when they consented to that treaty. Indeed the American commitment under SEATO has been reshaped into an instrument directly at variance with what the Senate originally intended, emerging as a means for Presidential military initiatives unfettered as yet by any effective congressional restraints. And as a weapon available to the President for military intervention in Southeast Asia its cutting edge now faces not toward China but rather toward those rebels and potential rebels that local American-backed regimes are unable to suppress on their own.

I submit that it is a dangerous weapon and that it ill befits a responsible Senate to leave it in his hands. Thank you.

[Dr. Kahin's prepared statement follows:]

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. GEORGE MC. KAHIN, CORNELL UNIVERSITY**

An effective reassertion by Congress of its foreign policy role in Southeast Asia is incompatible with a continuing American participation in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. That old pact may be dormant, but it is still very much alive, operative and available as an instrument for further presidentially initiated military interventions in Southeast Asia. The Executive Branch has found the way to employ it in a way diametrically opposed to the intent of the Senate when that body consented to the treaty. Congress has been unable to constrain the President from violating that intent, and there is little reason to expect that it will be able to do so as long as the United States remains in SEATO.

It was before this Committee almost two decades ago that John Foster Dulles in urging Senate approval of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty sought to relieve anxieties of those senators who were apprehensive lest its insurgency or "subversion" clause (paragraph 2 of article 4) draw the United States into the support of unpopular governments against broadly-based political opposition. In trying to assuage their concern, he pledged:

"If there is a revolutionary movement in Vietnam or Thailand we [the SEATO] allies would consult together as to what to do about it ... but we have no undertaking to put it down; all we have is an undertaking to consult together as to what to do about it."

On being further pressed, he assured the Senators that there was no obligation for action in such cases and that the authority for action in cases of armed attack from outside the treaty area would not be employed as subterfuge for dealing militarily with situations involving subversion. Yet this is precisely what did happen in Vietminh and could easily happen in Thailand or the Philippines.

Certainly as it was understood and endorsed by the Senate 19 years ago, SEATO did not authorize U.S. military intervention in situations such as the one that arose in Vietnam. But through a quite unjustified Presidential interpretation of that treaty, in which Congress acquiesced, it came to be employed as the Executive Branch's principal authority for putting down a revolutionary movement in Vietnam. By March of 1966, as Arthur Krock then noted in his column, the Johnson Administration had moved from the Tonkin Gulf Resolution to SEATO as the major justification for its Vietnam policy, Dean Rusk citing the treaty as "the fundamental source of President Johnson's authority to commit the United States to whatever expenditure of manpower and treasure he deems necessary to sustain the war in Vietnam."

This Administration has renounced the authority for military intervention once provided by the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, but it has never repudiated that specious interpretation of the American SEATO commitment that provided President Johnson with his major rationale for American military involvement in Vietnam.

The record of American participation in SEATO provides vivid evidence that where the operation of a treaty is dependent upon the Executive Branch's findings as to the nature of relevant conditions abroad, and Congress has no independent means for checking them, an assertive President can easily ignore the understanding upon which Senatorial confirmation of the treaty originally rested. In the case of SEATO, all the President had to do was to assert that a locally rooted insurgency was actually a case of clear-cut outside aggression—the very subter-
fuge that the Senate had been previously assured would never be resorted to.

An understanding of how this could happen in Vietnam is important to an appreciation of how the survival of SEATO militates against Congress' ability to restrain the President from launching further military adventures in Southeast Asia.

One must begin with a careful scrutiny of the actual nature of our SEATO commitment, and especially of its two principal prongs—addressed respectively to outside aggression (Para. 1, Article IV) and internal insurrection, or "subversion" as it was originally termed (Para. 2, Article IV). It is only in cases of outside aggression that the language of the treaty can be construed as providing authority for a signatory to respond with action, and even then that possibility was qualified by the proviso that any such move had to be in accordance with the country's "constitutional processes". With respect to situations involving insurrection, the treaty is susceptible to no such interpretation. In such instances a signatory is not empowered to act, it being stipulated merely that the "parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense." Consultation among the SEATO signatories, then, and not action—either collective or unilateral—is all that is provided for in cases of insurrection. If this consultation should lead to a sufficient consensus, then recommendations to the several signatory governments as to an appropriate course of action might ensue. But as the Senate clearly understood when it consented to the SEATO treaty, nothing in its terms constituted any commitment to or authority for the United States or any other signatory to take action in such cases.

However, those Senators who endorsed the treaty had not reckoned with the power of a President to define insurgency as outside aggression. By resorting to this expedient he was able to shift over to a basis of treaty authority that empowered a signatory to act rather than merely consult with his fellow pact members (Para. 1, rather than Para. 2 or Article IV). The condition in the treaty stipulating that invocation of such authority be in conformity with a signatory's "constitutional processes" poses no problem to a President, so long as Congress acquiesces in his simply consulting with a few of its more amenable members. For such a casualty to succeed the original intent of the Senate in endorsing SEATO to be defied, all that is required is an apathetic and poorly informed Congress. This made it possible to invoke SEATO in the case of Vietnam, and it could again with respect to other countries in Southeast Asia.

The same authority under SEATO claimed by the Chief Executive in justification of American military intervention in Vietnam still remains immediately available to any American President if he should decide to intervene militarily against rebels in Thailand or the Philippines. Nor can the possibility be entirely dismissed that SEATO might be drawn on as justification for renewed American military intervention in Indochina, despite the actions taken by Congress designed to restrain the Executive Branch from reembarking upon such a course and despite the Administration's having signed the Paris peace accords.

Some confusion seems to have arisen with regard to the applicability of SEATO to Cambodia, and perhaps some clarification is in order. As the protocol of the Southeast Asia Regional Defense Treaty makes explicit, the protection made available applies as much to Cambodia as it ever did to South Vietnam. There is nothing to prevent the present Phnom Penh regime from repudiating Sihanouk's renunciation of SEATO's protection and requesting supportive American military intervention. If President Nixon chose to grant the request he could resort to that same perversion of SEATO utilized by his predecessor, asserting that the intelligence available to him established that the situation in Cambodia, was basically one of "outside aggression" rather than rebellion or civil war.

If one dismisses the possibility of the President precipitating a resumption of American bombing in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos, one must also be prepared to

1 As the history of our Indochina involvement so eloquently testifies, the means for such an on-the-ground demobilization are almost exclusively in the hands of the President. It is for him as well as to him—not Congress—that both field and Washington-based foreign affairs specialists from Departments of Defense and State and from the CIA report, and it is unlikely that the President would be moved by a suggestion that challenges a course of action they know is already determined to take. Unless Congress secures considerably greater help from outside sources than is normally the case (or provides itself with much more substantial means of its own) it will, of course, always find it difficult to contest actions made by the Executive Branch.

2 For further details concerning Cambodia's relation to SEATO, see the note at the end of this paper.
dismisses the possibility that in order to shift public attention away from Water­
gate, a president who is increasingly beleaguered on the domestic front might not welcome a well-publicized confrontation with Congress over a highly controversi­al issue of foreign policy. Unless Congress is certain that Mr. Nixon would never be that reckless, it would be irresponsible not to remove the encouragement to embark on such action that SEATO’s continued existence might give him.

Although Congress has not deprived the President of whatever legitimacy SEATO might bestow on a renewal of American bombing in Cambodia, it has certainly made this course difficult by denying him funds for this purpose. But it has not undertaken any such pre-emptive action to safeguard against his launching military actions to protect the governments of the Philippines and Thailand against rebels they have by themselves been unable to suppress. In those two countries the door is still wide open to presidentially initiated military intervention against an insurgency. As was the case with South Vietnam, the only existing constraint against such an initiative is that same provision of SEATO that proved so ineffective in Vietnam—the condition that this be undertaken in accordance with this country’s constitutional processes. There appears nothing in the record to suggest that the present Administration would be likely to inter­pret that limitation any more stringently than its predecessor. Nor do this Congress and the public appear to appreciate how extensive is our commitment to back the Thai and Philippine governments in putting down politically dis­affected elements that challenge them.

THAILAND

The American commitment to Thailand is tied to and crucially dependent upon a special reinterpretation of the SEATO treaty by executive action in the Ken­ney Administration that was never submitted to Congress for approval and that considerably increases the possibility for committing American forces against an internal insurgency as well as against outside aggression. A joint communi­qué by Secretary of State Rusk and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman of March 6, 1962 in effect “bilateralized” the SEATO agreement, asserting that the United States was obliged to come to Thailand’s support even if other SEATO signatories refused to go along.

Citing the case of Vietnam as an appropriate example of how under SEATO Thailand could rely on United States support against the threat of insurgency, this communiqué employs language that Thai leaders have understood provides the basis for active US military support against any major insurgency in Thailand, as well as against outside aggression. Thus just after the communiqué was signed, the Thai Prime Minister, Field Marshal Sarit, announced that the United States had pledged aid to Thailand against indirect aggression, subversion or instruc­tion—“the same way it is doing in South Vietnam now.” If members of Congress have been confused by the seeming ambiguity of the American defense commit­ment to Thailand, that country’s military leaders have not been.

Nor did the present Administration shake their faith as to the strength of that commitment. Whatever anxiety there may have been after the initial procla­mation of the “Nixon Doctrine” was quickly put to rest in President Nixon’s public statement in Bangkok on July 28, 1969. After pledging to maintain all existing American commitments to Thailand, he went on to say, “The United States will stand proudly with Thailand against all of those who might threaten it from abroad or from within.” Echoing the feelings of Thailand’s military leaders the Bangkok World observed: “The inclusion of threats from ‘within’ is seen as a tangling of confusion to Thai military leaders as to the prospects of Amer­ican involvement in future Southeast Asian problems.” Mr. Nixon’s statement... came as a surprise to Thai leaders fearing that his mission here was only to prepare the nation for the eventuality of American disengagement... The Thal-US relationship is... stronger now than at any time in days past.” As Vice President Agnew made evident during his visit to Bangkok on May 17, 1972, the Nixon Administration indicated no subsequent reservations about this pledge; and, indeed, it reinforced the Thai leadership’s conviction that if any of their insur­gencies became a serious threat they could count upon the United States to come to their rescue.

American support against insurgency in Thailand is, of course, not a hypo­thetical question. Counter-insurgency training by American Special forces and CIA personnel is known to have been going on there for many years, and Thai counter-insurgency military operations have enlisted the assistance of U.S.
military advisers in the field as well as in Bangkok. It is difficult to check out rumors that American military personnel have in recent years been directly involved in military operations against insurgents in Thailand; but we do know that the U.S. 606th Air Commando Squadron was intimately involved in Bangkok's efforts to suppress insurgents in 1966-67. Apparently, Congress wasn't consulted about this involvement and there would seem little reason to assume that it would be if the present administration arranged for a similar operation.

