OUR COMMITMENTS IN ASIA

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OUR COMMITMENTS IN ASIA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 1974

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2 p.m. in room H-236, the Capitol, Hon. Robert N. C. Nix (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. Nix. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are beginning hearings on our defense commitments in Asia in the hope that we will also gather information as to the alternatives to our present Asian defense position.

Because of the size of our defense budget, Americans must have the assurance that other nations in the future will take on the burden of their own defense, while the United States provides the nuclear umbrella which protects all non-Communist nations.

Today we provide with our bases security for many nations which have very small defense budgets, while their economies prosper.

This has happened in part because we inherited what amounted to an American empire at the end of the Second World War. Behind the American defense shield, old nations recovered from the agony of war, and new nations were born and prospered.

It is time to look at this defense shield and its cost to the American people, since other nations may be ready to do their share, or should be, at least.

The mission this shield serves abroad has changed. Some of our troops are stationed in foreign countries for political rather than military purposes. That is they are there as evidence of our good faith, where our written promises do not suffice.

The requirements of 1974 differ from those of 1945. Guerrilla warfare requires domestic reforms and Asian varieties of democracy to meet internal subversion. Intercontinental ballistic missiles and shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles which do not have to be aimed since they are heat seeking, have changed the threat to peace. Extensive overseas bases with large garrisons do not deter either guerrilla wars or intercontinental attack. These bases are then obsolete.

Such bases may be more out of date, they may be tempting to guerrilla forces. Consider for example our airbases in Thailand; the shoulder-fired heat seeking missile may be fired at planes landing or taking off by a single terrorist. Planes crashing on landing or taking off would probably kill their crews. Protection for planes and crews would require large garrisons which would have to fan out from bases on jungle patrols.
Recently, a large contingent of British tanks and infantry had to cover the grounds of the vast London Airport to protect one man and one plane, and that man is the American Secretary of State, Mr. Henry Kissinger. This had to be done because Palestinian terrorists had acquired these weapons which are no bigger than a bazooka and can be easily handled. British intelligence had learned of a planned attack on the other side of the coin. The U.S. version of these weapons, the Red Eye, has been issued to the White House Secret Service detail to protect the President against a repetition of the Skyjacker’s plot to crash an airliner into the White House and the February 18th landing of a stolen helicopter outside the White House windows.

If London Airport and the White House are protected with great effort, the difficulty of protecting our airbases in Thailand is obvious. In any case, our needs at home are growing so fast that the expansive missions assigned to the Defense Department in Asia and other areas must be trimmed. For instance, a Wharton School of Finance study estimates that it will cost $132 billion in private and Government investment to insure American self-sufficiency in energy by 1982.

If we neglect our needs at home, if we refuse to face issues which involve the life of the American people, we will endanger democracy at home. If that happens, other nations of the world will have no democratic source of strength to turn to. There is no distinction between foreign policy and domestic policy since neither set of issues can be neglected for any period of time. Each has to be kept in balance with the common purpose of serving the American people who are in fact “the last best hope of earth.” The Defense budget must be tamed.

Our first witness is Mr. Roland Paul, attorney at law, and author of the volume, “American Military Commitments Abroad.”

I welcome you, Mr. Paul. It is really a pleasure to have you here.

STATEMENT OF ROLAND PAUL, ATTORNEY AT LAW, AUTHOR OF “AMERICAN MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD,” 1973; FORMER COUNSEL, SUBCOMMITTEE ON U.S. SECURITY AGREEMENTS ABROAD, U.S. SENATE

Mr. Paul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You have invited me to testify on American commitments in Asia—a term which various people use in different ways, depending upon the context of the discussion, and sometimes depending upon what they are trying to prove. The fairest definition of a commitment that I can devise is any set of circumstances, other than an intrinsic or strategic relationship, that would strongly tend toward requiring the United States to come to the defense of another country, even if, at the moment of crisis, it would not otherwise be in the American interest to do so. Such a definition includes:

1. Treaty commitments.
2. The stationing of large numbers of our troops in another country.
3. Congressional resolutions and declarations of support by other American officials.
4. Circumstances which may be termed moral commitments.
5. Binding involvements that arise from the inherent dynamics of any large ongoing program, what might be called bureaucratic commitments, and
6. More broadly based identification between this country and another country, such as elements in our relationship with Israel.

However, commitments in all of these forms are not nearly so important as some people assume in determining the course of American involvement abroad or the level of our military-related expenditures. Far more important is the perception of American interests as seen by our Nation's leaders.

These interests include, first, the prevention of nuclear calamity, including the avoidance of deadly superpower confrontations and nuclear proliferation, and second, the averting of political collapse within this country generated by pressures, anxieties or debacles abroad. Toward these ends, the United States has sought to project an image of strength abroad so as to influence the leaders of other important countries along lines conducive to these American interests, and to arrest the momentum of dangerous tendencies far enough forward to keep them well away from areas or issues of primary importance.

In designing the size and shape of our military establishment abroad, also factors such as the assessment of the threat to the foregoing interests and a judgment as to the margin of tolerable error in readiness are probably more important than is a determination as to what our so-called commitments are.

That is not to say, however, that such commitments play no role at all in determining our action and our force abroad. In at least one instance, Vietnam, a preexisting commitment played a very significant role, I believe, in leading the United States to undergo great sacrifice in very unfavorable circumstances.

The conclusion to be drawn, it seems to me, is that both extremes should be avoided. The United States should not order its affairs so as to require it to respond to every shift in power abroad, even where the victors are closely identified with our adversaries, but on the other hand, it should also avoid the appearance that American intervention is extremely unlikely. In this regard I would admonish against the recent practice of creating highly visible noncommitments, such as congressional resolutions barring American forces from certain countries.

A reasonably visible commitment, for one that is not unduly threatening to the other side, seems appropriate enough where that commitment is likely to be effective as a deterrent against the relevant threat, but a low profile, or at least an ambiguous one, is fitting where high visibility will not be so effective. Two of the best examples in the Far East to illustrate this distinction are perhaps Korea, on the one hand, and Laos, on the other hand.

Korea seems to me to be an instance in which a highly visible American commitment has been effective in preventing war for more than 20 years, and has even contributed to a change in the situation from intense confrontation to a sort of détente. As late as 1969, North Korea's behavior was characterized by seizure of an American vessel, shooting down of our aircraft, infiltration, assassination teams, and gun fights along the DMZ. But in 1972, affected to some extent by the change in Sino-American relations, North Korea and South Korea took some tentative steps of their own to improve their mutual situation. It is hard for me to think of a countervailing argu-
ment that outweighs 20 years without major warfare in a place where without the American commitment such warfare would have been highly likely.

In Laos, however, the threat has taken the form of low-level, small-unit operations. In such a situation, large scale American precrisis visibility would not seem very effective as a deterrent. This is not to say, however, that the American military role need be zero. Indeed, Laos demonstrates that the United States in certain circumstances can play a very effective role without creating an undue commitment. For more than 8 years, the United States provided military support for the non-Communist government there against the Pathet Lao and their North Vietnamese allies. This support took the form of military advisers, materiel, bombing, and third-country troops.

Even though this support became quite substantial for a time, for example more than 100 bombing sorties a day in the late 1960's, it still remained relatively low in visibility. There were no large American bases in Laos, and few American casualties. Perhaps equally significant was the fact that world attention was fixed on the much larger war going on next door in South Vietnam. In these circumstances, certain American military activities such as those I have just mentioned can be conducted without serious risk of overinvolvement, even if things do not work out the way he would like.

There can be no doubt but that if the United States had not supported the Laotian Government in the way it did, Laos would have fallen to the Communists. But instead, in the peace settlement of 1973, it is worth noting that the non-Communists received virtually all of the important portfolios in the cabinet, and 80 percent of the population remained in territory controlled by government forces. This does not, of course, resolve the very close question whether the American interests being served justified the sacrifice which the Laotians had to endure. I think it does, however, undercut the argument that American military power cannot be effective in a Southeast Asian type of conflict.

I would like now to comment briefly on the other countries in the crescent of Asia where the United States has a military presence.

By far the most important of these countries is Japan. We have reduced our military presence somewhat in the last few years, but we still have large air and naval bases and other major facilities there, including Okinawa. I believe that further reductions are appropriate, and will inevitably be made. The subcommittee may want to look hard, for instance, at Yokota Airbase and Yokusuka Naval Base, both very close to Tokyo. However, I would hope that our military presence in Japan would not have to be terminated entirely in the next few years, because it constitutes a direct link between Japan's security and our own, a very relevant factor in regard to Japan's nonnuclear inclination.

We have minor facilities on Taiwan. Secretary Kissinger has testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that this presence is not a major problem in our relationship with Communist China. Most of the 14 million people on Taiwan, both the indigenous Taiwanese and the mainlanders, do not want to come under the domination of Red China. I am not sure what major American interest has been served by our commitment to Taiwan, but I am certain that it has benefited those people.
In the Philippines, we have two large facilities, Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base, and a few other posts. These facilities provide a rear echelon for staging into Southeast Asia if that should ever be America's policy again. They also support American naval forces in the Western Pacific and may possibly serve in the future as the homeport for some of these forces, a program which is likely to be more significant hereafter for budgetary reasons.

The domestic situation in the Philippines has not been particularly good in recent years, but that fact is essentially irrelevant to our military presence there. I have heard the suggestion from time to time that an American military presence in countries with unstable governments is likely to embroil us dangerously in the internal affairs of that country. Such involvement has just not been the case. Consider, for example, Greece, Turkey, Libya, Thailand, South Korea, Ethiopia, and the Philippines. All have experienced internal crises at times when American military units were stationed there; our forces have either remained or gone, but there have been no pitched battles between American forces and the dissidents and no significant American casualties.

In Thailand the United States now has six Air Force bases, one large port facility, and other lesser installations. These facilities represent a key element in the Vietnam peace settlement as substantial evidence that the United States may once again provide the South Vietnamese Government with air support in the event of a renewed border attack by North Vietnam similar to the one launched in the spring of 1972. If the preservation of the Vietnam settlement is an important interest of the United States, in light of what this country has invested to achieve it, and I believe that it is, then the continuation of at least some of these bases in Thailand is appropriate.

No discussion of American commitments in Asia would be complete without some reference to the situation in Vietnam. One of the major factors prompting this country to send ground forces to Vietnam in 1965 was our existing commitment to that country through the presence of 23,000 American servicemen, whose withdrawal under the circumstances in Vietnam in early 1965 would have constituted a highly visible foreign policy debacle for the United States. On balance, however, I think it would have been the better course to have bitten the bullet, accepted the negative consequences from such a defeat and to have taken steps elsewhere to offset these consequences to some extent. For example, a better choice in those days may have been to send American troops to Thailand, as the Thais were begging us to do at that time and as we had done in the past.

As for the present situation in South Vietnam, I would only observe that the peace settlement may have been more favorable to the non-Communist side than some have implied. Over 80 percent of the population is in territory controlled by the Government of South Vietnam, and the once dire predictions of that Government's collapse do not appear to be coming true.

With Cambodia, the United States has been able to structure a rather similar relationship to that which we had with Laos, thus avoiding any over-commitment. Indeed we may have overreacted somewhat in our concern to avoid a commitment. I believe the United States has some interest in warding off a Communist takeover in
Cambodia. The hard question, of course, is whether that interest, real but not overriding, is worth the sacrifice which the Cambodian people are undergoing. In this regard, however, the number of fatalities under the present circumstances, especially among the non-Communists, may be just as high as they would have been had the bombing continued. Some American airpower, possibly plus a few advisers, as in Laos, would have probably assured that the Communists would not have taken Cambodia, and I doubt if that support would have over-committed us even if it had failed to achieve its purpose. I must report an uneasy feeling that congressional action in precluding these measures was not as appropriate as it may have appeared at the time.

In conclusion, I would think on balance that the negative consequences would outweigh the positive ones if this country formally repudiated any of its present commitments in the Far East, whether they be in the form of treaties or in the form of troops stationed abroad. I see no need, however, of reemphasizing these obligations. To allow them to decline toward convenient ambiguity may not be inappropriate. The new form of American commitment-making gesture may well be the more ambiguous, and hence more appropriate, method of deploying American aircraft carriers near areas of concern. This was done during the Indo-Pakistan war of December 1971, and also during the recurring Middle East crises.

