonesia still suspicious of Beijing's behaviour, showed her reluctance to re-establish its relations with that country. It did not even respond positively to China's repeated assurances that "it would not meddle in Indonesia's domestic affairs either at state or party level"; that "China will never make any contact with or support those involved in the 1965 coup", and "China will never allow the former supporters of the 1965 coup "who are now living in Indonesia to carry out any activities in that country."\(^{35}\)

Apart from PRC's involvement in the coup attempt of 1965 Indonesia was also disturbed by the presence of a large number of overseas Chinese community in that country. There were about 3 to 5 million Chinese living in Indonesia out of a predominantly moslem population of 200 million. Indonesia was disturbed by their presence because, firstly, these ethnic Chinese were economically

\(^{35}\)Ji Guoxing, "Sino-ASEAN Prospective Relationship and its Effects on US", Asian Profile (Hong Kong), vol.18, no.1, February 1990, p.10.
aggressive and played an important role in controlling the economic life of Indonesia which affected the country's overall development; secondly, the existence of overseas Chinese community often led to communal violence and riots which again affected the country's internal security; thirdly, though, most of these overseas Chinese did not speak Chinese nor did they have any connection with the mainland China, still they were suspected to be more loyal and sympathetic to China than to Indonesia. Therefore, the Indonesian view in this regard was that the overseas Chinese would be susceptible to manipulation and exploitation by Peking.³⁶

Indonesia's perception of Chinese threat further heightened by the later's attack on Vietnam, China's support to the Communist insurgent movements in the past, its propensity to "teach lessons" to its neighbours, were all serious matters which Indonesia could not ignore. China's use of armed forces to seize some of the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China

Sea further added to Indonesia's concern over the Chinese threat.³⁷

Lastly, and finally, China's geographical proximity to Indonesia made such an expectation understandable. This was the geographical dimension of Indonesia's perception of the Chinese threat.

However, the long and persistent history of Chinese dominance in Southeast Asia, the geographical proximity, China's involvement in the coup affairs of 1965, its previous support for Communist insurgencies within ASEAN countries, and presence of a large number of overseas Chinese community within the territory of Indonesia made China a potentially more serious threat to Indonesia. Therefore, the Indonesian Government opposed any projection of Chinese power, and any expansion of Chinese political influence in Southeast Asia were perceived as harmful to the interests of Indonesians. For that reason Indonesia claimed to have serious reservations about the regional impact of the emerging Sino-American strategic alliance and perceived US close relations with China as harmful to its own security.³⁸


Therefore, despite assurances like the one given by Ronald Reagan during Suharto's visit to Washington that the US would not let its growing relations with China undermine the security of its allies in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's misgivings about it did not abate. The US visit in January 1984 of Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang was followed very attentively in Southeast Asia. President Reagan's trip to the PRC at the end of April 1984, and the visit by the Chinese minister of Defence Zhang Aiping a year later made Indonesia very uncomfortable. An Indonesian analyst warned during Reagan's China visit that relations between Indonesia and the US were likely to deteriorate if Washington strengthened its ties with Beijing.

The twelve day visit of Zhang Aiping to the United States in June 1985, and the military agreements that were signed between the two countries caused considerable concern in Indonesia. The US decision to help China to modernize its army by sale of lethal

39Ibid., p.11951.

40Asia Week (Hong Kong), vol.10, no.5, 3 February 1984, p.9.


42Congressional Record, 1985, p.35302.
weapons and nuclear technologies and other kinds of military assistance especially caused great concern to the Indonesians. According to one report, between 1975 and 1988, the Sino-American military and intelligence ties had taken a quantum jump and the United States made sincere efforts to develop China's defence capability. During this period China was able to acquire various defensive weapons like the anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, reconnaissance aircraft, short range air-defence missiles, mortar locating radars, Washingtonhouse APG-46 radars for F-8 high technology computers, military and civilian vehicles, super hercules Lockheed Radios etc.

The 1985 agreement of nuclear co-operation between the United States and the People's Republic of China represented an important step by the US decision makers in developing relations with China in the field of high technology cooperation as it provided a legal framework for US nuclear companies to export nuclear material equipment and services to China.