Since 1970 an arrangement has existed whereby several thousand Chinese Kuomintang troops police substantial hill and mountain areas of northern Thailand. Whether some Thai are correct in their understanding that the U.S. has backed and funded the arrangement, it would appear that Congress has not been sufficiently concerned to ask the administration pertinent questions about this matter. But whoever pays for these mercenaries, their military role in Thailand is something of a measure of the extent of the insurgency in this area and of the Thai military's inability to handle the problem on its own. In addition, if Bangkok is willing to turn to foreign mercenaries to help contain insurgents it is not prepared to handle on its own, surely it is logical to ask at what point it is likely to assert the right its leaders have assumed is guaranteed by the Rusk-Thanat amendment to SEATO and call on direct U.S. military support.

There is reason to hope that with Thailand's king and students recently securing a considerable degree of control over Thai government policy the likelihood of requests for American military support against insurgents is now less than it was six months ago when Generals Prapas and Thanom were politically dominant. But surely it would not be responsible to base our policy on the assumption that the present political balance in Thailand will necessarily continue and that the Thai army is not capable of reasserting the dominant position it held for so long.

And what of our own military? They have a considerable vested interest in the huge complex of U.S. bases and we have built up in Thailand—in financial terms alone around a billion dollars. There are still reportedly more than 30,000 American military personnel on these bases and elsewhere in Thailand. One cannot be sure what the reaction of the Pentagon might be to an effort by Bangkok to have these bases and U.S. military personnel removed from Thailand. It would, however, seem plausible to assume that if it would press for an American military response if Thai insurgents should seriously threaten any of these bases or American soldiers stationed elsewhere in Thailand.

Although during the last few years the several insurgent groups in Thailand have increased in power and the extent of territory they control, as yet they have not seriously threatened American bases and personnel or seized control of areas of vital importance to the Bangkok government. But what should we expect if either or both of these situations arose? On the basis of his hazardous record what should we expect President Nixon to do? Would be assert that we have a clear-cut case of outside aggression and invoke the SEATO pact as justification for American intervention—at first presumably with the less controversial dimension of additional military advisers and special forces along with tactical air power? Or could he simply repair to that formula that served him so well during the last years of United States military intervention in Vietnam—his duty to protect American military personnel abroad? Or to strengthen his case in the face of probable congressional opposition would he do both?

The Philippines

In the Philippines, too, the continuing existence of SEATO increases the possibility of the U.S. being drawn into military intervention against insurgents. The same distortion of the SEATO treaty that permitted it to be used as authority for a presidentially-initiated military intervention against insurgents in Vietnam could be applied in the Philippines.

While SEATO constitutes the sole basis for the American defense commitment to Thailand, in the Philippines this backing comes not only through SEATO but also through the precedent bilateral, Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1951. Through a series of executive actions, never submitted to the Senate for approval, this 1951 treaty has been re-interpreted in a way that has committed
the U.S. more heavily and with less flexibility than originally envisaged. In their combination, this Mutual Defense Treaty and U.S. obligations under SEATO, especially when perceived in the context of the islands' major U.S. air and fleet bases, add up to a formidable American defense commitment.

Neither in the original 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty nor in any of the subsequent elucidations is it stipulated that an attack to which the U.S. would respond must come from outside of the Philippines. And there is nothing in the Treaty itself or in these stronger supplementary statements that would not conform to and dovetail with that same special interpretation of the American SEATO commitment that has been applied in Vietnam and made available for Thailand. With respect to these American treaty commitments the question of deciding what constituted an "armed attack" on or against the Philippines would be up to the President of the United States. It would be he who would make the determination as to whether an insurgency directed against the government in Manila would qualify as the sort of "armed attack" that, in conformity with the authority provided in the two treaties, could legitimate American military intervention in support of that government.

The existence of major and geographically extensive American naval and air bases in the Philippines understandably increases the possibility of American military involvement there. The extensive vested interest of the U.S. military in these bases and in maintaining an unimpeded access to them leaves the possibility of armed U.S. intervention to protect them something of a hostage to the course of insurgent activity. The proximity of the largest American base, Clark Field, (180,000 acres in area) to territory frequently penetrated by insurgents makes this proposition something more than academic.

Philippine rebels might be wise enough to avoid attacking these bases lest the U.S. respond militarily in conformity with Articles IV and V of the Mutual Defense Treaty. However, there would be nothing to prevent a beleaguered government in Manila from itself engineering incidents in and around these bases and representing them as rebel attacks. But in any case, in view of the fact that most of the insurgents currently operating on Luzon are self-designated Communists, the door is open to President Nixon to respond to an appeal for help against them via the same SEATO route President Johnson blazed for Vietnam.

In view of the heightened social tensions attending President Marcos' recent seizure of dictatorial powers and the ensuing increase in the size of both the Communist-led insurgents Luzon and the Visayas and those led by Muslim rebels in the south, it would be unrealistic to dismiss the possibility that Marcos might call for U.S. counter-insurgency support well beyond what the Nixon Administration has already provided him—ultimately escalating to direct U.S.

8In mid-1964 Secretary Dulles pledged that: "An attack on the Philippines could not but be also an attack upon the military forces of the United States... any armed attack against the Philippines would involve an attack against United States forces stationed there and against the United States and would be instantly repelled." A joint communiqué of June 20, 1958 by President Eisenhower and President Arroyo stated that "any armed attack against the Philippines would involve an attack against United States forces stationed there and against the United States and would instantly be repelled." The following year the Bohlen-Serrano Agreement strengthened and spelled out the Eisenhower pledge, adding: "Under our Mutual Defense Treaty and related actions, there have resulted air and naval dispositions in the Philippines, such that an armed attack on the Philippines could not but be also an attack upon the military forces of the United States. As between our nations, it is no legal fiction to say that an attack on one is an attack on both. It is a reality that an attack on the Philippines is an attack also on the United States." Declarations signed in 1966 by President Johnson and President Marcos and by Secretary of State Rusk and Foreign Secretary Ramos reconfirmed these previous declarations, and there has been no indication that the Nixon Administration supports them less fully.

9The first paragraph of Article IV of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty states: "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes." Article V states: "For the purpose of Article IV, an armed attack on either of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific, or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.

10The New York Times of January 12, 1974 reported that during the year following Marcos' imposition of martial-law many students have gone underground, increasing the number of armed communist insurgents by more than a third.
military intervention. On the face of it, one might regard Marcos' insistence on referring to the anti-Communist Muslim rebels in Sulu and Mindanao as "Maoists" as a clumsy effort to bracket them with pro-Communist insurgents in Luzon and some of the other islands. But his dogmatic insistence on adhering to this terminology may also bespeak his appreciation of the fact that the United States has from the outset made clear that under its SEATO commitment American military power will be available only against Communist forces.

SEATO today no longer constitutes the means for containment of China that the Senate originally envisaged. Actually, of course, the treaty has never been invoked for that purpose; for a supposedly belligerent China failed to act in its expected part, keeping its armies back behind its southern frontier rather than directing them into Southeast Asia. Apparently, the present Administration now acknowledges this, and in moving closer to China recognizes that Peking's own interests are not compatible with such adventures.

But even with the rationale of China's containment removed, the Nixon Administration still clings to SEATO—no longer for the reasons for which it was originally intended, but rather for purposes that were never countenanced by the Senate when it consented to that treaty. Indeed, the American commitment under SEATO has been re-shaped into an instrument directly at variance with what the Senate originally intended, emerging as a means for presidential military initiatives unfettered by effective Congressional constraints. And as a weapon available to the President for military intervention in Southeast Asia, its cutting edge now faces not towards China, but rather towards those rebels and potential rebels that local American-backed regimes are unable to suppress on their own. It is a dangerous weapon, and it ill-bodes a responsible Senate to leave it in his hands.

Continuing American adherence to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty leaves the gate open for the President to launch military interventions in Thailand and the Philippines as well as in Indochina. If Congress is serious about reasserting its responsibilities in the field of foreign relations it should take preemptive action to deny him scope for such initiatives by terminating U.S. participation in SEATO as promptly as possible.

NOTE ON CAMBODIA'S RELATIONSHIP TO SEATO

The reported statement by Lon Nol's government at the end of March 1970 that it had "never contemplated joining SEATO" and that "Cambodia's attitude remains unchanged and its policy remains one of strict neutrality without participation in any military pact" does not affect the protection promised to Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam on request under the protocol of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. Though as with these other two "protocol states" Cambodia is not required to "join SEATO" in order to have access to its protection, unlike them it has not been barred by the terms of the 1954 Geneva Agreements from becoming an actual member of SEATO. At Geneva Cambodia was successful in retaining a degree of diplomatic freedom not permitted Laos and the Saigon regime, including the right to enter into military alliances in conformity with principles of the United Nations Charter and the right to permit establishment of foreign bases which its government regarded as essential to the country's security. But the possibility of Phnom Penh's petitioning for actual membership in SEATO is a matter that is not really pertinent to the question of whether or not SEATO's protection is available to Cambodia. That country does not have to join SEATO to request its help. As with South Vietnam and Laos.

6 Appended to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty is the "Understanding of the United States of America," which stipulates that U.S. actions under paragraph 1 of Article IV in response to aggression and armed attack can apply only to cases of "Communist aggression."

7 During the course of the 1954 Geneva discussions Anthony Eden and Mendes-France were reported to have assured Chou En-lai that if an armistice could be reached that neutralised Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, these states could not join the proposed SEATO pact. However, at the eleventh hour the Cambodian delegation balked and refused to support the agreements unless their country was exempted from limitations on its freedom to enter into security arrangements with other countries, such as those imposed on Laos and Vietnam. With the conference's deliberations almost concluded, Molotov (who alternated with Eden as chairman) reluctantly agreed to accept this different status for Cambodia in order not to jeopardize successful resolution of what were regarded as more important points.
even though Cambodia is not a signatory of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, it is covered by the protective mantle of that pact through the terms of its protocol. A particular government can if it wishes serve notice that it repudiates this protection— as Sihanouk did. But there is, of course, nothing to keep a successor government, recognized by members of SEATO, from disavowing or reversing that action.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Dr. Kahin. Dr. Gordon?

STATEMENT OF DR. BERNARD K. GORDON, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dr. Gordon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you in particular for having me here because it was through your early student-exchange resolution that I became so familiar—you started me off. I went to New Zealand and Australia many years before I went to Southeast Asia and it was with the Fulbright support that I did that.

I would like to ask that the statement I prepared for this hearing be inserted in your record.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, it will be inserted.

ORIgINAL INTENT OF SEATO

Dr. Gordon. I think it is important to note at the outset that almost from the beginning SEATO was to some large extent misunderstood. I don't think that it ever was intended to be anything like a formal military alliance. I think instead, in going over the record of the beginning of it, it was only intended to help dispel some of the dismay that Secretary Dulles and others felt in 1954 in wake of the Geneva settlements. He only intended, with a good deal of rhetoric, to lay a basis for some statement to the peoples in the area that the United States, whatever France did, was not about altogether to leave. And to the degree that its origins sounded like NATO, and that it sounded somewhat like a genuine military alliance, has sometimes led to criticisms of SEATO for not having done things that a military alliance might do. But that is by the by now and people don't really expect SEATO to be much more than just a formal organization in Bangkok.