As a budgetary matter, it may also be fitting to phase down the size of our military and naval forces in the Far East. But consistent with the need to project a militarily strong image abroad to avoid unfortunate miscalculations by adversaries or allies, I would hope that we would not entirely withdraw our military forces from any region of the Far East where they are presently stationed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. NIX. Thank you, Attorney Paul.

On page 9 at the bottom of your statement you stated: “In conclusion, I would think on balance that the negative consequences would outweigh the positive ones if this country formally repudiated any of its present commitments in the Far East.”

Hold it there. Now we do have commitments, that is, of course, agreed to. What compelling interest is it to the United States of America to maintain those commitments?

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, the interest that we have I would like to emphasize is strictly an American interest. We are not and we certainly should not be doing this for the interests of other people if it interferes with American interests. But it seems basic to me, Mr. Chairman, that the image of the United States as a powerful country abroad, not just within its own borders, be maintained. It is very important to avoid nuclear risks. I am thinking particularly, for example, of nuclear proliferation, and more specifically in the Far East I think it is worth a price to see that Japan does not acquire nuclear weapons from the fear of being without protection against possible nuclear blackmail.

This whole scheme of American military presence in the form of commitments relates to that image of America’s presence and military strength abroad. We can reduce this presence somewhat for budgetary reasons. There is no reason to keep it at its present level, but, to say formally and visibly we quit is very dangerous.
Mr. Nix. Do you believe that the benefits accruing to the United States of America outweigh the cost in dollars and deprivation to the people of this country?

Mr. Paul. Mr. Chairman, the question of the cost of our military establishment in terms of the military budget which I think is too high, must be answered by looking at our worldwide military posture. It does not make that much difference whether a division is stationed in Okinawa or in San Francisco as far as the cost of supporting it. So you must look at how many ground force divisions we have, how many aircraft task forces we have, how many air wings we have, cut the total, and then deploy the remaining units as thought appropriate.

I have written that we don't have to keep the total number that we now have. Some of them can serve dual functions if they were stationed in the United States or the Far East with C5-As and the like. They can be moved rather rapidly from one theater to another, but bringing them home does not change that position.

Mr. Nix. See, what I am trying to express is what most people don't seem to understand. The foreign policy of any country is designed to aid the interests of that particular country. There is nothing humanitarian about it. It is completely selfish.

Now if we, having subscribed to that theory, continue along the line that we are going without diminishing returns, financial returns in this country, it would seem to be logical to assume that the American people will at some point, and in the not too distant future, suffer more than they are suffering today because of the inability in this country to finance the advancements or the opportunities that they have been led to believe are in the offering.

In other words, I don't see how we can carry the burden that we are carrying now and that we have carried in the past into the future. What is your thinking?

Mr. Paul. Mr. Chairman, I would do you a disservice if I suggested comments which I am not qualified to make. The overall fiscal position of the United States is not something on which I am an authority. You are, and that is your responsibility.

Mr. Nix. I might say this. Many people in America are far more knowledgeable than I am on that, and from the letters that I receive from my constituents I am convinced that they are terribly disturbed about the expenditures inherent in these operations that we have under discussion.

Mr. du Pont.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for arriving in the middle of the witness's testimony. Several questions occur to me. First, talking about our bases in Japan: What do you think those bases add to (A) Japanese security interests, and (B) our own security?

Mr. Paul. Mr. du Pont, I would hope that those bases are there to help America's security interests, but these are implicit in our relationship with Japan, which is a very important part of America's security because of Japan's enormous importance in the world. Those bases provide a backup for Korea and, second, they provide, as I pointed out in my statement, some link with Japan to discourage Japan from acquiring nuclear weapons.

As I said earlier this afternoon, it is worth a price for the United States to pay to keep Japan from acquiring nuclear weapons, and other
important countries. We have done pretty well in limiting the nuclear club since World War II. Some countries have joined, but it has been less fashionable than it could have been. I would like very much to avoid an abundance of countries having these nuclear weapons, especially important countries such as Japan, Israel, and Egypt, to name the most obvious.

Mr. du Pont. Do you think that the presence of the U.S. bases in Japan gives them a feeling of security, if you will, sufficient not to make them go ahead with the development of nuclear weapons?

Mr. PAUL. I think, Mr. du Pont, that first we can cut down our bases in Japan. In fact when Mr. Pincus and I visited Japan with the Senate subcommittee in 1969 it seemed quite obvious to both of us there were far too many bases in Japan at that time. Shortly thereafter there was a significant reduction in bases.

Still, I think we can do a lot more to phase them down. A lot will depend, upon what Japan's attitude toward our bases is toward this country and our military relationship. I don't think we should force the Japanese to let us keep those bases there. I am just saying that it is a very important American consideration that every morning Premier Tanaka gets up and asks himself, "Shall I acquire nuclear weapons?" He has to answer that question implicitly every morning on behalf of the Japanese people.

There are three points that would come to his mind that relate to that question. One is the feeling that the Japanese are not very much in danger today. They feel very secure today from the possible threats. The second reason is he knows the United States would not like it. The third reason is it costs a good deal of money.

The first two reasons relate very much to what the United States does in the Far East and Japan is part of this total picture. As I have said, we don't have to keep those bases there if the Japanese don't want them, but I don't think we should rush to leave there entirely because these bases are proof of our nuclear umbrella, similar to our troops in Germany.

Mr. du Pont. Mr. Chairman, I have another question, but do you want to answer the quorum call?

Mr. NIX. I think we better.

The subcommittee will be in recess with the apology of the subcommittee for the interruption.

[Whereupon, a short recess was taken.]

Mr. NIX. The subcommittee will be in order.

Mr. du Pont has an additional question.

Mr. Hamilton, will you proceed?

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Paul, I would like to get in my mind a little more precisely what it is that you recommend. You conclude your statement at least by saying we should not entirely withdraw our military forces from any region in the Far East where they are presently stationed.

What would you recommend in terms of specifics? Where should we cut and how much?

Mr. Paul. I would tend to think that we could reduce in most every country where we presently are, and that would include Korea and Japan. I must confess I am not up on Taiwan as far as what our present level is.
Mr. Hamilton. We have about 8,000 there.

Mr. Paul. It was 10,000 during the height of the Vietnam war. The total number there is relatively small but probably that could go down, too, I believe. Before Vietnam it was around 3,000. So that is the order of magnitude.

I would think the same is true in the Philippines, though those have been reduced pretty much I would tend to think.

In Thailand we have six air force bases: I would tend to think we could place several of those bases on standby. In fact, one of the programs developed by the U.S. Air Force is called a bare base operation. These bases in Thailand would be, even without American personnel, above that level. But you don't need a large number of American forces on those bases even if you wanted to reactivate them very promptly.

So that would be my suggestion. I have suggested to another congressional group and have written also that I believe that the Defense budget could be cut in these nonnuclear forces. I have suggested the reduction perhaps of three ground force divisions, three air force wings, and three carrier task forces on a worldwide basis, and my estimate of the savings would be about $6 billion annually.

Mr. Hamilton. The figures I have suggest that we have about 173,000 troops in Asia today. That does not include civilian personnel, and it does not include dependents. That figure is substantially higher than the number of troops we had in Southeast Asia prior to the Vietnam buildup. You are suggesting we moderately reduce in almost every country, is that correct?

Mr. Paul. Yes, sir.

Mr. Hamilton. What do you mean; 10 percent, 20 percent?

Mr. Paul. I would hope it would be more than 10 percent. Again I don't wish to state things with precision that I am not qualified to state.

Mr. Hamilton. Let me ask this. Suppose we didn't have a single troop in Europe today. Where do you think we ought to place American troops to protect the American national interests?

Mr. Paul. Some of them in Europe.

Mr. Hamilton. Well, let's talk about Asia.

Mr. Paul. The fact that we have been there presents a problem of dynamics, a transition.

Mr. Hamilton. What I am really trying to get at is where in Southeast Asia do we have sufficient national interest that we need to have American troops there in substantial numbers and why?

Mr. Paul. Mr. Hamilton, 70 percent of the reason that we underwent the great cost we did in Vietnam, according to the people who made that decision in 1965, was, if I can quote it exactly "to protect our image as a guarantor."

Obviously those countries geographically are not particularly important to us, but the geographic dimension is not the important dimension in this matter. The important dimension is—I wish I had a better word for it—"image." It is meant in a very important sense and not in a trivial sense. In this nuclear age when other countries have nuclear weapons, whether they have been adversaries or have been allies, we don't want any miscalculation that would be calamitous.
I apologize for not answering your question in a few words but I am answering it as precisely as I can. It is because we have created an importance in Southeast Asia over the last 8 years, particularly Vietnam, that some price and some attempt to preserve Vietnam from failing is important to the United States. The way I look at it, that is not so impossible at all. It is worth a price.

In other words, I have said in another context, it is worth a price to keep Japan from acquiring nuclear weapons. To do that we are around Japan, we are comfortably available, we have not gone away. That is what is involved up in that part of the world. Down in Vietnam in Southeast Asia it is highly clear that Vietnam is a very important symbol in the U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. Hamilton. You are not suggesting that we put troops back into Vietnam, are you?

Mr. Paul. No, Mr. Hamilton; I am suggesting we have a peace settlement in Vietnam in which 80 percent of the population is in areas controlled by the South Vietnamese Government, and those air force bases in Thailand are part of keeping it that way. That is all.

Mr. Hamilton. In what countries do you perceive the American national interest to be greatest in Southeast Asia?

Mr. Paul. If you mean in Asia, it is clearly Japan, but that is Northeast Asia.

Mr. Hamilton. You would support the presence of a substantial number of American troops in Japan?

Mr. Paul. Mr. Hamilton, I don't mean to get philosophical, but the whole thing is sort of in an invisible world. It is not the tangible world of how many troops we have in those bases, it is the invisible world of Prime Minister Tanaka's perception and Chou En-lai's perception. Our whole projected military force in the Far East, which can change as budgetary interests require, is the key to maximizing American security in that regard.

Mr. Hamilton. All right. I am willing to go along with you on that but where does that leave you in terms of numbers?

Mr. Paul. In Japan I am saying that if the Japanese strongly took the position we should leave, we should leave, but I see no reason why we should invite them to ask us to leave in the present situation. By being there they say, "Well, we know the American troops are here, so that we know that if Japan was conceivably attacked by nuclear weapons Americans would be killed and, therefore, it is worth relying on the American nuclear umbrella".

So it is that kind of indirect and intangible role that these forces serve. That can be done in lesser numbers than they now have. There are affronts to the Japanese sensitivities in some of these cases, for instance, in the Tokyo area and the Kanto Plain area, and those sensitivities should be catered to.

Mr. Hamilton. There are local people suggesting today that SEATO is inactive. How do you feel about SEATO?

Mr. Paul. I feel that we should not formally repudiate SEATO or any of the other treaty commitments, because the dynamics of repudiating creates a downward impression in this area of perceptions. I think the situation with SEATO can be compared with CENTO. Have you heard from that recently?

Mr. Hamilton. I just met with the Secretary General of CENTO 2 days ago.
Mr. Paul. Perhaps I should not have phrased it that way.

The point is that CENTO is not very visible in the important list of American commitments. It has fallen into silence and oblivion, and it is all right with us if SEATO moves in that direction too.

If Iran gets into serious trouble, I am sure the Shah is going to remind us about CENTO, but that is not as bad as repeating it every day.

Mr. Hamilton. What do you think would be the consequences of American unilateral troop withdrawals in Southeast Asia?

Mr. Paul. I think it will substantially increase the likelihood of Japan acquiring nuclear weapons. Furthermore, may I say this. It may happen regardless of our efforts that Japan acquires nuclear weapons, but even so I think it is important the way she acquires them. In other words, that she does it in a pro-U.S. mold, that we are close and harmonious allies when she does.

Mr. Hamilton. When do you see our troop commitments in Southeast Asia ending? Are you at the point where you are just willing to keep the levels that we now have there, perhaps reduced by 40 or 20 percent, for as far in the future as you can see?