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41Ibid., p.35309.

44Ibid., p.30625.

The most important military deal between the two countries took place in October 1986, which gave China some US avionics. The equipment included 50 Chinese F-8 high altitude fighters interceptors. In 1986, the United States State Department concluded 25 other formal agreements in science and technology between the US and China. It also announced plans to build up at least 10 nuclear power plants, with a total generating capability of 10,000 megawatts by the year 2000 AD. Had these plans been realized China would have doubled its total energy output.

The massive arms transfer to China caused grave apprehension in Indonesia. Jakarta viewed potential increase in the PRC’s military capability as inherently threatening to Southeast Asia. The US decision to help China in its Four Modernizations (the modernization of agriculture, industry, defence, and science and technology) programmes created further concern in Indonesia. Jakarta was wary about what the PRC would do after it achieved its goals of modernization. This was apprehended by the Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja when he said, "Indonesia

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understood the strategies of the US and PRC which had intensified its modernization program. However, we are concerned about what China would do after it achieved the aims of modernization, because Indonesia had a bad experience with the PRC.\textsuperscript{48}

The question the Indonesians asked were whether a modern and economically developed China, with sufficient capabilities to exercise hegemony over Southeast Asia revive history or would help in the promotion of peace, stability and security in the region. They feared that such assistance might bring forth China's expansionist character to the fore.\textsuperscript{49} There was also a touch of anxiety in Indonesia as to how American weapons would be used by China. What worried them more was that the United States might provide the PRC with M-16s and other similar small weapons which would be ultimately used by that country to help the local insurgents.

They also feared that US support to China might result in the reduction of American aid to Indonesia. Furthermore, since China and the countries of Southeast Asia had the similar interests in the US market, the

\textsuperscript{48}The Indonesian News, 7 February 1986.

\textsuperscript{49}Tatsumi Okabe, "China's Asia Policy: Chance or Challenge?", The Indonesian Quarterly (Jakarta), vol.14, no.3, July 1987, p.401.
growing Sino-US relations, were likely to result in increasing competition in exports especially in oil and other resources. Throughout Southeast Asia there was concern about increasing competition from the PRC for export market, aid, and credit as China had become increasingly integrated into the global economy.\textsuperscript{50} The Indonesians were of the view that this would again affect international capital investment in their country. Therefore growing Sino-US comity of interests were perceived as harmful to Indonesia's economic development also.

For that reason, the Indonesian leaders expressed concern over the growing Sino-US ties. They were of the opinion that the interests of the Southeast Asian countries should not be sacrificed for better relations with the People's Republic of China. Reacting to the growing Sino-US Cooperation, the Indonesian ambassador to the United States A. Hasnan Habid said that, "our Southeast Asian security interests should not be disregarded if the US carried out its offer to sale arms to China".\textsuperscript{51} President Suharto also reminded the US Vice-President George Bush during his visit to Jakarta

\textsuperscript{50}Congressional Record, 1982, p.36250.

\textsuperscript{51}The Indonesian News, 12 October 1982.
in 1982 that, "US-China relations should not harm its relations with the ASEAN countries".\footnote{The New York Times, 14 October, 1982.}

US response to Indonesia's concern over the growing Sino-American rapprochement was positive and it reportedly assured the Indonesians that the US relationship with PRC would not endanger Jakarta's security. The US responded to the ASEAN opposition by arguing that the military sales to China would be handled on a case-by-case basis; that they would be limited to defensive purposes; and that in each case the US would consult with the ASEAN states before making any decision.\footnote{US Congress, Senate, 97th Congress, 2nd Session, A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, March 1982, On United States Relations with ASEAN, Hong Kong and Laos (Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1982), p.17.} Both Assistant Secretary of State John H. Holdridge and Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger reassured the ASEAN governments that security cooperation with China would not be negotiated at the expense of the ASEAN states.