REASONS FOR REVIEWING, PROBABLY DISBANDING, SEATO

It seems to me that the committee is to be congratulated for reviewing it at this time, nevertheless. We are now, of course, in the 20th year. There is very little indication that the administration is preparing to undertake a serious review itself, although the fact that Secretary Kissinger did not attend the SEATO Council meeting in as close a place as New York I think gives us an indication of what he himself thinks about the body.

There are many good reasons for reviewing the instrument and probably for disbanding it, and I think some of those ought to be quickly just identified.

Among the most important, it seems to me, is that the environment, the security environment in the area, in fact, is considerably more
satisfying and more stable than it was in 1954, but I want to be very careful. I don't want to indicate that I want to go overboard in expressing there is a general coloration of calm and stability throughout the region, but considering what the projections might have been in 1954 the environment is not at all as it might have been expected to be.

Another reason for disbanding the treaty altogether is its evident inconsistency with the Guam or Nixon doctrine of 1969. That whole instrument's thrust was to pull back from the role that you, Mr. Chairman, have often referred to as the United States as a global policeman. SEATO seems to employ a policeman's role in a large part of the area. The inconsistency with overall American statements is evident.

A third reason for considering disbanding altogether the treaty is the familiar notion that the Pact, and all pacts tend to be provocative to adversaries and, particularly, to a state with whom we now no longer wish to have an extreme adversary relationship, and I mean, of course, China.

Fourth of the five reasons I would see as relevant is that, of course, SEATO has been, as a military alliance, essentially ineffective. It has never done any of the things that maybe its hoped-for optimists may have expected from the outset.

Fifth, it seems to me among the most important is that the treaty as it is now is a source of division among members of the alliance. I do not agree at all with Assistant Secretary Ingersoll's assessment of the Australian or the New Zealand view; nor do I agree with him that no other critics have come out from among the members of the organization. Secretary Romulo of the Philippines as long ago as 1972 called for a very severe revision, and undertook to indicate perhaps the whole thing might be disbanded. But certainly Prime Minister Whitlam in Australia has gone very far to indicate that he felt SEATO had outlived its usefulness, and that attitude in New Zealand and Australia we should understand, because from the beginning of SEATO the two ANZUS powers have always felt their major security reliance was in the ANZUS Treaty. What was simply a bit of dressing on the cake, by virtue of SEATO, was never of significance, major significance to them.

To the extent now that SEATO forms a divisive element in our own relationships with as longstanding an American friend and close supporter as Australia, I think that in itself gives rise to reviewing and reconsidering the whole treaty instrument.

It seems to me that these are appealing, but not necessarily compelling reasons, however, for terminating the SEATO agreement altogether.

**BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP OF UNITED STATES WITH THAILAND**

The major reason why I find myself in some degree of agreement with Assistant Secretary Ingersoll and others who might speak to this point about not disbanding and why I would be very cautious in endorsing a wholesale overthrow or disbanding of the treaty, pertains to a factor that was just addressed by Professor Kahin, and that is the relationship which the United States has with Thailand.
As Mr. Kahin has indicated, Thailand has a bilateral relationship with the United States only by virtue of SEATO. The Australians, New Zealanders, the Filipinos have separate relationships, bilateral mutual security arrangements; the Thai have none. The Rusk-Thanath agreement of 1962 is the only relatively assured relationship in defense that the Thai have.

Now, it might be argued that that is not terribly important. It is not, however, the view to which I come by looking at primarily the international politics of East Asia as a whole. The judgment to which I come is that Thailand represents in many respects a key state in Southeast Asia and in many significant respects a key state in East Asia. Whether from the perspective of Indonesia, Australia, or Japan or Malaysia or Singapore, Thailand is seen as something of a bellwether state in Southeast Asia. I want to emphasize that this view is held in Japan, among civilian staffs and among military leaders in Japan; it is widely held in Australia, and it is in my view without question doctrine in Indonesia as well; that is, to perceive and identify Thailand as a state the continued independence of which relates impressively to the continued security and independence of mainland Southeast Asia and, in important respects, to insular Southeast Asia as well.

The reasons for this are very difficult to address. They are in part subjective, they are in part empirical but what they essentially come down to say is that from the viewpoint of leaders, and I think, informed individuals throughout the region, and I would try to project the view of the Indonesians on this, for example, the notion is essentially that if Thailand's continued independence cannot be assured then the continued security and independence of Malaysia will not be secure.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you say what you mean by independence? Do you mean the preservation of the present Government?

Dr. GORDON. No, not the preservation of the present regime, because I think you have seen a relatively easy transition of a quite significant nature in Thailand. I would mean instead an independent Thai Government that is not in major terms subject to the authority of either China or more primarily to some extent, Hanoi. It is increasingly the view, in my judgment, that the longstanding rivalry which existed in the 18th century, in the 19th century between the Vietnamese and the Thai and which was interrupted by the arrival of the West, by the arrival of the French and British, that that rivalry may indeed be resurrected. I cannot with any degree of certainty say whether that is a fact, whether it is a goal of hegemony in Southeast Asia on the part of the government in Hanoi. I do think, however, that that apprehension, that fear, is one that is held in a large degree in Thailand, it is, I think, held to a considerable degree among leaders in Indonesia as well.

The concern that I think exists is one that would fear the disappearance of an independent Thai Government of the sort that we have become familiar with over the past 20 to 25 years, not necessarily tied intimately to the West but one that is not necessarily tied to any major
bloc. That, I think, is what is desired in much of Southeast Asia and in East Asia as a whole.

Consequently, and to the extent that Thailand does play a role of some special importance, the view that I come down to is one that I think has already been identified by Senator Aiken, and which says essentially that SEATO may go by the board but it is probably best looked at, if it is to go by the board, if there is some degree of substitution for it.

**REINFORCEMENT OF THAI RELATIONSHIP**

It seems to me that what is called for is a clear indication on the part of the United States that it will seek to reinforce somehow, and this may not be possible any longer within the framework of the SEATO treaty, to reinforce somehow the particular bilateral relationship that the United States has with Thailand. I would not under any circumstances endorse a bilateral relationship, or a reinforcement of a bilateral relationship, with the Philippines, largely for the reasons that Professor Kahin has already identified. I think the dangers, the risks of even further American involvement, because the present reports do in fact indicate that special forces, American special forces, are involved in the Philippines. I do think, as he does, that President Marcos has not by accident identified the difficulties in the southern Philippines as Maoist. I don't think that is an accident.

My own view is that if all that rested on an abrogation of SEATO were the disappearance of the Philippine relationship I would not for a moment say that that shouldn't be done: But it is largely the connection with the Thai relationship that I think we ought to be quite cautious and recognize that there are likely to be changes that are not in our interests were SEATO to be abrogated and if there were not to be instituted for it a substitute relationship, particularly and specifically with regard to Thailand.

I have closed my formal remarks by quoting from the title of one Robert E. Ruark's books, and I would do that again here: Before we scrap something old I think we ought to be sure we haven't done something without substituting something new of value in its place where it is required, and I think a Thai relationship is required. Thank you.

[Dr. Gordon's prepared statement follows:]

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. BERNARD K. GORDON, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Foreign Relations Committee, my name is Bernard K. Gordon, and I am a Professor of Political Science and Chairman of the Department at the University of New Hampshire. I have also taught at other Universities, including George Washington, Vanderbilt, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the University of Singapore. Two of the books that I have written deal specifically with Southeast Asia: Toward Disengagement in Asia; A Strategy for American Foreign Policy, and Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.

I want first to thank you and Senator Church in particular for inviting me to participate in your study of SEATO. We are now in the twentieth year of experience with the Treaty, and even if there had not been the major changes in East Asia that have occurred during the past several years in the region, it would be altogether appropriate for the United States to undertake a review at this time. The Senate and this Committee have taken the initiative for that purpose and are to be congratulated for the approach taken in Senate Resolution 174. For
Senate Resolution 174 does not prejudge the policy or postures that should be taken towards SEATO at this time; instead Resolution 174 calls for a review that:

"shall include reexamination of the basic foreign policy considerations which originally led the United States to join the SEATO organization and reassessment of those considerations in the light of subsequent developments relating to that Organization and the foreign policy interests of the United States."

I. SEATO BACKGROUND

In my judgment this approach—particularly the requirement that we remind ourselves of the factors that led to SEATO in the first place—is very sound. For SEATO has been a much misunderstood element of U.S. policy, and many of the criticisms that have been directed at the Organization over the years stem from expectations that probably should never have been placed upon it. I refer in particular to the notion that SEATO was somehow to be like NATO, i.e., a full-fledged collective defense arrangement, with a genuine capability to engage in assuring the security of the region. I do not think this was ever the case.

Instead I believe that to understand SEATO we need to remind ourselves of the context in which it was established in 1954. That "context" was one of considerable dismay about the prospects for stability and security in the Southeast Asia region, for SEATO was formed immediately in the wake of the French defeat at Dien Bienphu and only weeks after the Geneva settlements of 1954. The initiative for the establishment of SEATO came from Secretary of State Dulles, and it is my judgment that he intended with its establishment to do little more than to indicate to all parties and states that despite the French defeat, not all Western states and interests would vacate the region. His intent, I believe, was largely symbolic—more rhetoric than reality, if you like. In brief, Dulles' effort should be seen as one designed to "buy time" for the states in the area—time in which, hopefully, they would better develop their own defense capabilities and promote their prospects for internal development and political stability.

In 1969, as part of a larger examination of present and future security prospects in Southeast Asia, I undertook a specific examination of SEATO's history and contemporary relevance. I believe those findings to be directly applicable to the purposes of Senate Resolution 174, and for that reason I will repeat here what I wrote at this time, drawing upon pp. 188-189 of my book, "Towards Disengagement in Asia."

A. SEATO: DULLES' EFFORT TO BUY TIME

There is a widespread conviction that the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization demonstrates how difficult it is, if it is possible at all, to apply the concept of defense cooperation in Southeast Asia. To those observers who already doubt that there are any genuine prospects for security cooperation among Asian nations, the SEATO experience is regularly cited as a ready-made "proof" of their case. For SEATO, as its critics always note, has had only partial Asian membership. It has never developed a defense potential analogous to NATO, and its two Southeast Asian members, Thailand and the Philippines, appear to rely far more heavily on their bilateral ties with the United States than on any SEATO guarantees.

Yet much of the criticism of SEATO, which after all at least sounds like NATO, rests on the assumption that it was genuinely expected to apply familiar principles of collective security to Southeast Asia. It was not, and to assume that SEATO can be compared usefully to NATO seems to misjudge not only the initial purposes of the Manila Pact, but also the underlying purposes of U.S. security policy in East Asia, of which SEATO was just one reflection in 1954.

It has to be recalled that SEATO was created immediately in the wake of the Geneva settlements, which Secretary of State Dulles regarded as the dismal reflection of a very distressing Asian environment, and with which he refused formally to associate the United States. It was in that context that he hastened to Manila not to create an Asian equivalent of NATO, but to underscore a point. The point was simply that the United States, despite the French defeat and withdrawal, intended to play a continuing and potentially larger role in the defense and security of Southeast Asia.
The method Dulles chose to make this point was the creation of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, but he was never under any illusion that Asian conditions allowed for collective security and defense burden-sharing arrangements along the lines set out in Europe. Indeed, both he and his predecessors had resisted the earlier urging of some Asian and Pacific nations for just such a multilateral security pact. Australia had wanted one, as had the Philippines, as early as 1949. But American policy had been instead to undertake bilateral guarantees on a quite selective basis—satisfying Australia and New Zealand with the ANZUS Pact, and others (like the Philippines) with bilateral commitments.