Mr. Paul. There may be another 20 percent later on. It does not bother me. You must ask yourself why you want them reduced and have that clearly in mind, if I may suggest. If you are worried about budgetary reasons, it does not matter where you put the troops; if you put them in Thailand or in California, it is about the same. There is a balance-of-payments problem which I would recognize, and that is a cost, but if it must be compared to: (1) Japan acquiring nuclear weapons, and (2) Vietnam being lost. I know that this last item is perhaps an unpopular term in certain quarters, but the psychological dynamics after the United States has paid all that it has in Vietnam with the prospects being what they are that it won’t be taken over by North Vietnam, those things seem worth a price, clearly the price in balance of payments.

Now, if you are worried about the fact that these troops may get us involved in another Vietnam, my analysis says that if you are alert to what you are doing, that is not very likely to happen in any of these places.

Mr. Hamilton. Let me ask specifically about Korea. I am not sure just what you recommend in your statement but we now have, I think, about 42,000 troops there. South Korea has one of the larger armies in Asia.

It has had a lot of experience very recently. What is the reason for us to have 42,000 troops in South Korea?

Mr. Paul. I would certainly recommend, as I think I did a few minutes ago, that that number could go down significantly. I could visualize that number going down by 50 percent. Twenty thousand would fulfill, as I see it, the American interest and a presence in Korea during these days. That 40,000 can now, or 50,000 could in 1970, and 60,000 a few years before that. So if you are asking me should it not go down, I agree with you, Mr. Hamilton, it could well go down by a substantial margin.

Mr. Hamilton. Would you single out Korea as the country where we could perhaps have the greatest reduction in troop levels without an adverse impact on our interests?
Mr. Paul. In making such a statement I would have to compare rather carefully other countries like Thailand where we have six Air Force bases. If a North Vietnamese attack over the border is not imminent perhaps there could be three Air Force bases, for instance, that order of magnitude.

Mr. Hamilton. So those two countries at least come to mind, Korea and Thailand, as areas where reductions could occur.

Mr. Paul. Yes, sir. I was going to venture that a substantial reduction could be made in Japan too.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time.

Mr. du Pont. Mr. Hamilton, I don't want to take too much time.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time.

Mr. Nix. Mr. du Pont.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time.

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Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nix, Thank you.

Attorney Paul, on behalf of the subcommittee I want to thank you very much for your presence and for your participation.

Mr. Paul, Thank you. It is a pleasure.

Mr. Nix. The next witness is Mr. Walter Pincus, executive editor of New Republic and former staff consultant for the Senate Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. We welcome you, Mr. Pincus, and you may begin.

STATEMENT OF WALTER PINCUS, EXECUTIVE EDITOR, NEW REPUBLIC; FORMER STAFF CONSULTANT, SUBCOMMITTEE ON U.S. SECURITY AGREEMENTS ABROAD, U.S. SENATE

Mr. Pincus. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am sorry I don’t have a prepared statement. I spend all my time writing, and when you don’t have to write I sort of enjoy it.

What I would like to talk about, because I have really not spent that much time and dealt as closely as I think I would be useful to the committee in talking about the specifics of the commitments in Southeast Asia, is really to talk more about a technique that a committee such as yours ought to apply in trying to deal with this area.

In some cases I would like to pick up on the discussion before and a little bit of what Roland is saying. As you sit here and try to decide whether to cut 10 percent, or 20 percent, or where we can make a large cut and where we can make a small cut, essentially the Congress historically has been working with really superficial information. When you talk about cutting 10 percent of the troops in any one country, you should be interested really in what the troops are doing, what their purposes are, what kind of troops are there, what your commitments specifically are in that country at a specific time. We really were trying to get the Senate Foreign Relations Committee some detailed information on what the U.S. military situation was abroad.

Each known military commitment was drawn together by the Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements Abroad in 1969. The approach we took at that time was to find out in as much detail as possible what the United States had in these specific countries in which it was known that the U.S. military was present.

I would like to take an outline that was followed back in 1969 and as an example just deal with one country, the Philippines, as an illustration of what I think a subcommittee such as yours should try to obtain from the Department of Defense and the Department of State in order to seriously discuss the kinds of questions that you are raising here.

I think the Congress is always at a disadvantage when it has to talk in large percentages and generalities. It can always be cut up by anybody from the State Department and the Defense Department on the grounds that if you cut 10 percent, or you cut 20 percent, you are eliminating some vital function about which you know nothing.

I think the experience of our subcommittee—and you can go into almost any country that we went into—was that you found that you have an American military presence that was caused by a specific incident. Time took over and the original purposes may have vanished.
but new purposes are developed, usually by the military or State Department people in that country, and used as a vehicle to increase the military presence rather than to decrease it. It is very much like a domestic program that once started can never be finished. The American military presence in a country once started develops many different hats and many different purposes, but the main purpose is that the presence always remains and new purposes for it develop.

If you want to approach the subject seriously, one method is to gather here in Washington information on a country-by-country basis. This performs two functions: One, it develops facts for the committee to permit discussion in the terms used by the Departments themselves as to why you are militarily in specific countries.

Second, as outsiders you look at these functions, the military functions, and even the foreign policy function in each of these countries with new eyes. You tend to raise new questions that our own Government people, because they are fixed in their own judgments or fixed by past decisions, don't raise. You may suddenly find yourself asking questions that they themselves never asked.

As an illustration, look at our situation in 1969, and use the country of the Philippines, and just briefly run through the kind of procedure we followed.

We originally took the Philippines, and we sought out everything that was written or stated in terms of what commitments are in effect. These are treaties and executive agreements. We then asked for information on all the U.S. forces and facilities, but not a general piece of information, not the overall total. We really wanted to know what the functions were and what their purposes were.

At that time there also was a Philippine unit in Vietnam, a unit that in effect represented the Philippine commitment to the American/Vietnam effort, although it was couched in terms of secrecy. We requested all the information that had to do with the payment, the origins of that commitment, and what the United States was doing to support it.

We then went into the question of the military assistance programs that we have. Again not dollar figures—not generalities, but specific programs.

I should say as you get into these, and maybe you will stop with military assistance, which is a good example—as you got into that you found out one of the things we were doing was supporting a Green Beret type unit within the Philippines back in 1969. That was supposedly in the very geographic areas that are now in rebellion doing civil action work. We are spending reasonable portions of time down there supposedly helping with civil action programs.

There also was a counterinsurgency program at that time which I think may still exist, which should be explored. What is the commitment to them? What has been the results of those programs?

There is a major problem at Clark Air Force Base and some other Air Force bases, crime and corruption affecting both the American troops and the Philippine locals, and we obtained a great deal of information there. It turned out that the stealing of American weapons, particularly M-16's, was the source of a lot of the armaments that were going both to private citizens and antigovernment groups, private government groups, individuals and that the local Filipinos
and even the Philippine Government would not cooperate with the American military to do away with that problem.

Another area that we went into that we considered important was the question of joint planning. The U.S. military in most every country in which we have people do joint planning with local governments to meet different kinds of contingencies. These take the form superficially of war games. But again in playing the game as to what the United States and the Philippines will do together in the case of certain contingencies you develop at least with the military the idea that that exact performance is going to take place. So I think you really have to understand what is going on even in terms of things like joint planning. We discovered that for years the United States and the Taiwanese were having a joint exercise in which the U.S. forces were in this game joining with the Taiwanese and holding an invasion in different areas. We did some joint war games in Korea. We did some in the Philippines also.

Having gotten a list of bases, we tried to get some information on what the U.S. military saw as the future of those bases. What kind of future planning were they doing, or were they just allowing these things to go along. That turned out to be the case in many of them.

Then because the Vietnam war was on, there were special situations that involved the Vietnam war, but I think even in the present circumstance it is worth inquiring as to what kind of contingency plans are in store for a country like the Philippines for example in the case of the reopening of either a bombing situation, or the return of American troops to Vietnam. It is that kind of program, by using the questionnaires which we used as a primary beginning; and then following it up with a staff visit to the Philippines, because I think you can learn twice as much in the country involved as you can learn here. You eliminate the Washington bureaucracy of the State and Defense Departments who answer questions anybody has written and tell the least amount of information. The fact is when you get into the field I think you find that both the military and State Department officials abroad are much more open and much more eager to cooperate and at least explain what is there. I think with that kind of information, even reviewing it as outsiders, you would be amazed at what you could discover.

I noticed in going through this in the Philippines we came across an airbase with an annual operating cost of $1.4 million a year when we went there. It had 600 personnel. The military didn’t particularly want us to go down there. It was way out of the way. It was just a stopover for American airplanes on their way to Vietnam.

In fact when you got down there you saw this was a Philippine commercial airport that in fact was being supported by the U.S. military. That there were four U.S. military planes coming through there a day. To support those four landings a day we were laying out $1.4 million to operate the base and then the cost of the 600 people who were down there. Very shortly after our hearings on the Philippines were published they announced that that particular airbase was being closed.

I am very biased to these kinds of details, but that is as important in the overall policymaking as are the broad generalizations that tend to be the basis on which things are argued and debated when you get up here in Congress. And really, they are the grounds on which State
and Defense experts that develop the arguments would much rather focus on today.

Roland and I have had our disagreements in the past which made, I think, for our investigation being as good as it was. But there is an element in his statement that I think is worth questioning philosophically: I think Roland represents a point of view that really is the basic point of view both held by the administration to some degree by people who deal with foreign policy up here. That is things are done because they have to be done, that you make commitments and you raise them and lower them really to suit the American interest, and they avoid the question of who decides what the interest is, and what does it take to make those commitments.

On the question of Laos, I have heard it argued that the American involvement in Laos—and I think Roland talks about it to a degree here—was really the way things should have been handled. The argument was made that the American presence was very low key—very few Americans were killed, we didn’t have any lasting commitment, although we are still there. We were not drawn into this war.

What that misses is twofold. One, that we have destroyed almost a third of that country which now is sort of refugee in character. It does not deal at all with the Laotians. In fact, what their interest is or that we have any responsibility for them. The so-called beauty of the American presence in Laos is made possible by the fact that they didn’t tell the American people we were there, that there are certain sorts of rules and regulations as a basic part, that we do not fight a war without congressional approval even if it is another way to do it, and if it does not make a lasting commitment.

I think one thing more than any other; that the subcommittee tried to get out, when it developed the Laotian presence and made the issue of Laos, is that as nice and clean as all the strategic arguments can be, this really is just not the way the American Government ought to function. If you are going to fight in a country you have to get authority to fight there. I felt as strongly about Laos as I did because I was told when I was there, and told when I came back, that Laos was going to be the future Vietnam, that no longer are you going to publicly acknowledge what you are doing because if you don’t publicly acknowledge it you don’t really have to debate it. You can really make the issue: Are you doing anything?

A very short time after we came back you had the Cambodian invasion—and that is what it was, it was a Cambodian invasion. Call it what you want. We invaded another country, and rather than going to the issue of, whether it is right or wrong to do it, whether the public could be convinced it was in their interest, rather than doing that the administration did what it had done in Laos. It went ahead and let the public try to find out about it rather than to tell them.

What happened in Cambodia worked out to the American interest. In Cambodia, the North Vietnamese moved into Cambodia, not because they were trying to get there but because they had to to protect their access to South Vietnam. So we went and destroyed and are in the process of still destroying another country. We failed to support Prince Sihanouk, who did not do at that time exactly what we wanted him to do. In retrospect he was doing what we wanted to do more than the Government ever acknowledged. He was permitting us to bomb secretly along the border areas.
When the opportunity came with his overthrow to move in we tried to wipe those things out. The temptation was just too much and the military went in. We may have cleaned out the sanctuaries temporarily. We may have stopped the invasion of the North Vietnamese. We may have protected the American line, but we did two things: We involved another country in the war, and we did something that really is against the manner in which this Government is supposed to operate.

I am arguing for the technique of assigning the subcommittee, and arguing for really the responsibility of the Congress to act on details, to try and find out what is going on. I really think that you are arguing for the ability to bring back into order the manner in which we go into these kinds of commitments. It will make commitments more difficult because you will have to get public and congressional support, and it won't be as neat as people who believe in keeping world balance, keeping presence, dealing with the subtleties of foreign policy would like it to be.