Reacting to the Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadji's statement that relations between the US and PRC should not harm the interests of Indonesia and the Southeast Asian countries, Holdridge referred to the
statement of US Deputy Secretary of State Walter J. Stoessel Jr., whereby he gave the assurance that the stepping-up of the US relations with China would not demote Southeast Asia into United States' second priority. The US was fully aware that the countries of Southeast Asia, especially the ASEAN countries, fear and distrust of the PRC while professing to be friendly to the Southeast Asian countries.

In the same vein, the US Vice-President George Bush gave assurance in 1982 while in Jakarta that his country would maintain friendly relations and cooperation with Indonesia and other ASEAN nations. "The US will not withdraw from relations with Indonesia", he said. He described the improvement in US-China relations as a step forward toward the creation of world stability. According to him better relations with China would not harm US friendship with ASEAN.

When Bush was questioned on fears of Southeast Asian countries about US plan to give nuclear aid to China, he said that every agreement by the US on aid in the nuclear field was meant for peaceful purposes. In

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54 *American Foreign Policy, 1982, Document No.460, pp.958-60.

55 *Congressional Record, 1982, p.11951."
every such agreement, aspect of security concerning the
use of nuclear power, was included. Bush assured that
their relationship would no way hamper the US interest
in Indonesia and would not result in the reduction of
American aid to that country. 56 On the other hand it
would make every effort to strengthen its relationship
with Indonesia.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, President
Reagan during Suharto's visit to Washington had assured
him that the US' growing ties with China would not be
allowed to come in the way of the Security of its allies
in the region. 57 The US Secretary of Defence, Casper
Weinberger, even went to the extent of saying that "Any
kind of infiltration or attack on the sovereignty of
Indonesia would be something we would consider very
seriously and we will try our best to prevent any
infiltration or attack threatening Indonesia's
sovereignty. 58 He made this statement in response to a
question at a news conference after meeting with
President Suharto and Defence Minister Mohammad Jusuf in
Jakarta.

56 Congressional Record, 1982, p.23902.

57 American Foreign Policy, 1982, Document No.459,
p.955.

Over the issue of arms sales to China, the United States assured the Indonesians by saying that these were all for China's own defensive purposes and neither it was going to be supplied to the local insurgents in Indonesia nor it was going to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the whole region. While in Indonesia, the US Secretary of State, George P. Shultz stated at a news conference on 14 July 1984 that, "nevertheless we think that a constructive relationship between the US and China lends stability to the region, not the other way around. Its our view and I believe widely shared in this part of the world that the emergence of a good and stable relationship between the US and China on the whole advances the idea of stability in this part of the world and it is a net plus. The relationship, I don't think, is in any sense a threat to other parts of Asia". 59

Such reassuring statements could hardly alter the Xenophobic perception from the minds of the Indonesians and they remained unconvinced.

**US-Japanese Ties: Concern for Indonesia**

The Indonesians were again confounded by the US policy towards Japan. The US-Japanese relationship had been viewed by Washington -- from Nixon to Reagan as the

"cornerstone" of American policy in the Asia-Pacific region. This constituted a source of concern for the Indonesians.

Here one is faced with two important questions. In the first place why the US-Japanese relationship was considered by the United States as the cornerstone of its policy in the Asia-Pacific region and why Indonesia perceived that cooperation as a threat to its security. In reply to the first question it could be said that Japan had become an economic giant, therefore an important power in its own right. The United States believed that such a great economic power could rightfully assume more political and military responsibilities for the security and stability of the region. Secondly, only Japan had enough potential power to weigh significantly against the communist states of Southeast Asia and thirdly, ASEAN countries always prefer an enhanced role of Japan much more than that of China.

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60 American Foreign Policy, 1977-80, Document No. 547, p. 1038.


62 Congressional Record, 1982, p. 23766.
The reason for the second question as to why Indonesia considered the growing Japanese-American relationship as a threat to its security was that Japan was the country with which Indonesia had serious difficulties. The lingering memories of Japanese behaviour in the Second World War were still fresh in the minds of the Indonesians. The history of the war in the Pacific and the three and half years of Japanese wartime occupation of the Southeast Asian countries were not forgotten, and the memories of the past had often intervened in developing amicable relations with them in the present. Indonesia remembered those bitter memories and feared a repetition of the past through their cooperation. Therefore, grave apprehensions were expressed in Jakarta over the US-Japanese friendship. The US decision to rearm Japan evoked resentment in Indonesia. Mounting American pressure on Japan to build up its defence capabilities by reinforcing its military alliance and advocating a "sharing of responsibilities" by Japan disappointed them more.