At Geneva, however, Dulles stated that if the armistice arrangements reached by the French were unsatisfactory, if they “provide a road to a Communist takeover and further aggression . . . then the need will be even more urgent to create the conditions for united action . . .” Dulles clearly regarded the Geneva arrangements as less than satisfactory, and consequently he sought at Manila to restore some of the confidence which he felt had been destroyed in Geneva. At Manila, however, he resisted efforts to establish a NATO-like structure:

At the Manila Conference in 1954 the United States was not in favor of the establishment of a unified military command and a standing force, it did not want an Asian NATO with joint headquarters, joint military forces, and a common strategy. . . . Washington was opposed to earmarking American forces under the proposed Manila Pact for specific areas in the Far East; such a step was considered neither necessary, practical, nor desirable.

The reason that Dulles adopted this posture, so different from the one in Europe, was precisely his recognition of the difference in circumstances between the two regions. American interests in Europe and East Asia, as we have stressed repeatedly here, have not been fundamentally different—in both regions the United States has sought to prevent any one-nation dominance—but as Dulles said about Southeast Asia (which could never be said about Europe): “We have a material and industrial strength which they lack and which is an essential ingredient of security.”

These sentiments should make clear the U.S. purpose in creating SEATO: to stake a claim, as it were, to the defense and security of the region, and to put others on notice that the U.S. would not shrink from providing the major military force necessary to prevent dominance in Southeast Asia. It was decidedly not Dulles’ purpose to bind Southeast Asian nations into an orthodox collective security arrangement to which they could not usefully contribute. It was for this reason, for example, that he even resisted calling the Manila Pact by the name that has since been given to it. “He made an effort to have it nicknamed MANPAC, for Manila Pact, by way of emphasizing that it differed from NATO, but SEATO stuck.”

Despite the SEATO label, however, the differences between it and NATO need to be remembered. In Europe, at the time NATO was formed, the Red Army and Soviet policies represented a more massive and more immediate level of potential threat to the security of the Western European states than was the threat in Southeast Asia when SEATO was formed. These circumstances of the European environment and the purposes envisaged for NATO both called for and allowed for the permanent stationing of sizeable American and allied military forces. That was an appropriate response in that environment because for some years a conventional Soviet military move was seen as one of the more likely threats to European security. In East Asia, on the other hand, a similar conventional military threat was not among the likely threats at the time SEATO was formed, nor was a permanent and collective military deployment

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*These treaties took effect on August 80 (with the Philippines), and on September 1 (with Australia and New Zealand), 1951.


||John R. Beal, John Foster Dulles (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc, 1957). see also Fifield's comment that “Dulles, in fact, tried to avoid in the early stages of the pact using the word ‘SEATO’ lest an organization like NATO be implied” (Fifield, op. cit., p. 126).

I have also quoted this statement of Dulles’s in 1954 views with future Department officials responsible for compiling the Dulles papers, and with Professor Fifield in a conversation of October 6, 1967.
an appropriate response. The most that seemed feasible and necessary was almost precisely what Dulles set out to do: to convey the message that the U.S. remained committed to the security of the region, and to do this in a way that would bolster the confidence of small Asian nations.

Compared to NATO, these were quite limited purposes, and because of these limited goals the United States never tried to bolster SEATO with the sort of infrastructure and joint military forces that characterized its European alliance—and Washington's posture toward that alliance. It seems clear from that evidence (or rather the lack of any evidence suggesting that the United States pressed for significantly intensified efforts in SEATO), that the Manila Pact was not expected nor intended to become a conventional alliance system. The United States expected instead that should a high-level threat develop (from China, no doubt), the major defense and deterrent role in Asia and the Pacific would continue to be a function of American air and naval forces.

At the low end of the threat spectrum, that is, in terms of subversion and insurgency, the U.S. hoped that its essentially bilateral military assistance programs would enable each potentially threatened state to manage on its own resources. Certainly few, if any, efforts were made to develop joint programs for collective defense on the ground, and in the few cases where outside troop assistance was implemented—as in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam—the U.S. deployed American ground units on the basis of bilateral agreements. The SEATO framework was almost incidental to those decisions, although within the American domestic context it may have been useful to point to the treaty as an added justification for these actions.

B. THE NONAPPLICABILITY OF SEATO IN THE FUTURE

In sum, SEATO did not represent an American aim to duplicate patterns that had been applied to Europe, and in all important respects it has simply not been comparable to NATO. SEATO is better understood as an effort in image-building, and, at most, as an annex to and a restatement of the many bilateral arrangements that the U.S. has concluded in East Asia. In that context SEATO may have played an important and general deterrent role since 1954—not because it was a formidable collective defense agreement, but because it symbolized a high-level American military commitment in Southeast Asia. Any deterrent effect during the years of SEATO's existence must be traced to a Chinese (and perhaps Soviet) perception of American will, in which SEATO per se can have had only marginal meaning.

That condition—that deterrence against major conventional and certainly nuclear aggression in Asia will continue to be largely an American function—is likely to remain essentially unchanged for the foreseeable future. That reality is increasingly understood in East Asia, and this implicit American defense umbrella—instead of detracting from indigenous interest in regional cooperation—appears to enhance those trends toward defense cooperation to which we pointed in the previous chapter. This should be a welcome development for American foreign policy, especially in light of the U.S. objective of encouraging multipolarity in East Asia.

12 It is worth noting, too, that even in the heyday of Secretary Dulles' alleged propensity for collecting allies and building "pacts" (some have referred to this as his "pactomania"), the United States did not seek to enlarge the formal membership of SEATO. Cambodia, for example, is reported in the immediate and depressing aftermath of the 1954 Geneva Settlements to have sought more specific defense guarantees from the United States. Prince (then Kiang) Sihanouk, according to some sources, even expressed his willingness to join a "Western security system for Southeast Asia" if an American guarantee went with it (Virginia Thompson and Richard Adlolf, Minority Problems in Southeast Asia [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961], p. 189). Michael Leifer, a very close student of Cambodian affairs, similarly reports that "Cambodia was the most anxious of the Indo-Chinese states to be militarily associated with the United States" (Michael Leifer, Cambodia and Neutrality [Canberra: Australian National University, 1962], p. 23). Much the same point is made in Roger M. Smith, Cambodia's Foreign Policy (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969). See the section "Cambodia Seeks an American Commitment," pp. 69-72.

Despite Cambodia's interest at that time, the United States was singularly unresponsive to efforts to extend its guarantees on the mainland beyond Thailand, and certainly was not seeking to enlarge the formal coverage of SEATO for the sake of its image. Aware that SEATO cannot usefully be compared with NATO—for an Asian security framework that does not include Japan, Taiwan, and Korea hardly expresses the full range of U.S. defense interests and guarantees to East Asia.
It needs to be stressed, however, that the type and style of any emergent patterns of Asian security cooperation are likely to be fairly unique, or at least quite different from "collective" defense efforts that have been tried elsewhere. This reflects the widespread negativism throughout Asia toward the concept of defense "pacts," and also reflects certain security conditions specific to Southeast Asia—the Asian subregion where interest in defense cooperation is strongest. Both factors suggest the "lines along which military cooperation is most likely to develop, for at least the following three boundaries, or parameters of discussion, can even now be identified.

First, it is clear that SEATO will provide no model for foreseeable Asian defense efforts, because SEATO was essentially a unilateral American guarantee with merely the color of multilateralism. Leaders in contemporary Southeast Asia reject that model; they seek instead to disassociate themselves as much as possible from too heavy dependence on the United States or any other great power.

Second, it can be safely presumed that future defense arrangements will in all likelihood grow out of presently discernible patterns of Southeast Asian regionalism. Asian leaders are extremely unlikely to embark on an ad hoc collective defense arrangement, or create a new organization specifically for defense purposes. Instead, there is increasing evidence that today's leaders realize that defense cooperation is the most difficult form of international collaboration, and they recognize as a result that much common experience and trust is required before this more difficult form of cooperation can be attempted.

This is, of course, precisely the opposite of the process that developed in SEATO, CENTO, or NATO. Each of those bodies, and SEATO in particular, has striven to find new "nonmilitary" tasks and functions to perform, as if by so doing it could polish a tarnished image. But that is a difficult (if not impossible) transformation to achieve, and leaders in Southeast Asia today appear to recognize that defense cooperation will be more soundly based if it grows from other forms of collaborative experiences. Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman has said as much in his recent calls for devoting much more intensive efforts to ASEAN. Mutual interests developed through "economic cooperation and... joint projects," he has begun to emphasize, will provide the ASEAN nations "with something they want to join together to defend." 13

Finally, it is reasonable to predict that regional security arrangements, because they will center on Southeast Asia, will be primarily concerned with defense against low-level or insurgent threats. No responsible leader in Southeast Asia deceives himself into believing that the full range of defense functions can be met by the Southeast Asian nations themselves. Most of them recognize (reluctantly perhaps, but at the same time realistically) that the ultimate element of security against, for example, "nuclear blackmail" or large-scale aggression, can be provided only by the United States, and this is the sine qua non for their own efforts. Indeed, if they are to become increasingly willing to shoulder a greater share of local defense burdens, these leaders must at the same time be assured that the overall strategic umbrella provided by the United States will not be withdrawn.

These characteristics suggest an ambivalence about the U.S. security role in Asia that must be regarded as one of the region's most important political features. There is a strong desire to loosen dependence on the United States, but this is tempered by the belief of many that Washington should continue to play some sort of protective role. In Southeast Asia especially, much of the contemporary interest in regionalism grows directly from the first part of this attitude: from an intense concern to reduce dependence on the West, particularly on the United States. This conviction is no doubt most strong in Thailand, and only slightly less so in Indonesia, where the interest in regionalism also derives from Djakarta's concern to play a role of some leadership. And even among those nations which do not yet give priority to regionalism (like Burma and Cambodia), there is, nonetheless, agreement on the need to reduce dependence on

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13 Bangkok Post, March 8, 1966. It was for this reason that the Thai Foreign Minister (whose devotion to regional cooperation cannot be questioned) called for "more planning, more work and more sacrifices" to make ASEAN a "going concern" if it is indeed to lead to a regional defense arrangement.
the West. All that is, would subscribe to the three-fold thesis in the 1967 ASEAN Declaration that:

“(1) The countries of Southeast Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the . . . stability of the region
“(2) . . . that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference . . . [and]
“(3) that all foreign bases are temporary . . .”