I have no doubt that there are subtleties to it, but there are subtleties that go beyond what the American system permits. I think foreign policy in the last 10 years has dropped that point of view. I think one of the things that helps to reinstate it is committees such as yours taking a much more active role at least in the initial step of trying to find out what is going on; not in general terms but in specific terms and therefore are better able to question, not to set foreign policy. I think that is a difficult thing for Congress to do. But instead to raise the kinds of questions and perform the oversight function that I think has been very much missing in the last 10 years, the lack of questioning in many ways has permitted all kinds of wars and all kinds of tragedies that we have and still have.

Mr. Nix. Thank you.

Mr. Guyer.

Mr. Gutter. No. I enjoyed this very much. I am sorry I was not here at the beginning. Mr. Chairman, I will reserve comments.

Mr. Nix, Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton. After you made all that analysis of the Philippines, where did you come out?

Mr. Pincus. Well, two things. One, we cut down the number of the bases. Two, the Philippines is one of these countries where I think the smaller the presence the better, I cannot talk percentages because I am much more interested in the units that are there and what their function is, but you get into these units that have tremendous logistic tails on them. If they have got the Philippines set up, and I am not sure that they do—when I was there they were in the midst of building up Subic Bay where there is a competition between Subic Bay, and I guess it was in Japan. The Navy had had one big naval facility to repair ships prior to the Vietnam War. When we got out there is was a competition between Subic Bay and the Philippines and in Japan.

Well, each one has a part. People in Subic Bay want to stay there, and some in Japan want to stay there.

Mr. Hamilton. Did you do this kind of analysis in all the countries in Asia?

Mr. Pincus. Just about.

Mr. Hamilton. From that perception what are your general conclusions about our troop levels today?
Mr. PINCUS. Today?
Mr. HAMILTON. Yes.

Mr. PINCUS. I think they are too high all over the place. I mean I was amazed when you said 42,000 in Korea. I don't know how good my memory is, it was 48,000 at the height, and it went to 48,000 because of the crisis when we rammed in a whole bunch of aircraft. The talk they gave us was that now because we have extensive aircraft there we can start moving out ground troops, but when we were there they were fighting over one of the things I guess we accomplished. We used to have a company up on the line in the DMZ. There was no rationale in the world why they ought to be there but it was great training. It was the only place you could be—and this is the kind of detail that I think is important—that the DMZ in Korea was the only country outside of Vietnam, and some lines along Europe, but because there were incidents in the DMZ it was the only place you could send patrols out for 24 hours that really had to worry about being shot. It was great training, and for that reason we used to do it, and that reason we used to do it, and that is the way they looked at it.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Pincus, I appreciate your testimony, and I think you have given some helpful suggestions to the subcommittee. I have to meet King Hussein here in just a few minutes. I am sorry I have to run away; I would enjoy listening to the rest of your comments and Mr. Paul's.

I do want to try to get a feeling of how you look at the total picture as quickly as I can. I take it that you would make very substantial reductions in our troop commitments throughout East Asia, and that you think we can do that without harm to the American national interest.

Mr. PINCUS. I don't believe in the downward disengagement. I think people are either going to be with us or not be with us, either support us or not support us, either have faith or not have faith based on what we tell them. We think the faith they have in the Government is important and not whether there are 10,000 troops there, or 50,000 troops there, or 100,000 troops there.

Mr. HAMILTON. Where would you keep troops in Southeast Asia, and at what level?

Mr. PINCUS. Well, the pre-Vietnam level was not a very big level. They were back in Okinawa with a half division of marines. I think you have to be realistic. I think it will be a long day in hell before American ground troops go into Southeast Asia and probably should be.

I don't think we are kidding the Chinese, to go back to why they were there in the first place, Dean Rusk was afraid of the Chinese moving through Southeast Asia. Well, we are not afraid of the Chinese moving from Southeast Asia now. We have to talk about why they are there.

I disagree with the Japanese nuclear theory. When it is in the Japanese interest to have nuclear weapons and when their leaders want them, they are going to have them. We can have 100,000 troops and our own weapons there and it won't make any difference. They don't want weapons now, it is a political problem. If we were there or not there it would not matter. They have an attitude toward nuclear weapons that I think is going to take them generations to overcome,
and when they get them they are going to use them in their own interest as every country.

Mr. HAMILTON. Would you station troops in any Southeast Asian country?

Mr. PINOUS. My own instincts are that once you have a firm policy, a national policy, and you set it you begin an orderly phased withdrawal; that is, announce a known goal and a known purpose. You can withdraw all ground troops, I think, to Okinawa.

I would think the Philippines in the future are going to cause us great trouble. I think the day of American troops all over the world is gone.

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you very much. I apologize to both of you for leaving and also to the chairman.

Mr. NIX. I understand, certainly. Mr. du Pont.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pincus, I, like Mr. Hamilton, enjoyed your testimony, but there is one strain or theory that I detect in your conversation that you never really specified. You talked about destroying a part of Laos and turning it into a refugee zone. Am I right that you somehow feel that we should not have done that, that somehow we were impinging on the people by doing that?

Mr. PINOUS. Laos became a tool in the Vietnam war for us. The North Vietnamese were using the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was not through the heart of Laos, it was away from the people's zone. If you go back in the history of bombing Laos, you will find that we initially tried to get the Royal Laotian Government to bomb the North Vietnamese on the trail and that in order then to get their permission for us to bomb the trail they asked if we would perform what they euphemistically called armed reconnaissance in North Laos, which essentially was the Pathet Lao territory. The Communists were fighting with the Royal Laotian Government, again another civil war situation. That armed reconnaissance was using fighter-bombers which to me you know is slightly different than the Pathet Lao on the ground.

It took the form of destruction in places wherever we thought there were Pathet Lao, which were essentially the towns and cities.

Mr. du Pont. I am fishing for something here that I am not making very clear. I understand the military argument and your feeling that maybe militarily we should not have done it, but do you have a feeling that we didn't deal fairly with the people? You seem to suggest in your remarks that somehow, even though the Government requested it, that somehow we should not have done it.

Mr. PINOUS. Well, I think it is euphemism to say the Government requested it. The Government was in power because of the U.S. support. There is no country in the world that the United States has had or at least at that time had a tighter control financially than the Laos Government, and we gave them more money and military aid than they had of gross national product.

The Laos war was to a degree an internal war. They are fighting over control of the country. Control of the country was important because of the control of the trail, and we got involved in that fight militarily. I mean the Laotian people I don't think really cared very much. Those who lived close to the trail were oppressed by the North Vietnamese.
Mr. du Pont. The final question in the chain is; do we consider in making our foreign policy decisions, and in this case our military foreign policy decisions, simply dealing with the government in a given country, or is there some other responsibility to take into consideration?

Mr. Pincus. There is one other element that is missing in all this and that is when you say "we". In the Laos Government you really don't have to worry about the people. You deal with the King, and maybe you deal with the general, but this is not right. That decision to go into Laos and to bomb in Laos, and in effect to fight in Laos, was made in this country in the same manner as it was made in that country. It was made by the Government and by the military, and I over-emphasize that because I have heard people talk about the beauty of that system, but it is not the system.

If in this country the President had done what I think constitutionally he was supposed to do, which was to explain to the public and to the Congress what he was doing, and get authority to do it, then I think you would be in a much stronger position to talk about our going ahead. But because it was done the way it was done, I think we made policy that the public could not support and didn't support, and that is the basis of a lot of our problems.

Now, in all these countries we essentially deal with either a democracy or an undemocratic country. We are dealing with their leaders. You cannot avoid that. Certainly in many countries the leaders don't represent the interests of the people. In some cases it is enlightened leadership, and in some cases it is not.

Mr. du Pont. But in those cases we still have to deal with it any-way?

Mr. Pincus. Yes, but the corollary of that is that is not the situation here.

Mr. du Pont. Absolutely.

Mr. Pincus. I think in any kind of debate or discussion that would have come up. If that is debated and discussed and it is decided we then want to go ahead and do that in Laos, then I think you know that essentially is the policy. You accept that and try to turn it around. The idea is not that you conceal it. That is the offensive part.

Mr. du Pont. I appreciate the very philosophical discussion, and what I wanted to hear you say was what you just said, that you really do have to deal with them because they are elected or established leaders of the country. So often in our foreign policy debate you hear the theme that you would not deal with the government, it doesn't represent the people. It has always been one of my theories that you must deal with whoever is running the country and leave the internal representation to the people themselves. From your vantage point I was interested in your thinking. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nix. Mr. Pincus, you mentioned earlier that we should have a national policy, and after which we should arrive at the method of the phased withdrawal. Do you recall that?

Mr. Pincus. Yes.

Mr. Nix. How would you arrive at a national policy?

Mr. Pincus. I think you go through the function of having the President deliver a message. There is a state of the world. I think
the implementation of policy such as that if the policy is openly discussed and openly debated is then either approved or disapproved based on the actions of the Congress.

Mr. Nixon. Then you would expect the President, as he is required to do, to inform the Congress and the country of the national policy that he suggests for the country and that national policy is debated in the Congress of the United States and the people of the United States will communicate their wishes to the Members of the Congress, the consensus will be arrived at in the Congress of the United States, which in turn will be transmitted to the President before anything is implemented.

Mr. Pincus. This all recognizes that the President has extraordinary educational powers in terms of both the public and the Congress, and if he cannot convince the Congress on the merits of his argument and anything else he wants to choose to use, then I would think that there is something missing in either his policy or his ability to convince people that that is the right direction to go.

Mr. Nixon. Then would you say that something is missing in the times in which we are living?

Mr. Pincus. No doubt.

Mr. Nixon. Mr. Paul, could you give us the benefit of your thoughts on that?

Mr. Paul. As to what Mr. Pincus had to say in general, or just the last question?

Mr. Nixon. Not the last question.

Mr. Paul. I appreciate that.

Mr. Nixon. The people of the country make me aware of their thinking on the last question.

Mr. Paul. Very good.

Mr. Chairman, I do have some reservations about a few of the conclusions that Mr. Pincus drew in terms of various items. I will be very brief.

Concerning Laos, one of the benefits which the subcommittee which Mr. Pincus and I had the privilege of being staff to did bring to the attention of the American people what was going on in Laos. I think it was to the credit of that Symington subcommittee that proper disclosure was made and should have been made and I agree with that. It did not destroy or terminate the operation and the operation continued. So you can have public information as to these operations and still not make an overcommitment; it must be done carefully. There was too much visibility, which we tended to do in the early 1960's.

President Kennedy once said about Laos, "Our security runs with that of Laos." That was a terrible statement to make, I would submit. That kind of overenthusiasm about what we are doing is wrong. But the disclosed transcript of our hearings—and it was well reported in the press—was very good.

On the legal rights to intervene vis-a-vis Cambodia, I would say the Congress should have its role. As long as the Gulf of Tonkin resolution was on the books, the invasion of Cambodia was legally appropriate under our constitutional system.

The problem with Laos was that that which was going on in northern Laos really was very indirectly related to the war in Vietnam, and, therefore, may not have been justified by the congressional action
taken in the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, and to that extent it was not appropriately in a legal mold.

My remarks went to the strategic role. In resolving these hard questions, these bloody questions, in terms of whether it is justified or not, you always have to count bodies and estimates of bodies of how many Laotians are going to be killed, and how many Americans are going to be killed, and you have to weigh that against how many would have been killed if we didn't do anything. After you weigh that, then you have to weigh it against the American interest. The interest in Laos was to keep the Communists off of the Thai border, and to facilitate our bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which related to Vietnam. These were very important interests and other lives were saved.

Finally, on Cambodia, as far as the incursion was concerned, which I know on the Hill was not very well received in those days. Walter and I were here at that time. The lives in South Vietnam that were saved and the success of the American military operation in Vietnam was enhanced by that, and those were important interests.

Mr. Nix. I see.

Do you have any comments on that, Mr. Pincus?

Mr. Pincus. No; just let it rest for the present.

Mr. Nix. I take it that is, because you are in perfect agreement with it.

Mr. Pincus. No; I have a hard time thinking first that the invasion of Cambodia was a military success, and second, that we have really been very creative in Vietnam at all, nor do I think we were victorious. I think we got out as we could have gotten out 8 years earlier.