The consistent US pressure on Japan that it should substantially increase its defence budget so that it

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64Congressional Record, 1982, pp.26675-26679.
could look after the security problems in the region created further grumbling in Indonesia. In Jakarta there was suspicion that the American eagerness to push Japan to greater military efforts concealed a desire by the United States to reduce the American presence in Asia and that, burden-sharing was a euphemism for burden-shifting. This was a point that was vigorously made to US Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger during his visit to the region in October 1982.

The most controversial proposition over which Indonesia expressed concern was the US-Japanese agreement to hold joint naval exercises in the Western Pacific for the protection of sealanes upto 1,000 nautical miles from Japan's main islands. The Japanese plan for militarization on this scale caused special tension in Indonesia because they thought, the said area (1,000 nautical miles from Japan's main island) would touch the ASEAN waters, and the presence of huge Japanese military forces at such a little distance would certainly disturb the peace and stability of the region.

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Reacting to the Japanese plan for militarization, the Indonesian ambassador to the United States, A. Hasnan Habib said, "Japan’s agreement on US call to extend its defence to 1,000 nautical miles from its shores would reach Indonesia if the distance were measured from Okinawa. We are for increased capability for Japan to defend its own country, he said. We really would like to see no outside military pressures on ASEAN nations", he added.

Besides this, the Indonesians were of the opinion that if the United States continued this process for another five years then Japan would no doubt become a nuclear power. Reflecting Indonesian ambivalence about the rearming of Japan, Dr. Yusuf Wawandi asked "where it might end if the United States kept urging Japan to bear more of a military burden in Asia? If they really decide to arm, if they set their mind to it, if they can work out some consensus in the next five years they could become a nuclear power." The presence of a nuclear power adjacent to their border, the Indonesian diplomats said, would be a constant source of concern for the country’s security. Therefore, instead of repeated assurances given by the US and Japanese leaders that the

67 The Indonesian News, 27 April 1982.

68 The International Herald Tribune, 29 July 1982.
rearmament was mainly for Japan's own defensive purposes and Indonesia should not be worried about the possible increase in Tokyo's military capability, Indonesia still remembering the disastrous consequences of Japanese wartime occupation could not give up their reservations about Japan. An Indonesian top official said, "all states in Southeast Asia remembering the war in the Pacific and the three and half years of Japanese occupation are very much concerned over the possible increase in Tokyo's military role".  

Amin Iskander, member of the Indonesian Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security said: "Japanese expansionism is no secret to any one. The question is whether Japan seeks to ensure it by the force of Japan. This wish is encouraged by the militaristic and individualistic circles gaining strength in that country."  

Indonesia apprehended that a great military role by Japan would aggravate tension in the region leading to a simultaneous increase in the Soviet military build-up. The growing Soviet presence in the Western Pacific area would lead to the Big Power rivalry in the region which


in turn would destroy the ASEAN country's hope for establishing a ZOPFAN (Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality). There was also the fear that an enhanced Japanese defence capability would encourage a more assertive Japanese political role. They feared that Japanese character might change as a result of the rearmament. They were afraid of the revival of "BUSHIDO" or a militaristic Japan.\textsuperscript{71}

According to the Indonesians, armament might make Japan the "Policeman" of Southeast Asia and the countries of Southeast Asia might suffer again at their hands. On the eve of the visit by Yasuhero Nakasone, former Prime Minister of Japan), former Vice-President of Indonesia Adam Malik stated, "Indonesia is concerned over the fact that Japan may become the USA's policeman in Asia which reminds the Indonesians of the time when a war was waged by Japan in East Asia."\textsuperscript{72}

Similar concern was expressed by the Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja when he said to \textit{The New York Times} that, "People in the United States should feel that Japan to share the burden and