It is probably fair to say that disdain for SEATO has increased in the few years since those pages were written. As we are all aware, France and Pakistan have withdrawn from the body, and since 1972 the Philippines as well has indicated strong reservations. Even more recently, the Australian government, with New Zealand largely echoing the same sentiments, has also strongly suggested that it might be best to disband the arrangement altogether. And of course the growing relaxation of tensions between the United States and China has caused all of us to question the appropriateness of a Treaty whose major announced purpose was to provide for security against externally-sponsored Communist aggressions.

These are of course some of the considerations which no doubt led to the adoption of Senate Resolution 174. For as SEATO’s membership narrows, and as its remaining members become increasingly critical, the question has to arise whether it is in the continuing best interests of the United States to appear as its main supporter. By the same token, it is probably also necessary to face head-on the question of whether the U.S. may wish to take steps to bring SEATO to an end altogether.

II. FACTORS FAVORING DISABANDMENT

There are good reasons to consider this course. Among the most important is that the overall environment of deep dismay which characterized the region in 1954 has improved. I have to be very cautious here, because it would be useless to pretend that Southeast Asia is today a region of calm, of assured security, or of universal and widespread support for the governments in power. Yet there have been improvements, to the point where projections that might have been made in 1954—for continued deterioration and overthrow of governments by anti-Western forces—have not been borne out.

I have in mind Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. When we consider what might have been in those nations, and consider as well that there is still in place in South Vietnam a government that was not deposed by Hanoi, I think it reasonable to conclude that much of the twenty-year effort by the U.S. has helped to buy the time that Secretary Dulles had in mind in 1954. In this context, it is a respectable position for Americans to argue that “we have done enough” that SEATO may have contributed somewhat to our willingness to become and stay involved in the region for so long, and that now is a good time to conclude that what SEATO symbolized is no longer needed.

Another factor that argues for disbanding SEATO derives from the overall thrust of the Guem or Nixon Doctrine. Certainly the historic of the Kissinger-Nixon foreign policy is that the United States will seek to reduce its overall commitments, and also the circumstances under which we will be willing to play the role (as Senator Fulbright has often termed it) of the world’s “policeman.” SEATO, it has to be conceded, at least implies a continued willingness by the U.S. to bear a large security burden in Southeast Asia. To the extent therefore that the overall thrust of the Nixon Doctrine is to disengage, no better place to begin than in Southeast Asia, and this can be made most evident by bringing an end to the U.S. role in SEATO.

It can also be argued that SEATO has been provocative—and in a period in which we seek to convince China that we will adhere to the mutual respect principles of the Shanghai communique, it hardly can be in our interests to shore up a collective defense effort that always had China in mind as the major adversary. Instead, and if we hope also to encourage China to take a relaxed view of Southeast Asian developments, is it not best to disband this vestige of what Hans Morgenthau once called our “pactomania”? SEATO, is, after all, a product of the period of bi-polar blocs and alliances that characterized the cold war; in the context of a Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy that promotes “multipolarity,” SEATO seems an anachronism.
Two remaining criticisms need to be mentioned. One is that SEATO, in an operational military sense, never did anything. As a military alliance, SEATO was and is ineffective, if measured as NATO is measured. This is nowhere doubted indeed the present SEATO Secretary-General has himself recommended that major cutbacks be achieved in the military staffing of SEATO. He recommends that its activities increasingly be devoted to economic and social programmes, and to support for the internal security efforts of Thailand and the Philippines.

The final consideration that argues for the dissolution of SEATO is that the Treaty is now itself a cause of division and disagreement among some of our oldest and closest associates of the past 25 years. The fact that the Australian government would probably like to be rid of SEATO is no light matter. In 1972, when Canberra strongly indicated its desire to review the entire SEATO structure, probably with a view to ultimate termination of the arrangement, it was the American Secretary of State (Mr. Rogers) who insisted that SEATO was too important to be tampered with. More recently, there were reports (New York Times, 22 January, 1973) that our government broadly hinted to the Australians that abrogation of SEATO might bring ANZUS into question—and that warning goes to the heart of Australia's entire postwar foreign policy. Thus for the time being, the Australians seem not to be pressing hard for an end to SEATO, but it is true nevertheless that there would be no significant Australian complaints (nor from New Zealand either) if the United States now took the lead in bringing an end to the Treaty.

III. SHOULD SEATO BE TERMINATED?

All of these considerations that argue for an end to SEATO are appealing, but they are not necessarily compelling. For there is one element associated with SEATO which is of major continuing importance, and which would disappear were SEATO also to disappear: the American security relationship with Thailand. For unlike each of the other Asian-Pacific members of the Treaty Organization, only Thailand has no other security connection with the United States. Australia and New Zealand have ANZUS, and the Philippines has a separate bilateral security Treaty. Thailand, on the other hand, has a bilateral security relationship directly with the United States only as a result of the Rusk-Thanat "agreement" or "understanding" of 1962, and that arrangement is altogether tied to SEATO. The Rusk Thanat agreement essentially states that the United States will consider undertaking direct support of Thai security, in the context of SEATO, even if there is an absence of unanimity among the other members.

For the Thai this has been very important, and I see very little persuasive evidence that Thailand, including the leaders of the government that came to power in October, 1973, wish to be rid of the American security guarantee. Instead, and almost simultaneously with Marshall Dawee's recent trip to Peking the Thai Foreign Minister has requested an increase in American economic assistance. The Thais have by no means called for an end to the Treaty, although like everyone else they have begun to wonder about it, and to question very seriously the extent to which the United States any longer considers SEATO to be operational. Bangkok newspapers commented pointedly, for example, to Secretary Kissinger's absence from the recent SEATO Council meeting—despite the fact that it was held in New York. No doubt this was taken as a signal that he, at least, does not take SEATO too seriously.

These "signals", as well as the possibility that the U.S. might itself call for an end to SEATO, will necessarily have an effect on Thai foreign policy, and it is the role of Thailand in overall Southeast Asian security matters to which I want now to direct our attention. For I think the point to be made that an end to SEATO would seriously call into question the future assured security prospects of Thailand—and that, in turn, can have a greater impact on the overall security prospects of Southeast Asia than events taking place in any other state in Southeast Asia.

I say this because all available evidence, whether from the viewpoint of Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, or Australia points to the simple proposition that Thailand is regarded as the crucial element in the future security of at least mainland Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew in Singapore has repeatedly made this point, and it is a point that has been made to me, regularly,
by leaders as far removed as those in Tokyo and Canberra. All, that is, recognize that Thailand—with its 35 million people and its long-standing tradition of separate existence and independence—is something of a bellwether in Southeast Asia.

The Malays, for example, do not believe that they would be able to hold out against any political force that came to dominate the mainland, including Thailand. The Indonesians, who regard the security of Malaysia and Singapore as essential to their own, strongly make the same point. They regard Malaysian security as depending directly on the continued existence of a separate and distinct Thailand as a state freely cooperating with the Western world. Japanese attitudes at leadership levels are identical: when asked what is the most important element in Southeast Asian security they point without hesitation to Thailand, and the way it bears upon the entire Strait of Malacca region.

If SEATO were abrogated, and if thereby Thailand's continued security guarantee from the United States were also to end, all this would be called into question. It is for that reason that I want strongly to endorse the view that I believe has been put forward by Senator Aiken—for in your Committee Report dated 30 October, 1973, Senator Aiken "suggested that, as an alternative to SEATO, the United States might wish to consider working out separate understandings with the two remaining regional members of the pact, Thailand and the Philippines." I believe that insofar as Thailand is concerned, such a step is an essential requirement for the development of security in East Asia as a whole. And accordingly, I cannot endorse American steps to bring about an end to SEATO unless simultaneously steps are undertaken to establish firm bilateral security arrangements between the United States and Thailand.

I do not believe that any such step is required in connection with the Philippines. Aside from the fact that the United States and the Philippines are already tied together in a mutual defense treaty that predates SEATO, it is my judgment that it would be beneficial for the United States to avoid any further reinforcement of Filipino expectations about American guarantees. Indeed, I would go further and ask this Committee seriously to consider loosening the bilateral ties with Manila that we already have.

My reasons for stating this are several—and long predate the unfortunate turn of events that has accompanied President Marcos' imposition of martial law, and his recent excesses in the Southern Philippines with regard to the non-Christian Muslim population. Instead, my reasons have largely to do with the proposition that few in Southeast Asia, or East Asia for that matter, will believe overall security to be threatened or adversely affected no matter what takes place in the Philippines. Manila has for so long adopted the role of "odd man out," and has for so long persisted in adopting a non-responsible policy in Southeast Asia, that Philippine events can in no way be regarded as a bellwether for the region.

Moreover, and as President Marcos' repeated assertions that he faces a "Maoist" rebellion help demonstrate, there is a danger that even present U.S.-Philippine ties can lead to an American military involvement in matters of Philippine security, brought about by Manila's own maladministration and insensitivity. This should at all costs be avoided, and I am distressed and dismayed by press reports that American Special Forces are even now operating in support of Philippines' armed forces in Mindanao and the Southern Philippines. Frankly, if the Philippines were the only U.S.-Southeast Asian defense relationship that might be sacrificed were SEATO to be terminated, I would be among those arguing strongly for the end of the Treaty Organization.

In the present circumstance, however, that is not the case, and the need to find some way by which to maintain an American defense guarantee to Thailand needs to be emphasized. If the continued existence of SEATO is the only method available, I would endorse the continued existence of the Treaty, but that hardly seems to be the most appropriate form. The weaknesses of SEATO cannot be wished away, and its weaknesses are so strong that the United States ought to avoid being placed in the position of defending or endorsing a wide-ranging and allegedly "collective security" treaty that in reality has application only to one nation: Thailand. For SEATO's original purposes can no longer be defended, and the Administration runs the risk of proclaiming to the American people a set of reasons for the continued existence of SEATO that are not true, and lacking truth, will not be persuasive. If, as is justified in my view, the genuine
requirement is for the United States to extend a defense guarantee to Thailand, let us tell the truth, create an appropriate relationship with Bangkok, and let SEATO come to an end.

I believe finally that such a step will be endorsed, although of course tacitly by Peking. Already it is evident that Peking has doubts, not very different from those entertained in Indonesia and other places, about the long-term aims of the government in Hanoi. If those aims include the eventual establishment of a Hanoi-dominated regime throughout mainland Southeast Asia, it is very likely that such aims are not endorsed by the leaders of China. This is especially true to the extent that Hanoi has associated itself with the aims of the Soviet Union in East and Southeast Asia. Accordingly and while I expect that China is not presently greatly bothered by the continued existence of SEATO, China would not wish to see take place in Southeast Asia any set of circumstances that might lead to an eventual enhancement of the role of the Soviet Union in that region.

I note, for example, that China’s leaders have ceased criticizing Thailand for its role in SEATO, and I expect that were SEATO to come to an end, and if that were accompanied by a specific bilateral connection between Bangkok and Washington, China would not complain. For in point of fact it is Hanoi about whom Thailand may have to be most concerned in the future, and steps to inhibit further expansion by Hanoi are consistent with China’s own view of the region. This is one reason why SEATO itself is not terribly criticized by China today, and it suggests as well that China would not be provoked by the creation of a specific, bilateral security link between the U.S. and Thailand.