Mr. Nix. Now let us say the Cambodian incident had some justification to it. When the conflict spilled over into Laos, if the military justified it, then who could gainsay that?

Mr. Pincus. Well, this fits into something else that Roland mentioned of noncommitment. The amendments that prohibited American troops from going into Laos and Thailand came as a result of our disclosures about the Laos involvement, and we would have had a similar amendment to Cambodia but Cambodia was neutral at the time we passed the first one. Those noncommitments, in effect you had reached a point where you really had to prohibit the military from considering that operation.

What I am getting at is, the U.S. military did not participate in the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos, and, according to Secretary Laird, it was primarily because there was legislation on the books that did prohibit it. The legislation does not prohibit anything. What it says is that the President has to get authority. In other words, the President has to live up to his constitutional requirements of getting the Congress to approve a warlike action before he can take it, and all we essentially were doing is sort of rewriting what everybody thought was the status quo. The effect of having that legislation on the books in Laos was that the military could not think of it as a protective action because it was prohibited because they were not about to come back to Congress. I happen to believe that our military was creative enough to design their planning to make it fit whatever the law requires.

Mr. Nix. And that was done?

Mr. Pincus. And that was done.
Mr. Nix. And considering that it was done, what is that decision violative of?

Mr. Pincus. Well, the decision was to stay out. Had they gone into Laos after the Cambodian invasion, had American ground troops gone into Laos in violation of the law—

Mr. Nix. What I am talking about is they devised a method to circumvent the decision.

Mr. Pincus. Well, what they did was to send Vietnamese troops into Laos armed by America. Well, maybe this is a paradox, and that is the same way I feel about the Cambodian invasion. The intent of Congress was to make the President come to Congress if he was to undertake acts of which the Cambodian invasion was case No. 1. The fact that the Congress has not been—

Mr. Nix. Was not—

Mr. Pincus. Was not far looking and did not prohibit it. You were in a situation where when Congress and the President do engage in games—and I think we had gone through a period in which Congress by these kinds of amendments is trying to reassert rights it gave up: The administration has taken all this authority to go do these things, and I think you are now in a situation where you have to get them back.

Mr. Nix. I think Congress is acutely aware of that fact.

Mr. Pincus. I hope so.

Mr. Nix. And I think actively engaged in an effort to reassert its prerogatives, its powers and authority, its constitutional responsibility. I am convinced of that.

Mr. Pincus. Exercise essentially like this. I guess I keep reemphasizing the gathering of information other than the information fed to you. I mean it is information basically—because I am a journalist I believe information is essentially power, and I think your channels of information should not just be those that the administration sets up for its benefit, that you have rights and in some ways responsibility to develop your own channel and thereby have a way of weighing and challenging the information given to you.

Mr. Nix. Mr. Paul.

Mr. Paul. Mr. Chairman, there is no argument here as to the right of the Congress to participate in these decisions. But what has been implied here that should not go unchallenged is that it is the correctness of the decision to preclude these activities. Certainly Congress should participate in the decisions of war or no war, definitely. The question that I addressed myself to you, as a representative of the Congress in making that decision, is that some of these operations are perfectly proper and highly desirable.

I don’t know that it was necessarily wrong to preclude American air support to the South Vietnamese forces that went into the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. I would remind you, if I may, that South Vietnamese forces with American air support were highly effective to repel the North Vietnamese spring offensive of 1972 in which the North Vietnamese sent out of their country virtually all of their ground forces and gained little.

If there was an American interest in not losing Vietnam, and I honestly disagree that Vietnam has been lost—and if you just look at who is in control there now, I think you will appreciate that—
then the forces to maintain that should not be so shackled as to preclude that. It has to be done in measured steps. We have a tendency to overreact.

The overcommitment to Vietnam in 1965 was a mistake, so now we are way over on the other side and we cannot do anything militarily, certain people suggest. I think a more modulated response is appropriate.

Mr. Nixon. Gentlemen, I want to express the gratitude of the subcommittee for your presence. You have been most helpful. We are not actually groping in the dark in this subcommittee, and in these hearings, but I do confess that it is not vast sunlight. We are trying to do the best we possibly can.

Mr. Paul. Thank you.

Mr. Nixon. The subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:40 p.m. the subcommittee adjourned.]
OUR COMMITMENTS IN ASIA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1974

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2 p.m. in room H-236, the Capitol, Hon. Robert N. C. Nix (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. Nix. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are continuing our hearings on the question as to whether or not our base system in Asia is tied to military needs or political inertia.

Whatever military role the United States continues to play in Asia, it will be tied to a naval long range role with primary reliance on a developing naval missile capability. It has already been noted by informed observers that American policy in Asia can be analyzed by observing the movement of the 7th Fleet from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. Yet, we maintain 40,000 or so foot soldiers in South Korea, a nation with an armed force of its own of over 630,000 or 200,000 more men than the entire British Army.

We maintain 38,000 men in the Okinawa area which is part of Japan and 19,000 men in the home islands. Japan, which is the third greatest industrial nation, maintains an armed force of 250,000 by spending only 1 percent of its gross national product.

Thus we maintain 98,000 men in an area where our allies already have a force of their own of over 800,000 men with the capacity to easily double that number. Japan has a population of 106 million, while South Korea has a population of 33 million with a militia which would double its army.

We support a contingent of 35,000 men in Thailand attached to our bomber bases which do not protect Thailand but are stationed there for possible bombing missions in South Vietnam which is forbidden by an act of Congress. Of course, Congress could change its mind—I doubt it, however. At the same time it should be pointed out that such bombing could be carried out from Guam and was during the South Vietnam war.

The only conclusion that can be drawn then is that our men are in place in forward positions in Asia as hostages, standing bond for our word which has been established already with 100,000 deaths in the Korean war and the South Vietnam war. That is, only the deaths of Americans will insure our defense of others. It should also be obvious that the United States has the long-range capacity to punish from the mid-Pacific any aggressor without the need for forward bases.
This subcommittee at least can frame issues for the American public so that it can decide the real value of the tripwire or hostage theory. We can also inquire when the time comes whether or not we are now in forward positions in Asia in order to reassure the People's Republic of China that we will take their part in conflict with the Soviet Union. We are well aware that new missions can be thought of for old bases. If they have been, we would like to know what they are.

It seems at the outset that 100,000 Americans could be brought home with no loss of defense to us or our allies.

Our witness today is Hon. Morton Halperin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and a Senior Associate of Dr. Kissinger with the National Security Council.

This subcommittee is indeed pleased to have Dr. Halperin before us. You may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF MORTON H. HALPERIN, FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND SENIOR ASSOCIATE OF HENRY KISSINGER AT THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Halperin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to be here.

I have a short statement and I would, with your permission, propose to read it.

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in these hearings on U.S. defense commitments in Asia. A careful look at this subject is long overdue not only because the United States continues to spend billions of dollars each year to fulfill security commitments in Asia but also because those commitments have embroiled us in two major military conflicts and a number of other crises and could easily do so again in the future.

There are a number of elements of our defense commitments in Asia of great significance, including the measures necessary to sustain our relations with Japan, the future of our relations with Korea and the Philippines, and the future of the American commitment to Taiwan in light of our new relations with the People's Republic of China. If I do not address these questions, it is not because of their lack of importance—indeed, I would be happy to respond to questions about them.

In view of the limited time available, it seemed to me appropriate to focus on a single question and one on which I have a precise recommendation.

My subject is SEATO. And my advice, to put it simply, is that the United States should seek to negotiate an end to the treaty. Failing that, we should give the 1-year notice of renunciation (specified in article X) and withdraw.

SEATO was one of the results of the pactomania of the 1950's. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty was signed in Manila, September 8, 1954 and ratification advised by the U.S. Senate on February 1, 1955. The treaty provides that:

- Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agree that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional procedures.
The United States immediately issued an "understanding" limiting its commitment to "Communist aggression."

For the United States the treaty was seen as necessary to shore up Southeast Asia in light of the success of the Sino-Soviet bloc in gaining control of part of Vietnam. At American urging, Laos, Cambodia, and the "free territory" of Vietnam were included as so-called protocol states protected by the treaty. China—Red China—was seen as a tool of Soviet aggression. SEATO was necessary to prevent the dominoes from falling.

Much has changed since the treaty was signed but unfortunately, rather than consider renouncing the treaty, the administration reaffirms its support for it and for the special meaning it has come to have. The significant changes affecting the meaning of the treaty as it was ratified by the Senate and supported by appropriations from the Congress include: The Sino-Soviet split; The Sino-American reapproachment and the changed American perception of Pekin's aggressiveness; and the post-Vietnam reevaluation of American interests in Southeast Asia.

These changes are important to any reevaluation of the importance of SEATO, but so are other changes less clearly understood.

Most of the members of SEATO have withdrawn from the Organization with varying degrees of formality.

Pakistan has formally renounced membership in 1972.

France has long been inactive and pays no funds toward the support of the minimal common organs.

Laos and Cambodia have renounced their status as "protocol" states.

The Philippines rely primarily on its bilateral treaty with the United States.

Great Britain remains a member out of deference to U.S. interests but has stated its intention not to deploy or engage any military forces east of Suez.

That leaves the United States and Thailand. For all intents and purposes SEATO is now a bilateral security pact providing an American guarantee of Thai security against Communist invasion or subversion.

American military and civilian officials have long viewed SEATO in just these terms. Thus, the Foreign Relations Committee study of commitments revealed Thai and American military planners have drawn up contingency plans for bilateral military operations. Diplomatically, SEATO was turned into a bilateral treaty in the Rusk-Thammat communiqué of March 6, 1962. In that agreement, the United States asserted that its obligation under the treaty "does not depend upon the prior agreement of all the other parties to the treaty, since this treaty obligation is, individual as well as collective." In May and again in July of 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers reaffirmed that Rusk-Thammat communiqué and it remains American policy—or at least the policy of the executive branch.

It should be noted that President Nixon, in presenting his doctrine at Guam in 1969, stated specifically that "we will keep our treaty commitments, our treaty commitments, for example, with Thailand under SEATO." And in his 1973 Report on U.S. Foreign Policy, President Nixon reaffirmed that "the United States will keep all its treaty commitments," and he continued, "as a matter of principle, and
as a matter of preserving the stability of Asia, we made it clear that the United States would never repudiate its pledged word nor betray an ally."

Thus we are told that commitments, once made, must be maintained forever. Regardless of how the world’s and our perception of it may change, we must not “betray” our allies. And Congress and the American public are asked not to “repudiate” a multilateral pledge even though it has been turned into a bilateral treaty.

Plainly the United States has a right to reconsider its commitments as every state does. “Betrayal” might occur if, having not renounced SEATO, we refused to respond when the Thais called for help. But to give warning now that the United States will at some future time no longer consider an attack on Thailand as an action which necessarily threatens American security is only to reflect the sentiments of the American people.

Now is the time for a careful analysis of American security interests. Now, when a threat to Thailand appears remote, is the time to decide whether the United States should maintain capabilities in its baseline force structure whose primary justification is their potential use in Southeast Asia. Now is the time to decide if we want American boys to die once again in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Now is the time to decide if our relations with China or the Soviet Union justify a security commitment to Thailand, or whether the commitment is justified on other grounds. We should act now so as not to be confronted later with the need to live up to an anachronistic commitment that we failed to terminate in order to make credible our continuing vital commitments in Western Europe and Northeast Asia.

As I have already noted, the SEATO Treaty itself contains a specific provision permitting any state to withdraw after one year’s notice. Should the United States fail to get agreement to disband the treaty, we should, I believe, take that step.

Thank you.

Mr. Nixon. Thank you, Mr. Halperin.

Is it the basic American military doctrine that in brush fire wars American troops are to be introduced in order to gain time to train native troops? Is that a fair interpretation as you see it?

Mr. Halperin. Well, I think President Nixon has said that the embodiment of the Nixon doctrine was what we did in Cambodia which seems to suggest that our policy is that where we feel we have an interest we will use whatever American forces are necessary. We obviously would prefer to rely on local troops and use only American air- and sea-power, but where we don’t feel that is sufficient and where the Congress has not interposed an effective objection by legislation, I think it is clearly the policy of this administration to use American troops as long as necessary.