\textsuperscript{72}The Indonesian News, 13 April, 1983.
understand that, we have no problem with that so long as it is for the defence of Japan. But based on past experience, where does it stop? There are hints that sharing of the burden would mean some policeman's role and Japan would be given some task in Asia to lighten US presence.\textsuperscript{73} He further said, "Indonesia is of the view that Japan has the right to enhance its military power, but that Indonesia does not want Japan to play the role of policeman in the Asia-Pacific region".\textsuperscript{74}

From the above statements one may conclude that the concept of Japan sharing defence burden implied a policeman's role for Japan and a likelihood that the United States would assign some tasks to Japan that would lighten its own responsibility in the region. This was not very compatible with Indonesia's own ambitions and aspirations.\textsuperscript{75}

Indonesia's misgivings on Japan's increased military capability seemed to have been practically over when they secured full assurance from the US and Japanese high officials that its intentions were purely


\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{75}Jusuf Wawandi, "Japan's international and regional role: An Indonesian Perspective", \textit{The Indonesian Quarterly}, vol.15, no.3, July 1988, p.331.
defensive, and any indication of Japanese interest to play a major role in the political or security field should not create concern in Indonesia. The Japanese diplomats expressed regrets over the Japanese activities in Southeast Asia during the Second World War and assured the Indonesian President Suharto by saying that, no future Japanese threat to the region existed. Indonesia's mistrust of the Japanese rearmament further relaxed when Prime Minister Yasuhero Nakasone paid a visit to Indonesia in May 1983. He stated there, Japan wanted to raise her military build up in the Western Pacific region in order to check the growing Soviet activities. He assured President Suharto by saying that, "Japan needed to beef up its forces in view of the naval and air build up of the Soviet Union and 1,000 nautical miles sealanes from home islands would never reach ASEAN waters".  

A similar view was also expressed by the US Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger during his visit to the region in the fall of 1982. Replying to a question from The Indonesian News, the US Defence Secretary ruled out any possibility of Japan, promoting its military strength except for defensive reasons. "Japan has developed a suitable and entire self-defence

system to protect their home land. Our concern is primarily that Japan would have to do more than they are doing now to fulfil their self-defence role. I don't think that there is any indication that they have any offensive desire."

Explaining why Japan has to do more for their self-defence, Weinberger said, "it is simply that the United States is responsible for other parts of the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to protect the sealanes". He assured the Indonesian President that, "the US proposal for Japan to help patrol sealanes was limited to 1,000 miles from Tokyo Bay, and stopped far away from Indonesia. Therefore the Indonesians should not suspect the Japanese agreement to hold joint naval operations in the Western Pacific region for the protection of sealanes upto 1,000 nautical miles from Japan’s main island."

The US Ambassador to Indonesia John H. Holdridge also defended the American plan of increasing the Japanese military strength and assured the Indonesians that this would not endanger the security of their country. When asked about possible dangers in the US

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73 Congressional Record, 1982, p.31225.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., p.29802.

policy of encouraging Japan to build up its military strength, Holdridge said that, he was aware of the concerns expressed by some Asian countries. There were worries on the part of some countries that the US might be thinking over the longer term policy of turning over its security role to Japan in Southeast Asia so that the US would concentrate its resources elsewhere. He emphatically declared: "I can tell you that is not our policy. The US was not encouraging Japan to do more than the role which Japan itself had accepted, i.e., to defend the air and sea approaches to the home islands upto a distance of 1,000 nautical miles. He also said, Japan was still a considerable way from achieving a very large military capability and the US did not see that, there would be a quantum jump in the size of the Japanese military requirement".\(^1\)

Another top US official, John H. Holdridge said that, "Indonesia and other ASEAN nations should not think that Japan's expansion of defence forces would constitute a threat to them or that it was an attempt by the United States to use Japan as a surrogate for the defence of Southeast Asia".\(^2\) In addition to these repeated assurances, the Indonesians were also assured

\(^1\)Congressional Record, 1982, p.28598.

that they would be receiving US help and assistance in case of any danger posed by Japan.