In any event, the step to avoid is a wholesale throwing-out of SEATO, particularly if that means that nothing stands in its place so far as Thailand is concerned. If we are going to bring about an end to something old and outdated, it is imperative that we put in its place, as Robert Ruark once wrote, “something of value.”

Thank you.

EFFECT OF HANOI GOVERNMENT’S ASPIRATIONS IN INDOCHINA

The CHAIRMAN. I wish you would elaborate a little bit about the probabilities of Hanoi aspiring to control Thailand. I had not heard of this before. You say a rivalry between them—an ancient rivalry, I take it. Do you think Hanoi—

Dr. GORDON. Ancient but not necessarily pre-historic.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think Hanoi has designs about taking over Thailand? I didn’t know her appetite was that big. I thought South Vietnam was about all she could handle.

Dr. GORDON. With the qualification there I would not agree. It seems to me from the understanding that I have of the Hanoi Government’s aspirations and desires, it is to succeed to the role that France maintained in French Indochina; that ultimately a desirable outcome would be to have, if possible, Cambodia and Laos as well as South Vietnam, of course, within the tutelage or perhaps, if possible, the ultimate political control of the Hanoi Government.

I think what this represents to Thailand is a major apprehension because the Lao and the Cambodian borders are to Thailand the most sensitive of all. It was precisely in the period in which it seemed most certain that the United States would prevent that kind of development that the Thai Government began its most encouraging relationships with Indonesia, with Malaysia in the ASEAN framework. To the extent that the United States has begun to withdraw, has begun to indicate, whether rightly or wrongly, that it would perhaps not be involved in the support of Thailand, the Thai have reverted to a much earlier and perhaps more classic and traditional role that is to pay much more attention, in my judgment, to their traditional
concerns with the Cambodia and Laos borders. They have now begun to pay much less attention to what were, I think, helpful and encouraging signs of relationships with Indonesia, with Malaysia, and with Singapore in a regional framework. I think those developments were positive, were helpful in a long term way from American interest viewpoint.

I think they have been interfered with and impeded because of these increasing Thai apprehensions. I don’t want, however, to be inferred to say that it is my judgment that the Hanoi Government would like to succeed to the control of Thailand. I don’t mean that. I do mean that the rivalry of the two with regard to territories in former French Indochina is liable to be resuscitated, and I think that is what in part has taken place.

The CHAIRMAN. You mean they might fight over who controls Cambodia?

Dr. GORDON. Cambodia, Laos, yes.

U.S. INTEREST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The CHAIRMAN. Is whether one or the other controls it a vital American interest? How do you justify our maintaining the kind of establishment that we are doing to determine that particular fact, just taken as a hypothetical? How would our interests be affected if, by chance, Cambodia decided either voluntarily or involuntarily, it should be under Thailand versus Hanoi? I assume they don’t want to be under either one. I didn’t know Sihanouk and Cambodia would like to be under either one.

Dr. GORDON. No, Cambodia would not and, Senator, I have testified in the other body with regard to the awesome size of our appropriations to the Lon Nol government, and I was most distressed, with many others, when Prince Sihanouk was overthrown. I think that was an effective and viable government that was being maintained there under his leadership.

The relationship I draw is an indirect one and, I recognize a difficult one. It is essentially this: what I think was taking place in the mid and late 1960’s was a degree of increasing assurance about the long term security prospects in East Asia and, particularly, Southeast Asia on the part of the Governments of Malaya, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, about the long term prospects. As a consequence of that sense of encouragement and optimism, the governments in the region began to embark upon systems which, in the long past, in the early 1960’s, the United States had itself endorsed; that is movements toward regional cooperation. I think that those movements, those tendencies toward regional cooperation were, in fact, in the American interests.

To the extent that they would lead to a greater degree of ability on the part of those smaller governments to see to their own security, I think it was in the American interest to encourage cooperation, regional cohesion in Southeast Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. I wish you would elaborate. We have been engaged so long it seems to me there is an assumption we have a great interest in which particular group controls which. I am not clear that we do.
What is our interest and why is it so different that it justifies the enormous expenditures that we are presently expending over there, without further intervention? I find it is hard to justify when we look at the state of our budget and the deterioration of our economy. A lot of these policies were developed in the days of the dollar gap when we had so much money we didn’t know what to do with it, so we went to the Moon and we went everywhere.

I think our economic conditions require a close examination of what our interest is. Why does it make any difference really? None of these governments are in our image exactly and we are not going to get them in our image and I am not sure that it would be good for them anyway. I have great difficulty in deciding whether it is worth $2 or $5 billion for us to maintain this particular setup, and I wish you would explore it for my benefit. I would like to be convinced that there is some great important value to us in maintaining the status quo in Thailand or in Cambodia.

Dr. Gordon, I think our interest can be simply defined. It is not a new one, and that is in seeing that East Asia is without domination by any single state. I think that has been stated by this administration and by the last administration but I don’t think it depends upon official administration statements to define it. I think this has been a reasonable view for a long period.

**CHINA’S INTENTIONS**

The Chairman. Now you are shifting back to China, it is against our interests for China to take it all, is that what you are saying?

Dr. Gordon. From my point of view I understand our policy has sought—and I think it is a reasonable notion—to prevent any major power to successfully take power throughout the East Asia region, whether that was Japan earlier or China in a present environment, and I don’t see major likelihood now for China aspiring to that.

The Chairman. There is nothing to indicate it. It wasn’t at the time we entered, it was all an illusion of Secretary Rusk that we were protecting South Vietnam from China. China hasn’t done anything to indicate she wanted to take over. I mean it is a lot of nonsense, but because he stated it, people have now come to accept it. I don’t think it is true.

Do you see any signs China is moving to take over the political control of this area?

Dr. Gordon. Senator, I think that the Chinese have been up and down in their supportive efforts. It is noteworthy—

The Chairman. Supportive effort is another matter. We support a lot of people that nobody thinks we are going to take over, and I think in many cases without any justification. You could apply that to any place in the world and have us give treaty commitments, and so on, if you just assumed that it is possible anywhere. I suppose you could justify a treaty in Chad or Upper Niger because it is possible that China might want to influence them. I don’t think it is reasonable, and I don’t see anything really that indicates China is about to move against these countries.
If you come back to Hanoi, is it vitally important to us whether Hanoi should control Laos or whether it shouldn't? We have our preferences, but I am trying to reconcile our own demands at home and the terrible condition we have gotten ourselves in by intervening all over the world. I am trying to see if there is any justification for continuing this great expense of supporting these kinds of obligations, because this is the justification for keeping these bases.

I know one of these bases is used now—it says in this article, it says, U-Tapao is the aerial resupply point for the American-British base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Of course I think it is a very dubious thing. We begin to spread out our military bases when we already have 1,800 or 1,900 all over the world and all of them established really during and after World War II.

What I am trying to suggest is in reconsidering these matters we should keep in mind our own condition here at home, which is very perilous, I think, politically speaking and economically speaking. Unless you can make a strong case that this is very important to us, such as one can make for the Panama Canal, I think it is pretty clear that is important to us, I have never been quite able to understand why the character of the Government of Cambodia or Thailand is all important to us.

You say communism—well, the word “communism” seems to equate with dictatorship which we tolerate, we even support, and I am not sure but what we encourage in places like Chile. That certainly is a dictatorship just as much as any Communist regime is, isn’t it? It is just a different kind of dictatorship. I wish you would explore just why do you think it is of great interest to us—if you say China, I say that is so improbable I don’t believe that is a valid basis for this policy. I don’t see anything, I have heard nothing.

Do you think there is a probability that China will move physically to take over Thailand?

Dr. Gordon. No, Senator.

The Chairman. You do not?

Dr. Gordon. I do not under the present circumstances believe that is likely.

The Chairman. We have to deal with present circumstances, don’t we?

PROSPECTS FOR CONDITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Dr. Gordon. I do. However, I think that the prospect for even more unstable conditions in Southeast Asia and in East Asia than exist now would be enhanced by virtue of China’s, Russia’s, and Japan’s concerns with the instability of the region were all of the states of Southeast Asia to begin to have to move in their own separate directions, each making his own separate best bargain for peace if he could get it, along the lines that the Malaysians have suggested, neutrality. Along the lines that the Indonesians might ultimately have to move toward if Singapore as well felt there was no prospect for continued stability in the region.

What I am saying essentially is that there would be lower prospect for inviting in and for risking large power rivalries were the region to be in a situation where the states within it—by and large to me that
means the ASEAN states, the five or so that are now in the ASEAN grouping—were they to be encouraged to coalesce among themselves. I don’t see that taking place if there is major anxiety and apprehension about approximate security, and I think that the Thais will have that kind of apprehension about their own security.

The Chairman. I think it would be much more to the point if we affirmatively and aggressively supported neutrality of this area, seeking adherence of Russia, China, and Japan, trying to bring about neutrality to where none of us have to be involved because our presence there and our guarantee is provocative. I think to China, it would naturally be provocative.

If they were messing around in Mexico I am sure we would think it provocative and we were certainly very, very provoked about Cuba, have been and still are. So I am bound to say I think it is provocative.

Why wouldn’t neutrality for the area be far superior to bilateral military engagements to Thailand or any other country?

Dr. Gordon. I don’t think that a number of the governments in the area believe, or leaders believe, that neutrality is now or in the immediately foreseeable future available prospect.

The Chairman. Why not?

Dr. Gordon. Among other considerations the Indonesians have had, in my judgment, too recent an experience with difficulties with China to yet place reliance, as well as with the Soviet Union to yet place reliance, upon assurances and guarantees that would come from that quarter. I don’t think they are yet ready for that.

I don’t think that the Thais are yet ready for that. No one of the states has given any more than a pleasant lip service to the Malaysian Government’s proposals which, after all, have been current for 5 years.

WHAT IS INTEREST OF PEOPLE OF UNITED STATES?

The Chairman. Of course, if they are on our payroll and we are giving them hundreds of millions of dollars they will continue that. I don’t see our interests there.

I still come back to what is the interest of my constituents and the people of this country in this matter. I don’t think we ever tested against that. We just pursue these old, in many cases, discredited justifications in these policies. I don’t quite see it. I would like to be persuaded if I am wrong about it, if there is a real interest. Is it economic? Do we expect to exploit them? I don’t know that it is. We have Communist countries in Eastern Europe and in Russia trying to do business with us, but we are so committed to the military part of it we resist it when they want to do business with us. So I gather it is not economic, it is ideological, but I don’t see where that is appropriate either. I wish I could be informed as to why it is in our interests to intervene all around the world, especially in Southeast Asia.

Will you go ahead just on that point?

Dr. Gordon. I would be the last one to argue that we have interests all around the world.

The Chairman. In this case, what is our interest? Is it economic?

Dr. Gordon. No.

The Chairman. It is not economic. Is it political?

Dr. Gordon. Yes.
The Chairman. All right. And how is that important to us? I mean the political makeup of the individual states?

Dr. Gordon. I mean the political makeup of the region of Southeast Asia as it bears on East Asia.

The Chairman. By political, you mean you don't want them authoritarian or Communists or we don't want them what?