Mr. Nixon. That applies to Thailand as well as to any spot anywhere in the world?

Mr. Halperin. I think certainly it applies to Thailand where the United States continues to have a treaty commitment which says that we view an attack on Thailand as a threat to American security.

Mr. Nixon. Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Halperin, I appreciate your statement very much.
Do you think the SEATO Treaty can now serve as an umbrella for the reintroduction of American troops into Southeast Asia?

Mr. HALPERIN. I don't think there is any question of it. The United States remains committed to the statement that an attack on Thailand by Communist forces would threaten American security, and I think as long as that treaty is on the books it can serve as a justification for reintroduction of American troops.

Mr. HAMILTON. Is it the only legal authority existing now to permit us to do that?

Mr. HALPERIN. I believe that it is; yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. The Assistant Secretary, Mr. Ingersoll, said the other day that SEATO had not outlived its usefulness and if we were to withdraw from it, as you are advocating, it would create doubts and uncertainty. How do you respond to that observation?

Mr. HALPERIN. Well, I think there are already doubts and uncertainties among all our allies as to whether the United States will meet any of its commitments in view of reaction to the Vietnam war. I think those doubts and uncertainties are increased by our maintaining commitments that do not have the support of the American people. If we have a commitment to Thailand which most of the American public does not support and which the administration itself suggests is obsolete—that SEATO is really only an economic treaty arrangement, then countries with whom we have other treaties—Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and countries of Western Europe—have to ask themselves: Do any of our treaty commitments mean anything or do we consider them economic arrangements. It seems to me we would enhance the credibility of those commitments we really feel are important by going to the countries where we have commitments that we know are not important such as the SEATO Treaty and renouncing or negotiating those and then turn around and say to Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the countries of Western Europe: the treaties which we are keeping are the ones we believe in. So I think it would enhance our remaining commitments rather than subtract from.

Mr. HAMILTON. If we did renounce the treaty, what would be the status of other American troops stationed in Southeast Asia? Would there be any doubt about our legal authority to have them there?

Mr. HALPERIN. Well——

Mr. HAMILTON. What is the tie-in, if any, at that point?

Mr. HALPERIN. The only troops we now have stationed on the mainland of Southeast Asia are in Thailand, and those troops in terms of international law could be kept there if the Thais permitted it. In terms of the President's authority to station those troops overseas, that it seems would depend on whether the Congress asserts what I believe to be its constitutional right to determine whether troops may be stationed in any country, whether or not there is a treaty. I don't believe the SEATO Treaty itself gives the President the right to station troops in Thailand, I believe he has that right only if the Congress affirmatively or by default gives it to him.

Mr. HAMILTON. Where would you keep substantial numbers of U.S. troops in Asia today?

Mr. HALPERIN. I guess that a little bit depends on your definition of "substantial." I don't think I would keep substantial troops anywhere.
I would keep some American troops in Japan, including Okinawa. I think I would keep a small number of troops in Korea. I would keep some troops at sea with the 7th Fleet. Apart from that, I believe that we should phase out the remaining American military force.

Mr. Hamilton. You see no reason for troops in Thailand?

Mr. Halperin. The only conceivable purpose for troops in Thailand—in fact, I believe explicitly stated by the administration—is to back up the administration's threat for the resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam. I do not believe that we should resume the bombing in North Vietnam under any circumstances. I do not believe we should threaten the bombing of North Vietnam, and I believe the Congress could show its determination not to permit the resumption of that bombing by mandating the withdrawal of the troops from Thailand.

Mr. Hamilton. We have, I think, roughly 56,000 troops in Japan today. How does that figure strike you?

Mr. Halperin. I think it is much too high and it is really based on an anachronism. The island of Okinawa was run by an American general as a kind of colonial territory. It is quite natural when you have a territory that is your own to put a lot of troops and a lot of support facilities on that island. I would expect and certainly urge a substantial reduction of troops. I believe the Japanese would prefer that we have fewer rather than more troops in Japan, so that you don't have the problem that you have in Germany where the Germans are urging us to keep the troops there. So I believe there could be and should be a substantial reduction from that 56,000.

Mr. Hamilton. Let me ask you also about the Philippines. We have about 14,000 troops there, according to my understanding.

Mr. Halperin. I don't believe that there is any justification for the maintenance of American troops in the Philippines. The Philippines are not threatened by any external aggression of any kind. There is a great deal of internal unrest in the Philippines but I don't believe that internal unrest in any way affects the security of the United States.

Mr. Hamilton. You support a reduction of troops in South Korea but we have about 42,000 there. How sharply would you reduce that number?

Mr. Halperin. I would cut that in half.

Mr. Hamilton. We have about 8,000 on Taiwan.

Mr. Halperin. Those, I believe, should go. These troops were there as a part of the buildup for the Southeast Asia commitments. I believe they should go.

Mr. Hamilton. All right. I would like you to comment, if you would, Dr. Halperin, on the administration request for an additional $474 million in supplemental military aid to Saigon and an additional $54 million in supplemental economic aid. How do you think we ought to deal with that?

Mr. Halperin. I think the supplemental request should be denied and I think Congress should make it clear that it intends over a relatively small number of years to phase out all aid to South Vietnam. We are now in a situation where the South Vietnamese Government has absolutely refused to proceed with the negotiation for a political reconciliation in South Vietnam. Their policy is clearly to hold on and continue to fight the war under the assumption that the Congress and the American public will continue to pay for the ammunition.
Mr. Hamilton. Do you put the whole blame on South Vietnam? You say South Vietnam has refused to proceed. Is that also true of North Vietnam?

Mr. Halperin. I think that is hard to tell because in the absence of a willingness on the part of the Saigon Government to negotiate, it is very hard to tell whether the other side would be willing to or not. The other side continues in its propaganda to talk about the virtues of the cease-fire agreement that is signed and I think that they would try for a period of time to come to power by political means if the South Vietnam Government is prepared to give them a chance. I think ultimately they would use whatever force is necessary to take over the South. I don’t believe anything would change that determination, but I think they are prepared for a time to try a political route to power if they are given a chance to do so.

Mr. Hamilton. You support, I take it, a rather rapid phaseout of military and economic assistance to South Vietnam?

Mr. Halperin. Yes.

Mr. Hamilton. What would be the consequences of that in your judgment, in South Vietnam?

Mr. Halperin. I believe the consequences of that would be the beginnings of negotiations among the political groups in the South which I think would be first to form some sort of coalition government. I suspect a number of the current rulers in South Vietnam would move to the Riviera and you would get a new government. I think gradually it would be taken over by the NLF forces in the South. I believe the only alternative to that is a period of the kind of stalemate we now have followed by resumption of large-scale fighting which, unless the United States is prepared to go back in, would end in the NLF controlling the South anyway. I think we are confronted with the choice in South Vietnam to either stay and fight forever or there will be a takeover by the NLF.

Mr. Hamilton. Thank you very much, Dr. Halperin.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nixon. Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

The bells rang a while ago. I think it would be wise to recess the hearing so that we can go over and vote and come back. Would you kindly excuse us.

Mr. Halperin. I am available.

[Whereupon, a short recess was taken.]

Mr. Nixon. The subcommittee will come to order.

Dr. Halperin, you wanted to clarify something in your statement.

Mr. Halperin. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It was called to my attention that I failed to mention Australia and New Zealand in mentioning SEATO. They are, of course, members of the treaty organization but they are also allied with us in the ANZUS Pact so that if SEATO is renounced we would continue to have treaty commitments with them.

Mr. Nixon. Mr. du Pont.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for not being here for your opening statement. I came in just as you were having an exchange with Mr. Hamilton in which you said you thought one of the ways we could make sure that we did not get involved in the bombing of North Vietnam again was to
take our troops out of Thailand. Of course since we bombed the last time we have a war powers bill that prohibits the bombing without a vote of Congress, so don't you think we have some pretty good protection against the bombing as it is?

Mr. HALPERIN. Well, my understanding of the war powers bill, it would permit the United States to bomb Vietnam for 30 days. There is the fund cutoff which I think does legally prohibit the bombing of North Vietnam without the concurrence of the Congress. My point is that the administration is now threatening the North Vietnamese that if they resume an offensive in the South that we will resume the bombing in the North and it is pointing to the American bombers in Thailand as evidence that we really mean that commitment.

There will be a resumption of the offensive in the South by the North Vietnamese if not this year, next year or the following year, unless there is a political settlement in the South. The President will be before the joint session of the Congress in a day saying, "We warned the North Vietnamese and they have now gone ahead in the face of our warning and if we fail to resume the bombing nobody will ever believe any of our commitments anywhere." If you say, "What right did you have to make this commitment when Congress had to approve it?" the answer will be the same as the commitment they made to the Russians for MFN.

The administration has gone ahead and made commitments and threats even though they needed congressional support without having it. I think the Congress has an obligation to the countries of Southeast Asia and the whole world to make it clear that that threat is not an American Government threat, it is a threat of the President of the United States which he is not free to make without the support of the Congress. And the way the Congress can add to that is by mandating those troops go out of Thailand because that would be saying to the President and saying to the South Vietnamese Government: "Don't count on those bombers to protect you, you have got to negotiate."

Mr. du Pont. Well, this kind of ties in with another statement you made in response to Mr. Hamilton which is that you were in favor of phasing out all aid, economic and military, to South Vietnam because they have been recalcitrant in going forward with the new negotiations. Is it your thesis that American aid, both economic and military, for all nations who do not live up to a commitment that we think is important be phased out?

Mr. HALPERIN. No. The sacrifice that the United States has made for the Government of South Vietnam goes far beyond the sacrifice made for any other country. I think we can say to South Vietnam: We have spilled our blood and treasure for you, at least as much as you deserve, if not a great deal more, and that is all you are entitled to. The United States has other commitments and other uses for funds at home and you are on your own. You will have to decide what you want to do. If you want to fight on your own, you are free to do so. If you want to negotiate—

Mr. du Pont. You differentiate between economic aid to South Vietnam and let's say economic aid to Brazil on the basis that we have done a lot for South Vietnam and not very much for Brazil.

Mr. HALPERIN. No, on the basis that the South Vietnamese are in a struggle with other forces in South Vietnam which I believe will
either be resolved by political negotiation or by military conflict. I do not believe that is the case with most, if not all, the other countries to whom we give economic and military aid.

Mr. Du Pont. Well, I have trouble, I think, with your thesis. I think what you are saying is that we ought to take these things on an ad hoc basis in South Vietnam as a very special case.

Mr. Halperin. Yes.

Mr. Du Pont. Now what I am searching for is if you have a general theory that says when we go ahead with aid programs and when we decide not to.

Mr. Halperin. Well, I am not sure I have a total theory. My view is that the resources of the United States are very scarce and we ought to use them where it is consistent with our interests. I think that has to be a judgment on each country and about what they are doing with the aid. The South Vietnamese are using the aid to maintain a government in power which in the absence of that aid I believe could not remain in power, and I just think we have given them enough aid. So that I don't think I can go any further than I have already on your general thesis.

Mr. Du Pont. All right. One final question. Perhaps you touched upon this before I came in. I can understand and even sympathize with removing troops in Southeast Asia because it is not in our interest to have them there and too expensive to have them there and so forth, but the thrust of your attack on SEATO really seemed to be not on the purposes of the treaty so much as the fact that most everybody else had dropped out of it and therefore we ought to drop out of it, too. Could you distinguish on the treaty itself a difference between SEATO and NATO?

Mr. Halperin. Let me try to make my argument a little clearer. My view is that the security interests of the United States are not sufficiently tied in with the future of the government in Thailand that the United States ought now to undertake to maintain a commitment which says that an attack on Thailand is a threat to the security of the United States. I don't think most of the American people think so and therefore I don't think we ought to continue to have on the books a commitment which we don't believe in and which if it is threatened we are either confronted then with not living up to our commitment or living up to it but for reasons not connected with our security.

The point about the changes in SEATO and their commitment to it goes to the question of whether it is legitimate for us to renounce this commitment. In my view, it ought to be sufficient to say that we have now decided that it is no longer in our interest to maintain this treaty and therefore we could renounce it, but there is always the danger that other people will say: "Maybe some day you will renounce NATO." It is not only the case that we have to reevaluate it, it is the case that most of the people who signed that treaty have also reevaluated their views.