But such reassuring statements could not completely clear the doubts from the minds of the Indonesians. They became really upset when the Reagan Administration gradually outlined a new Asian policy. Some general trends in this connection could be seen from addresses delivered by the US Secretary of State George Shultz on 5 March, 1983\textsuperscript{83} in San Francisco, and by Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Paul Wolfowitz on 15 April 1983\textsuperscript{84} in Singapore. These speeches included the following emphasis: Upgrading the place of Japan in US Asian Policy and stressing US-Japan relations as of primary importance; focussing on the economic aspect of diplomacy in Asia and thus strengthening relationship with ASEAN; and downgrading the strategic importance of China and seeing it as a regional force.

The statements, which were widely viewed by the American and foreign press as a "new course" in Asian policy, seemed to mark a shift in US partnership in Asia

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\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., 6 March 1983.

\textsuperscript{84}Ibid., 16 April 1983.
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from the notion of a strategic triangle to an emphasis on ideology.

"The new far-reaching turnabout in United States' Pacific Policy", according to the Chicago Tribune "had downgraded Peking's importance and shifted strategic emphasis to Japan and other non-communist states."\(^{85}\) The Far Eastern Economic Review noted that, "Shultz's speech represented a quiet counter revolution against the triangular tradition which dominated Washington's Asian policy since Nixon's opening to China."\(^{86}\)

The novelty in Reagan Administration's Asian policy, i.e., shifting of emphasis to Japan, making Japan a main force in countering Soviet expansionism created deep concern among the Indonesians. They feared that the shift of emphasis toward Japan would increase US pressure on Tokyo, to expand its military forces. It would thus exacerbate tensions with the US on defence and trade issues and bring forth greater friction rather than harmony which would in turn endanger not only the


\(^{86}\)Robert Manning, "Whose Advantage?", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), vol.120, no.16, 21 April 1983, p.11.
security of Indonesia but also the security of all Southeast Asian countries.

The US View On Nuclear Free Zone in Southeast Asia

The Reagan administration's negative reaction and blunt refusal to recognize the concept of Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) created disappointment in Jakarta. Reacting to the ZOPFAN Concept, the US Secretary of State George P. Shultz stated in Singapore that "nuclear weapons are important elements in the US deterrence against Soviet Union in Asia and that creation of nuclear free zone in the region would be a mistake."87 The statement really hurt the sentiment of the ASEAN governments. They became more upset when the United States expressed its unwillingness to accept the ZOPFAN idea, issued at the end of the Third ASEAN Summit on 15 December 1987 in Manila. Reacting to the Manila Declaration, the US State Department spokesman Philiis Oakley immediately expressed the US reservations against it. In his opinion the ASEAN call would undermine the concept of deterrence, that had served all the nations so well.88

87 The Indonesian News, 26 June 1986.

The statement added to the unhappiness of the Indonesians.

Thus, in conclusion, it can be said that though the United States had substantial security interest in Indonesia and recognized its future important role in Southeast Asia, it had not entered into any special arrangement to put the Indonesian fear and suspicion at rest. On the contrary, the shaping of US policy according to the changing international scenario sharpened the anxiety of the Indonesian people.

Indonesia was important for the United States. But so were China and Japan. Indeed, they were more important than Indonesia. Any expansion in the role of either of these countries was not compatible with Indonesia's own foreign policy aspirations and ambitions. Therefore, any move that the US made to accept a large role for either China or Japan aroused misgivings in Indonesia. The US felt the need to reassure Indonesia that its security interest would be well looked after. But in reality, it could not sacrifice its relationship with either China or Japan in order to satisfy the Indonesian aspirations. It could not even provide support to Indonesia for pursuing goals like ZOPPAN for the fear that the concept would affect its own interest.
But the United States should not overlook the importance of Southeast Asia in the world politics today. The region, as it is known, is relatively calm and stable with its economy booming across the Pacific rim countries. The US should also not forget the fact that, ASEAN as a regional grouping is increasingly enlarging its influence over the Third World countries and in the United Nations as well, and Indonesia is the pivot of that regional organization. Any strain in the US-Indonesian bilateral relationship would affect the diverse and long-standing interests of the United States in the region as a whole.