Dr. Gordon. I mean I do not think it is in our interest to see one of either of two circumstances develop: Either the states in that area become linked closely with a major, another major power, either China or the Soviet Union or Japan, nor do I think it is in our interest to see such circumstances of instability develop so that a rivalry begins to take place among the present major states in the area: Japan, China and possibly the Soviet Union. I think that would be a more tense environment even than that we have recognized in the past 10 years. I think it is in our interests to avoid that circumstance taking place.

It is a negative interest, Senator, and a very difficult one to state for that reason. It doesn't have the rhetorical appeal of the Communist thing that was so long talked about. It does not have the attraction of saying there is trade there, as we argue with regard to Europe. It does not have the attraction of pretending that Latin America is closer than it is. Of course, as you know, the states in Latin America are not, in many instances, any more proximate than those in Southeast Asia. It is a negative reason and for that reason a much more difficult one to defend, but I think in the long-term interests and stability and security of the United States.

Effectiveness of Military Alliances Questioned

The Chairman. Even granting the interests, I would also raise a very serious question of whether this type of approach even accomplishes that purpose. Even granting your statement that this is a matter of great interest to us, I question whether military alliances are clearly as effective as more civilized relations which develop as a result of trade and cultural relations.

Do you really think it is military? Because I think they are provocative. It almost is an invitation to the other powers to do likewise, to try to get another base, to offset it, just as our starting in Diego Garcia no doubt will enhance the determination of the Russians to get a place—perhaps in India, they are building up the one in Somalia now. They interact—each country provokes the other to take similar measures. It is all leading to vast extravagances on both sides. You say Indonesia does not rely on an agreement, but if the Russians and the Chinese and the Japanese should agree with us, that is most important. I don't know whether they would or not, but we have never investigated it or to my knowledge we haven't made a proposal. We just pursue the same policy which has gotten us into a rather terrible mess at the moment.

This is a continuation of the same policy that resulted in Vietnam. It seems to me it is. I would think that it is worthwhile examining some possible alternative approach. I am frank to say I don't like the idea of making further military commitment to Thailand. I don't know why she isn't able to maintain her own independence. She did for 2,000 years without our intervention. This has always amazed me.
This part of the world got along pretty well without us for a long
time and why we are important all of a sudden is beyond me.

Dr. Gordon. We got ourselves involved in President McKinley's
administration and I think that started a train of events.

The Chairman. I never thought that was very wise. I have never
thought of it as being one of our brightest moments in what we did
about Aguinaldo, is that right?

Dr. Gordon. No, I don't.

The Chairman. So we still get ourselves involved pursuing
McKinley.

Dr. Gordon. I think we have seen in some instances where we can
back off. As I say, I would not make the argument that we should in
any way endorse the present regimes, for example, in Cambodia nor
do I make an argument that we should endorse the present regime,
or any regime frankly, in the Philippines. My argument essentially
rests in large part on the role that I believe that Thailand plays in
the political thinking of leadership groups in major East Asian
governments, and I think we have to deal with that. We cannot wish that
away. I do, however, think we can do away with SEATO as a body,
because that, in fact, does imply a greater degree of expectation for
American roles that I think is justified. I would be very much in
support of what Senator Javits said earlier, it is time, in fact long
since time, that we tell the truth and not pretend we are going to get
involved in many places where we ought not and I think there are
indeed severe risks in SEATO to the extent that the protocol extends
a relationship to Cambodia and Laos.

THAILAND'S ROLE IN EAST ASIA

As I say, my concern derives in part from the place and role that
I think Thailand has begun to play in thinking and in activities in
East Asia in the past 10 or 15 years. It is a fact that is not easily
wished away and it puts us in a dilemma and in a quandry about
whether we will simply abrogate the thing quickly or whether we will
seek to find steps by which to get off the escalator and it would be
that latter that I would want to see taking place.

The Chairman. I would, too. I am not sure that making a bilateral
military agreement with Thailand promotes that objective. I don't
know whether it would or not. I am not sure it would. Thailand has
been a very resourceful country maintaining her independence from
foreign domination. She is the only one in the area that was not dom-
inated by a Western country, isn't that correct?

Dr. Gordon. That is correct.

The Chairman. For a long time and she is probably——

Dr. Gordon. Although protected I think by British influence during
the period of the 19th century but not certainly in any formal colonial
way.

The Chairman. Right.
I won't prolong this, but what concerns me is this continued intervention on our part and the assumption that we should or ought to have a responsibility to see that everybody is stable, no change takes place, and wherever there is an insurgency that is against our interest. I don’t think that is necessarily so. Some of these places, I am not saying Thailand needs it, but some of them might well benefit from a change; I would hope it wouldn’t be a change too radical. I don’t believe in violence and revolutions, they never do any good, but I don’t know that we can control it effectively.

You go ahead and say whatever you like.

POSSIBLE AGREEMENT WITH THAILAND

Dr. Gordon. No, Senator, I am done with the formal remarks. I would say the Government of Thailand in the kind of transition it has been experiencing over the past 5 months since October I think should represent to us a favorable development, and if a constitution does, in fact, develop and take place, as seems now to be indicated, there is good reason, I think, to expect a more widely based government coming from a new constitutional framework.

The present leadership, the Prime Minister, has expressed apprehensions about the coming to an end of the SEATO thing altogether but not because it is SEATO as a whole, but only by virtue of what the SEATO relationship represents to the Thai. I don’t think that SEATO as an organization any longer represents anything of consequence to any one of the member states, and, more to leading Americans, and I include specifically Secretary Kissinger. I think it is only by virtue of the specific and sole relationship that the United States has with Thailand that SEATO represents anything of significance at all today, and that is why I asked for some caution before it is abrogated.

I think, as I said, that Senator Aiken’s proposal to consider substituting specific relationships with Thailand, although I recognize he included the Philippines, and I would not endorse that, I think that warrants and merits very serious attention.

The Chairman. Well, if such an agreement with Thailand is the price of getting rid of SEATO it might be worthwhile but that is about the only—

Dr. Gordon. I am very encouraged to hear you say that, Senator.

The Chairman. What?

Dr. Gordon. I am very encouraged to hear you say that.

The Chairman. I said it might be. I just wonder whether we have to pay that big a price or not. If we did, it would only be to pacify the Pentagon; I think. I don’t think it has any reason to it other than just a deal as we say we have to make, and I recognize these have to be made to get anything done, so it might be on that round worthwhile.

I didn’t give that as a reason for it. I mean I think that is the most
reasonable, politically speaking, the best reason you have given for making the agreement with SEATO if that is the price you have got to give to get rid of SEATO.

Do you have anything further, Mr. Kahin, observations to make. It is 1 o’clock. Would you care to make an observation about that and then we will—Senator Case may have something.

Senator Case. May I just say, I certainly want you to hear this observation. I am sorry I had to be out. I had promised to see a number of television editorial writers from Philadelphia at a particular hour and I had to see them.

PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF U.S. INTERVENTION AND MAINTAINED PRESENCE

I wanted to ask you how to run the world and what your formula was. If I don’t have a chance this time I will get at it later.

The Chairman. Mr. Kahin, would you make any remarks?

Dr. Kahin. It is late but maybe just a couple of remarks, Senator Fulbright.

I take exception to several things that I guess my colleague, Bernard Gordon, has said. I think basically I would say that you don’t keep Southeast Asia stable or from being dominated by any major power by maintaining the presence of one of those major powers, to wit, the United States in the area. That simply provokes countervailing intervention, it seems to me, from other major powers.

Furthermore, I believe that there is no reason why Thailand can’t look after its own defenses. If one is worried over the Thai relationship with Vietnam, I would not agree that the historical record provides much basis for being terribly concerned. The one instance where there was an invasion was one from Thailand at the end of the 18th century into southern Vietnam, and I know of no Vietnamese invasion into Thailand.

As for Laos, traditionally it was a buffer area. It looks like it may become one again and one of the hopes is that it can be established as a viable buffer area as was the original purpose of the 1954 Geneva agreement.

I don’t really see any outside threat to Thailand. I do see problems which have developed because of American intervention in places close to Thailand. If one looks closely at the insurgency in the north of Thailand, some of the Meo, the most militant element there, pushed across the border from Laos, wanting to get away from the fighting there. A year ago, the last time I encountered statistics that were reliable, it was something over 7,000 that had crossed over into Thailand.

The Chairman. Are those Lao?

Dr. Kahin. These are Meo that came over into northern Thailand from Laos.

I am much less sanguine than Professor Gordon about the possibility of anything productive coming from ASEAN. There have been 10 years for it to confront really significant issues; there has been much talk and very little action.
NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

It would seem to me it is a mistake to think that any neutralization would have to subsume all Southeast Asia. With respect to neutralization the critical area is continental Southeast Asia, and this doesn't embrace either Indonesia or the Philippines. I have found amongst local elements, who are likely to have a greater voice in the future than in the past, a disposition to look seriously at the possibility of some kind of a neutralization for continental Southeast Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Case, do you have any questions?

Senator CASE. No, I don't. I will read these things with very great interest from both of these gentlemen.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentlemen I apologize for having poor representation of the committee here.

Senator CASE. It had quality.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

The CHAIRMAN. That is just what I had in mind. Senator Church anticipated holding the hearing, and I think you have made a good record. Unfortunately, it came on a day in which the votes are very important in the Senate because they involved our own housekeeping status. Anyway, I think you have made a very good record and we appreciate your taking the time to give us your thoughts. The Congress is so overwhelmed with other things that they rarely give thought to anything. We have to depend upon you gentlemen to think for us. I believe what you have said has been very useful and I am hopeful that it will be the beginning of a movement toward at least a serious review of our accumulated barnacles from the dead past. I would hope and we can begin to think about it in some different fashion anyway, and see if we can't rearrange our commitments to where they are more in accord with our capacity to do justice to them. I, for one, think we are grossly overcommitted all over the world far beyond our capacity to service those commitments and in many cases inspiring other people to do things they might not otherwise do. Thank you very much, unless you have something further you care to say? Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1 p.m., the committee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]
APPENDIX

STATEMENT BY SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA ON REVIEW OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TREATY

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to submit my views regarding United States participation in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, or, as the treaty is more commonly called, SEATO. As a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 174, which calls for this review to determine the advisability of United States renunciation of the SEATO pact, I am keenly interested in the conclusions that might arise from these hearings.

It is my belief that SEATO is an anachronism, and that the Treaty is an obstacle to a realistic and progressive United States policy in Asia. There is considerable doubt in my mind whether the SEATO pact ever promoted American interests and objectives in Asia. There is no doubt in my mind that currently, it does not.

Twenty years ago, when the Senate gave its advice and consent to U.S. membership in SEATO, the situation in southeast Asia was markedly different to the conditions that obtain today. In the mid-1950's, the entire area appeared to be threatened by Communist expansion, sponsored by Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China. The reasonable judgment was made that a collective security agreement among certain southeast Asian nations—backed by concerned Western powers—would be an effective tool for maintaining regional security. The recent diplomatic overtures made by the United States to the People's Republic, and the policy of detente with the Soviet Union, have substantially reduced the Communist threat in Asia, and have further reduced the usefulness of the SEATO agreement.