When we signed the treaty what we believed we were undertaking was a commitment jointly with the British and the French and a number of the countries of the region to come to the aid of Thailand and a number of other countries. That is no longer the case. The British and French are out and most of the other countries are out, so it is not a question of us simply saying we have changed our
mind. It is a question of the whole framework of the treaty having changed and therefore I think withdrawal would be less painful and less costly than if we renounced the treaty with Australia where nothing has changed.

Mr. du Pont. One final question. Do you think a military attack on Greece or Turkey would be a threat to the security of the United States? Obviously you can see what is behind my question. If it is good for SEATO, why not good for NATO?

Mr. Halperin. I think there is a question whether we should have sponsored Greece and Turkey to NATO. I think it is clear that Greece and Turkey are not the flank of NATO, and anybody who says that should look at a military geography.

I think the problem with NATO is that our commitment to the central region, particularly Germany, is of vital importance to the security of the United States. I don't see any way now to renegotiate the Greek and Turkish portion of the treaty without suggesting to the Germans that it is really a prelude to a total American withdrawal. On the other hand, I do not believe that we are obliged under the treaty to give military or economic aid or to station American troops in Greece. I do not believe that we should do these things as long as there is no restoration of democracy in Greece.

Mr. du Pont. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nix. Mr. Halperin, as to your 1973 article in the Brookings Institution publication entitled "The Next Phase of Foreign Policy," I would like to ask the following: You say:

In the case of Southeast Asian countries United States interests would be defined by the Japanese interests. We would not intervene in these countries unless Japan was prepared to support our intervention in a way consistent with its domestic constraints for we would intervene in these countries only if we felt this necessary to continue Japanese confidence in the American deterrent and to close a harmonious U.S.-Japanese relation.

Would you explain that?

Mr. Halperin. I think one can ask the question of whether the United States has a security interest in a particular region of the world in two ways. One, directly we would have in the case of Japan and Germany and other countries, and the other is indirectly. That is to say, our credibility and effectiveness. Our commitment to Japan for example, depends on what happens in Korea, so that the American security interest in Korea stems from the Japanese perception that the security of South Korea is in the Japanese security interest and therefore is in the American interest.

What I was saying about Southeast Asia is that the only argument that I could conceive of for American security in Southeast Asia was the argument that the Japanese would feel that their security was threatened; if there was a change in government in Thailand or other Southeast Asian countries, I do not believe that is the case. I believe that if you talk to the Japanese they would not support American military action in Thailand, would not be prepared to publicly urge it, and to put the Japanese political support in behind it. So that is not operative in the sense that it is in the interest of Japan and the United States.

Mr. Nix. Don't you think that it is a worthwhile endeavor for this subcommittee to examine all of the outstanding U.S. commitments to
other countries, to analyze those commitments and to make facts known to the American people?

Mr. Hartmann. I think it is very important that that be done because I think the administration has made it clear that, whatever the rhetoric in the Nixon doctrine, it feels that we are stuck with every commitment that we ever made in perpetuity. Therefore I think it is only from the Congress that we are going to get a careful reevaluation of those commitments.

Mr. Nix. Mr. Riegle.

Mr. Riegle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First I want to thank you for the statement and for all the hard work and time that you have put in on this subject.

I basically agree with your assessment. I think you are probably right; we are facing a situation where the choices may not be pleasant but we ought to look at them and determine what choices we really do have. I get the feeling that the government in South Vietnam is narrowly based and it is operated in a way that will not last indefinitely even if we plug in $54 million now and the amount that was asked for yesterday. It is still an inevitable fact that the government there probably won't survive.

If that is true, and if it is also true in Thailand, then in all likelihood we face a situation where we would be called upon to act contrary to our strategic interests. What is your best assessment of how long we have in South Vietnam? How long do you think they can hold together? Can you plug large sums of money in there?

Mr. Hartmann. Let me first react to what you said about Thailand. I don't agree with that. I don't think it is true that the Government of Thailand will be taken over by the left wing. I think the Thais have shown over the years remarkable ability to maintain their independence and I think they will continue to do so. But I don't believe that our security is bound up with them in a way that justifies a treaty, not because I would expect it.

In the case of South Vietnam, I think it is very hard to say because we are dealing with a decision-making process in Hanoi, which we don't understand at all and have never really understood. They have the problem of several trade-offs. One is rebuilding the society in North Vietnam as opposed to building up in the South. Second, we have the question of whether they think time is on their side in the South, and I don't think we have a very good understanding of that at all.

What are they doing in South Vietnam in the territory they control? How well are they doing in recruiting people under their control? To what extent are they worried that the U.S. Government might launch attacks?

I don't think we know the answers to those questions at all, and those obviously are an important part of the internal argument in Hanoi on whether they should launch an offensive soon. We don't know if they have any expectation of negotiation. I think they would prefer a negotiation where a neutral government would take over in a few years.

There are a great many things we don't know at least I don't know, and I don't see any sign that anybody in the executive branch knows either which makes it very hard to predict. I think the thing that is absolutely certain is that at some point if they do not get a negotiation
which leads to a settlement that they will launch a more effective offensive. Nothing suggests that the Hanoi leadership has given up on a united Vietnam, and every international agreement that we have signed and agreed to support certifies this.

Mr. RIEGEL. Well, if you set SEATO aside, and try to look at just South Vietnam in terms of our own strategic interests—military factors, economic factors, geopolitical factors, and legally or any other strategic item—do you find any supporting arguments for our continuing to plug in money of that size to maintain the status quo?

Mr. HALPERIN. Yes; I remember wrestling with those when I was in the Pentagon; you used to send them to us.

I don't think it is. In fact, I think it is counterproductive because if I am right that there is going to come a day when there is an offensive in the South, I think the main question then is going to be have we created expectation in the minds of the Russians, the Chinese, and our allies in Asia and throughout the world that we will intervene when that happens. If we feel we have created such expectations, that will be the strongest argument to intervene.

The President's speech, which I would write for him, will say, "I warned the Russians, I warned the Chinese we would back up our economic and military aid with the resumption of the bombing and that is why those planes were in Thailand and Congress knew that is why they were in Thailand and therefore we have to go in."

If, on the other hand, we now cut off our economic and military aid and withdraw those airplanes from Thailand, then we are telling the South Vietnamese and we are telling the rest of our allies in the world and the Russians and the Chinese that South Vietnam is no longer something that we are obligated to protect. Then if there is an offensive we can say we have been telling the Saigon government for 3 years that if they do not negotiate in good faith under the cease-fire this would happen to them and we are not going to be there. I think then the impact on our other allies would be very small. I don't think there is a government in the world that thinks it needs anything like the support we gave the South Vietnamese Government in the past 10 years to survive. So the argument we all will give you is what we gave to South Vietnam over the last 10 years does not count; it is more than enough to maintain this.

Mr. RIEGEL. Suppose we decided that was right and we ought to back away. Can we do it all at once or do we start something that might be called economic?

Mr. HALPERIN. Well, I think that is what we do. We tell the Saigon government military aid is over; if you want to buy ammunition on the world market, it is for sale, anybody can buy it. We are going to phase out and after that you are on your own. You have 3 years to decide what you want to do. Those of you who want to go to the Riviera can go.

Mr. RIEGEL. So in dealing with this latest budget request from the White House, if we were to buy that reasoning, we should not get locked into an argument that it is all or nothing but scale the figure down to what is roughly defendable but which is on its way to zero.

Mr. HALPERIN. I think Congress ought to be able to do some long-range planning; it ought to be able to say to the South Vietnamese and the President this much this year, this much next year, this much the following year and then nothing and then stick to it.
Mr. RIEGLE. Do you have any sense for what the Soviet Union is doing with respect to the aid it is giving Vietnam now?

Mr. HALPERIN. I think it is pretty clear that both the Russians and the Chinese are limiting their military aid to North Vietnam and urging them not to engage in a resumption of the fighting and urging them to negotiate. I think that will last for a while.

Mr. RIEGLE. Are they doing less than we in Vietnam?

Mr. HALPERIN. Historically they have done somewhere between 1 and 10 percent, depending on whose numbers you want to believe, and I don't think that has changed.

Mr. RIEGLE. So it is probably still in that kind of ratio now?

Mr. HALPERIN. Yes.

Mr. RIEGLE. Should we adjourn and go vote, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. NIX. I think I will stay.

Have you other questions?

Mr. RIEGLE. Maybe one or two more.

Mr. NIX. Proceed.

Mr. RIEGLE. I would like to talk some more about Cambodia and Thailand. You probably spoke about Cambodia before I came in.

I would like to think of the three areas separately, and then region-wide. I think we nailed down Vietnam and talked a little bit about Thailand.

Mr. HALPERIN. I don't understand what the American interest in Cambodia is. It is clear that despite our efforts to describe it as a North Vietnamese invasion that it is in fact largely an indigenous condition. It is a civil war; and it is a civil war in which I think we have no interest and I think we ought to get out of it. I think the American military has shown—if you believe stories in the Washington Post—that when one sends American military off to any country where there is a war he cannot contain himself; he is an expert and trained and when he sees things done badly he corrects it. That is a civil war and whatever the people in Cambodia are doing it is not going to affect the security of the United States.

Mr. RIEGLE. One of the things that I worry about—if I may just offer an aside here—is that it is difficult to be an expert in South Vietnam or for that matter any place in Southeast Asia, when you have a kind of instability in the executive branch creating uncertainty that is difficult to deal with. What I fear most is what could happen in the next 90 days that could be given a false meaning.

So every time we lock ourselves into a framework, which seems to me to be the thrust of your paper, we give away our flexibility. The situation, as you say, has changed; the framework is different. I worry about being drawn in there almost as a diversionary tactic and create events over which we have no control. Congress would not have any control over that. Inasmuch as I would like to see us have it, I have great concern, especially now.

Mr. HALPERIN. I think that is a problem. In my view the administration is unlikely to take foreign action as a divergence to the domestic situation. The President would not get the support that he needs from the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense to do that. I think the danger is that all of them will feel that the foreign governments think the United States is now so weak they can get away with pushing us around and that therefore one must respond vigorously not to affect the debate at home but in order to show—
Mr. Riegler. But it adds up to the same thing.

Mr. Halperin. Yes. It goes a little bit to the question of motive. I think that Congress ought to be concerned about that problem. It ought to think about ways that reduce the speed with which the administration can react, and the bombers in Thailand are a perfect example. If Congress insisted as I believe, without question it could in legislation say that the bombers not be stationed in Thailand and that those bases be disbanded. Then the speed with which bombing of North Vietnam could take place would be substantially reduced. You are only talking about a few days when they were returning to the area. I would apply that to Guam as well.

So if the bombers were back in the United States and you had warning, you saw the bombers begin to fly out, then Congress could act to prevent the bombing of Thailand. I think if you begin thinking this way, what are the things we can do which either put locks on the President’s action as the funds are cut-off or put the delays, how fast there can be reaction, that that is one way to get in.

Mr. Riegler. I think that is an excellent suggestion. I don’t know why we have to have bombers in Thailand ready to go on a minute’s notice. I think the fact that they are there ready to go makes them easier to use, and on that point I agree with you. The thing I worry about it how the dynamics start. I think you are right that different people in the executive branch would view it different and they would react for different reasons, but I think it all adds up to the same thing. I think we could be back into this in a big way overnight and everybody would sort of be trailing along and that is the one thing I don’t want to see happen.

That is all for me, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nix. Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Halperin, if we did renounce the SEATO Treaty, what would be the impact as far as China and the Soviet Union are concerned?

Mr. Halperin. I think the Chinese would be worried that it was the beginning of an American military withdrawal from Asia which they worry about because it would help the Russians. I don’t believe the Russians would be affected by it at all but I believe that it is paradoxical as it seems we could give the Chinese assurances that this was not the beginning of a total withdrawal.

Mr. Hamilton. You would not expect the Chinese to take any particular action?

Mr. Halperin. No. I would not think it would be wise for either the Russians or the Chinese to conclude that the United States no longer has commitments. As I suggested before, it shows that we have maintained the commitments.

Mr. Hamilton. You don’t see it in any way as a destabilizing move—the renunciation of the SEATO Treaty?

Mr. Halperin. No. I don’t think any country in the world is so close to a decision to invade Thailand that the renunciation of this treaty would—

Mr. Hamilton. Actually our obligations under SEATO at this point are not very great, are they? You define it in terms of almost a bilateral treaty. It does not cost us very much money to maintain so we could just leave it as it is. You thus avoid any risk, however
great or small, of destabilization and there is not any real probable commitment in terms of American troops, is there, for Southeast Asia’s activities? They could not be used in Thailand, for example, or in the Philippines? That is what I am really driving at.

Mr. Halperin. Why not leave it alone?

Mr. Hamilton. Yes, why not leave it alone just for the sake of drawing it out a little bit more?

Mr. Halperin. Well, there is an attempt by the administration to say that SEATO now is just an economic arrangement. The fact remains that the Senate of the United States has consented to the ratification, the United States has ratified the treaty which says that an attack on Thailand would endanger the peace and safety of the United States and that we will act to meet that common danger.

Mr. Hamilton. According to our Constitution.

Mr. Halperin. According to our constitutional procedures which in my view means that Congress will have the right to decide what we have to. Under the War Powers bill for 30 days the President can do what he decided he had to do. I don’t think the United States should continue the treaty which (a) we don’t believe in and (b) we would not want to act on if they came to pass. I think it is very unhappy that there would be a Communist invasion either by North Vietnam or by China of Thailand, but I don’t believe we should put ourselves in a position to give the Thais a blank check with the knowledge that if they are attacked we are obliged to come in. I just believe the credibility of our commitments is much stronger if we only maintain those commitments that we believe in.

As to whether it costs us money or not, this is a very slippery problem because the troops necessary to meet any commitment are so much of a matter of judgment and argument that whatever the treaty commitments of the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would claim that the troops were too small. I suppose many critics would say they are too big. So even if we eliminated the SEATO Treaty, the argument would still be made. I think, by the Secretary of Defense that we ought to go back from 16 to 19 divisions rather than stay at 16 or go to a lower number.

I believe that argument to be much harder to make that in fact the argument that 16 is certainly enough as the President said last year and that in fact probably the number considerably below 16 is enough to be much easier to sustain both politically and intellectually if we had withdrawn our commitment to Thailand because in Northeast Asia the requirement for troops is really very difficult to make. The South Koreans have more men under arms, Japan, New Zealand, and the Philippines are not subject to any ground threats. So by renouncing the SEATO Treaty you would be virtually eliminating substantial grounds for an Asian commitment and that would, I believe, make the arguments that the Army is too big substantially better than they are.

Mr. Hamilton. In a very broad sense what initiatives do you think this Government ought to be taking now with regard to Asian policy, if any?

Mr. Halperin. Well, I believe in addition to what we already talked about on SEATO,

Mr. Hamilton. You don’t want to enter into any more mutual defense treaties, I take it.
Mr. Halperin. I think there is a much stronger case that can be made for Malaysia and Singapore. If we have a treaty with somebody in Southeast Asia, I would prefer those two countries to Thailand but I am not advocating a treaty with either.

I think we should withdraw military forces from Taiwan, I can see no reason to keep them there. I do not believe we should renounce our treaty commitments with Taiwan or any other countries we have in the area. I believe we should urge the Koreans into negotiations with the North Koreans leading to a recognition of both countries and creation of a nuclear free zone in Korea. I do not believe the United States should station nuclear weapons anywhere in Korea.

It continues to be the policy of the executive branch that the presence of the nuclear weapons in any country outside the United States can neither be confirmed or not so I am not prepared to volunteer information, but insofar as there are any I believe they should be removed. I certainly do not believe they should be maintained where they run the risk of being overrun by enemy forces, and I believe there are some that run that risk.

Mr. Nix. May I interrupt a moment. I understand this is the final passage.

Will you take over? Have you voted?

Mr. Hamilton. I have voted.

Mr. Nix. Take over while I vote.

Mr. Hamilton [presiding]. To continue, what other initiatives do you think we ought to take in Asia? What about Japan?

Mr. Halperin. I believe the American security relationship with Japan is of vital importance to the United States and should be continued. I think we should continue our process of closing bases in Japan and Okinawa to going down to a residual force of a single airbase and a single naval facility in Japan. I believe that we should begin a dialog with the Japanese which would be to a mutual definition by the two countries of what the security threats are in Asia and what we each propose to do about it. As a matter of fact, I think we should start insisting that the Japanese take some responsibility at least politically for what security commitments we continue. I do not believe we should encourage them to develop military capabilities for use outside Japan. I don't think that is in our interest or would be welcomed in Asia.

Mr. Hamilton. Apart from the steps relating to security commitments in the area, do you foresee any other steps that you think we ought to be taking?

Mr. Halperin. I think the Secretary of State ought to take a trip to Japan where he stops in China for once rather than always be the reverse. I think we continue to treat Japan as if it is Ceylon, with apologies to Ceylon. I guess it has also changed its name. We continue to treat Japan as if it is a very small and insignificant country instead of the third major economic power in the world and the major power in Asia.

That is probably a matter of attitude. It is a matter of whether our Secretary of State goes out there and just stops on the way back. It is a matter of whether we consult with them before we cut off their soybeans after for years lecturing them on how a responsible country would buy soybeans from the United States instead of growing their own. It is a matter whether we consult with them before we move to
China after promising faithfully for 20 years that we would do so. This seems to be an assumption that either it is inevitable that they become our antagonists or that it is desirable or that we are so grossly inept in our dealings with Japan. Since I refuse to accuse them of ineptness I am stuck with one of the other two. In Japan it has to do with the form and the style as it does with the substance.

Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Riegle.

Mr. Riegle. What do you think our role should be in South Korea as it relates to Japan? I gather you talked on that before I got here, but more specifically should we continue to do what we are doing now or does it ever matter what kinds of things we do as a part of a Japanese strategy.

Mr. Halperin. I would do three things.

One, I would withdraw some of the troops but not all of them.

Second, I would tell the Koreans that we are simply not going to continue to provide economic and military aid to the government which shows itself less and less concerned about the civil liberties and civil rights of its own citizens, that it is for them to decide how they want to operate their own government but it is also for us to decide whether we want to give military and economic aid.

I don't believe that we should continue to suggest indifference to what happens in Korea; it is the policy of this administration, that we are indifferent and as long as they support our foreign policy we don't care what they do at home. I don't believe that is the attitude of the American people and I believe the United States has indicated that. It seems to me, if I might say, it is much more fruitful of countries like Greece and Korea than it is with the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union democracy is much less likely to have an effect than lectures to the Koreans and to the Greeks.

The third thing I would do is to encourage an effort to work out an agreement which would involve renunciation of force by North and South Korea supported by the Russians, the Chinese and the United States and perhaps in some way, Japan. This would involve, among other things, a nuclear obligation by the countries with troops stationed there and perhaps some Chinese territory near Korea and Russian territory trying to work out an arrangement which brings the two Koreas into the United Nations and which in effect ends this abnormal state.

Mr. Riegle. One other point I would like to raise which is a side issue but one that hangs over everything else we talk about, is the loss of democratic government we have witnessed since the 1960ties. There is an increase in the number and the harshness of authoritarian governments, including our own.

Obviously we cannot do much revitalizing worldwide unless we can demonstrate that we can do it here at home. I am wondering what major foreign policy initiatives we ought to be thinking about? I don't know, I am very disturbed about that, and I don't think we should much in the way of policy discussion on this question.

What ideas or thoughts do you have that might be helpful to us?

Mr. Hamilton. Well, the executive branch has a policy line I mentioned before; namely, they can do whatever they want at home provided they support us in foreign policy. That is what the President and the Secretary of State have specifically said. Until foreign governments understand that and it has led them to be somewhat
bolder than they have been prepared to do at home than they have been in the past.

I mean the Korean abducting of the leader of the opposition party from Japan, bringing him to Korea and putting him under house arrest. As far as I can tell, the United States has said nothing about it and the Japanese did and got some satisfaction, though not a great deal.

I think our policy ought to be one which says to foreign governments that what they do at home is their business and the marines are not going to land. However the nature and extent of the American support, military aid and credits, will depend on our assessment of whether they are maintaining the kinds of government we want to be associated with and support. It is not clear to me how much good that will do, I think it varies from country to country, but it is something we ought to do because it is what we believe to be right; whether or not it is going to make a substantial difference. I think in Greece, there is no question if we had done that right away it would have made a difference. I think in Korea there may be a substantial difference. I think in other countries it might well also.

I certainly don’t think we should do as we did in Chile; namely, interferring against them because we don’t like what we think their foreign policies might be and creating situations in which authoritarian governments come to power and then announce this as a great success for American foreign policy. I think it is a disaster for American policy and it affects the way we see what happened in Chile as in our interest. It affects how we feel about what happens in our own society. It certainly affects people.

We have discovered that many of the people who thought it was legal to burglarize somebody’s office in the United States were people who were regularly authorizing burglaries in foreign countries, and it is very easy to get mixed up. I think we have learned that we just cannot separate the two. At least to be true to ourselves we ought to stop these policies and to try to hold a democratic front and not be indifferent to what happens.

Mr. Riegler. It seems to me that one of the things that has happened, in the centralization of power in our Government has been that it is more authoritarian in all sorts of ways. You get the worst variations of that from this administration but the trend lines were already there and appear to be getting worse. What I am concerned about is that in the two world power centers the authoritarian concept seems acceptable to many leaders, including our own. I am not sure how we reverse that. I believe that question must be answered and I don’t believe we have the answer to it at the moment.

Mr. Halperin. Well, I think part of the answer is the Congress must be willing to take responsibility. The Congress has had these statements of what is going on in Greece but it always puts in something to the effect that says unless the President shall find it in the security of the United States to do so then he names whatever he wants.

I think one should learn by now that there are a group of stamps in the executive branch and they use them whenever the legislation puts in “in the security of the United States” and they just use it and it says “whereas the Congress has found that the United States cannot do it.”
the Y is stamped in, the President's name is stamped on the bottom and the thing is done.

Congress is not carrying out its responsibility by cutting off funds except if the President shall sign X because he will find X and the Congress has to be prepared to take the responsibility to say: We have weighed the harm that will come from this cutoff and we find the aid that should be cut off because of what is going on. Congress must not take the easy way out and say we will give the President the right to waive.

Mr. Riegel. I just would like to ask one more question if I may, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Nix. Go ahead.

Mr. Riegel. This is a broader question but it relates to what we are discussing here. The world's needs in terms of problems be their pollution, population, or resource allocation, always create an attempt to deal with everybody's problems and the other difficulty is dealing with our own foreign policy and everybody else's foreign policy on the basis of everybody's strategic interests. So you get the whole balance of power policies in the way of trying to solve problems and neither seems to be working.

It seems to me we are falling further and further behind in terms of the critical issues that have to be addressed. It is a very complicated world and planning has to go on and there is not an awful lot of time left to do it. I am wondering how we get from where we are now in the absence of that kind of a mechanism to the development of such a mechanism.

It seems to me that we are at a point where we should lift ourselves out of the classical debate on these issues as important as they are and really think about the key things that are happening worldwide. I am just wondering what thoughts you may have along this line or people that you are talking with have along this line. How do we go about starting to sort of bridge into a brand new way of dealing with problems that belong to everybody and won't go away?

Mr. Halperin. I think that is a very hard question. My thoughts on that I guess begin and maybe end with what Florence Nightingale said about hospitals. She said first of all that they should not spread disease. When you solve that problem, then you can worry about others.

I would be inclined to say that the United States should stop adding to the problem, stop exacerbating in a variety of ways that it does before we are ready to turn to the question of how you go on from there. I guess I am skeptical of any bold design of one kind or another. I tend to believe that the individual problems have to be solved one by one and the problems that require solution require separate mechanisms to work them out. I guess I believe that mechanisms ought to be ones that don't require centralized control because I don't have any faith in how to do that even in the United States let alone for the world.

So I would guess that I am really skeptical of bold designs and on the United States being in a position to take leadership on these questions. We have to put our own house in order and we have to stop spreading disease. It is a very hard problem.