Our SEATO allies have shown little enthusiasm for their treaty obligations, and have done little for regional security. France has withdrawn from Asia, and has been a very inactive member of SEATO. Only token British forces remain in Asia. Pakistan gave official notice in November of 1972 that it was disassociating itself from the treaty. Australian and New Zealand leaders have criticized the pact, and have sharply questioned its usefulness, as have the Philippines and Thailand. The consensus of the signatories makes it clear that the pact has outlived any usefulness that it may have enjoyed, and that, although U.S. policy toward Asia has not been well articulated, it is time to scrap SEATO and re-direct American efforts and resources into more realistic and productive channels. The primary U.S. objective in Asia is peace. SEATO was formed in large part to help maintain the peace, and, as events of the past twelve years proved conclusively, it failed. There is far less reason to believe that SEATO would provide today a significant hedge against the outbreak of war in southeast Asia than it did in the years from 1954 up to the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Belatedly, the United States recognized that the People's Republic of China is a major force in Asia, and that it must be drawn into cooperative involvement in Asian programs. SEATO, which was created in part to contain and isolate the People's Republic, is an unnecessary barrier to such cooperation. There can be no meaningful role for the People's Republic as long as two Asian countries, two Pacific island countries, and three Western powers are linked by treaty to an overall policy that is inimical to Chinese interests and future development within the community of nations.

The Soviet Union and Japan are practically ignored by SEATO. It is wholly unrealistic for the United States to maintain alliances that ignore the interests, and preclude the constructive involvement of three major powers in Asia. A continued U.S. involvement in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, however meaningless its provisions may have become, is an obstruction in the path of the best interests of the United States in Asia.

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A renunciation of the treaty by the United States would not mean that we have abandoned our support of the southeast Asian states, or that we no longer associate ourselves with their aspirations for political, social, and economic wellbeing. We will continue to offer our good offices in their efforts to achieve freedom from tyranny and political corruption, freedom from hunger and disease, and freedom from the shackles of illiteracy and inadequate technology. In these vital fields, SEATO is very poorly equipped to help. It is primarily a mechanism of defense, and is not geared to administrative help and self-help programs. There are other international agencies that are infinitely better equipped to render the assistance that the countries of southeast Asia desperately need, and American help should be channeled through such organizations.

I firmly believe that the treaty, the membership, the organization, and the basic purpose of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty are inappropriate to the problems of southeast Asia today. I further believe that the financial commitment to SEATO by the United States, amounting to more than half-a-million dollars annually, is wholly unjustified in the light of the treaty's lack of usefulness to the United States, and its inviability as a peacekeeping instrument in southeast Asia.

I submit that the United States should withdraw from our commitment to this outmoded and outdated international agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you, and the members of the Committee on Foreign Relations for giving me this opportunity to present my views.
A. THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TREATY—A NONBINDING SOLUTION

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, also known as the Manila Pact, signed on September 8, 1954, is the founding document of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The treaty was designed primarily as a tool to prevent armed Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. It commits its eight original signatories (Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to act if a party to the treaty or a protocol state is subjected to armed attack; however, it does not specify what action is required, leaving that choice to the individual member states. When a party to the treaty or a protocol state is the victim of some other form of threat (such as subversion or insurgency), SEATO members are obligated only to consult immediately. The treaty also calls for cooperation in the promotion of economic development and social well-being among the member states.

1. The Principal Articles

The basic commitments of the treaty are found in Article four. The first paragraph thereof states that each SEATO member:

- 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 agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

For the United States, this obligation is limited by an understanding added to the treaty to cases of Communist armed attack. However, in cases of non-Communist attack, the United States affirmed it would consult with the other parties.

The second paragraph of Article four deals with actions to be taken by SEATO members in response to threats of subversion and insurgency. It states that if the “integrity or the integrity or the territory or the sovereignty of political independence” of any party or protocol state “is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any factor or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree upon the measures which should be taken for the common defense.”

Article two of the treaty affirms the intention of SEATO parties to work individually and collectively “to resist armed attack and to prevent and counter subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.”

Article three states that SEATO members will work together to promote their economic progress and social well-being.

Article eight defines the Treaty Area as “The general area of South-East Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian parties to the treaty, and the general area of the South-West Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude.”

Article ten provides that the treaty remain in effect indefinitely, though any party may withdraw after giving a one-year notice. The protocol states that the provisions of Article three and Article four of the treaty are applicable to Cambodia, Laos, and “the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Viet-Nam.”

1. Of November 3, 1973, Pakistan announced its plan to withdraw from SEATO. By treaty regulations, the withdrawal became effective 1 year after notice was given.
2. Degrees of Participation

SEATO has been given only limited power to act, and its non-involvement since 1955 in various Indochina crises and other security problems in Southeast Asia is indicative of the difficulty of its members acting together. The parties that signed the South-East Asia Collective Defense Treaty are under no formal obligation to act in unison, to follow the guidance of the SEATO headquarters, or to employ military forces to help defend threatened co-signers. There are no military forces assigned to SEATO, and there is no central commander to direct the operations of member-nations forces. SEATO is unlike NATO, which has a command and a supreme commander. SEATO headquarters prepares military operation plans for defense against various possible aggressors but does not have the means to execute the plans. In the field of national development, however, there are SEATO institutions which are actively involved in programs of regional cooperation.

3. Structure of SEATO Headquarters

The foreign ministers of the member nations constitute the SEATO Council which meets annually to discuss events and provide guidance. At the most recent meeting (the 18th Council meeting held in New York on September 28, 1973) decisions were made to reorganize the SEATO Headquarters. Steps already have been taken to reduce the size of both the civil and military staffs (particularly the military), to integrate the two staffs, and to form new offices within the headquarters which would facilitate a new emphasis on internal stability and development. The structure proposed and now in the early stages of implementation by the Secretary General consists of four offices:

Security Affairs—responsible for insurgency analysis, providing advisory services to the Philippines and Thailand, and preparing military exercise plans.

Development Affairs—administer economic aid and educational programs for the Philippines and Thailand.

Administration—provide administrative, financial, and personnel services, Office of the Secretary General—an executive office including the Deputy Secretary General and other executive staff personnel.

The reorganization, if implemented in its entirety, is scheduled to bring a reduction in military personnel on the staff from 88 to 20 officers, decrease the number of International civilian staff members from 32 to 28, and reduce the number of local employees by about 10.

Prior to the decision to reorganize, the SEATO Headquarters in Bangkok employed a full-time staff of about 200 people and operated on a budget of about $1.8 million a year. It also has drawn on personnel from the member-state embassies in Bangkok; in fact, the member’s ambassadors to Thailand meet at least monthly as SEATO Council Representatives, provide supervision and consultation, and use their embassy staffs to accomplish much of the detailed work. In the past, an Intelligence Assessment Committee, has met every six months to evaluate regional trends and threats; and numerous ad hoc study groups, conferences, and committees have been convened to study economic, education, health, labor, cultural, and security conditions in the area.

Prior to the reorganization now in progress the Secretariat, headed by Secretary General Suwanthorn Hongladarom, had a staff of approximately 150 people. It was responsible to the Council (or Council Representatives) and consisted of six functional offices: Office for Counter-Subversion and Counter-Insurgency; Research Office; Office of Cultural and Economic Affairs; and Administration, Security, and Public Information Offices. The Secretariat also supervised several schools and training and research programs located in Southeast Asia. These are discussed further in Section D below.

Military policy decisions of the Council in the past have been amplified by a Military Advisers Group, made up of senton officers from each member nation. (The American representatives has been the Commander-In-Chief, Pacific Com-

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*Under the proposed organization, the Public Information Office and the Research Office would be abolished and the others would be absorbed into new units.
The Group met twice a year to evaluate military implications of recent developments and to provide guidance for defense planning. A Military Planning Office, which is being abolished, prepared plans as directed by the Group. Neither the Advisers Group nor the Planning Office served as a central command for a standing military force. At the direction of the 18th Council Meeting, all military planning activities have been suspended, with existing plans shelved but not abandoned. Military activities and personnel in SEATO henceforth will be reduced and will emphasize counter-subversion and counter-insurgency.

In addition to preparing defense plans, SEATO has attempted to improve the military capabilities of the members, primarily through the conduct of joint military training exercises. The maneuvers are designed to test plans, provide experience in working on international staffs, standardize procedures and equipment, and make SEATO’s military capabilities more visible in Asia. SEATO has had as many as five exercises in one year, but in recent years has held only one or two annually. According to the Secretary General, member countries have agreed in principle to continue such exercises.

4. The Character of Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia includes Burma, Thailand, the states that make up Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, North and South Vietnam), Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei, and Portuguese Timor. It has a land area of greater than 1.5 million square miles and is home for approximately 300 million people. The region is a major source of tropical raw materials such as rubber, fibers, foodstuffs, and lumber, as well as tin, and oil. The United States has no critical need for these regional resources at the present time, although several U.S. firms have invested in raw materials extraction, particularly oil.

Most of Southeast Asia is easily accessible by water transportation, and mainland Southeast Asia is also fairly accessible by land from the rest of the Asian continent. The pattern of islands, peninsulas, and waterways has made the region vulnerable to conquest and shifting ethnic groups, but it also facilitates trade and other forms of cooperative contact.

Although Southeast Asia was the home of some very advanced ancient cultures, it is typified today by economic and political underdevelopment. In most of the countries there is very little economic diversification, with inefficient food production dominating the local economy and a few specialty crops or mineral extraction industries dominating the export market. The various national economies are not complementary, so intraregional trade is not great. Per capita income is low throughout the region, and farming families are especially poor.

The peoples of Southeast Asia display a great diversity of race, language, religion, and culture; and many ethno-linguistic groups straddle the poorly defined national borders. Population is very unevenly distributed through the area with extremely high densities in the fertile river valleys and cities, and with the interior highlands and jungles sparsely populated. The literacy rate is low, and education and medical facilities are insufficient. Most Southeast Asians suffer from a severe gap between the elites and the masses. The average Southeast Asian lives on farmland or in the remote countryside and has little contact with his government. National societies have been slow in forming, and the force of nationalism has been unevenly experienced.

There are several forms of government operating in Southeast Asia, but typically the nations are governed by an authoritarian, one-party system. Foreign alliances of Southeast Asian nations cover the spectrum from pro-West, to neutral, to pro-Communist.

Diversity is perhaps the most important characteristic describing Southeast Asia. In fact, it is said that in the 1860’s when SIDATO was formed the only common denominator among these nations was their proximity and their mutual feelings of anticolonialism.

Southeast Asia has changed a great deal in the last few decades and the pace of change has not appeared to slacken. Not only is the sense of national identity increasing, but regional cohesion is becoming a significant force. Tensions which have existed between many of the area’s nations have diminished in the last few years. 

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7 However, according to former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Marshall Green, “nationalism is the strongest force in Asia.” Department of State Bulletin, v. 66, Apr. 17, 1972:79.
years, and there is a considerable and growing amount of interchange and cooperation among the governments with regard to common economic concerns through organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asian Development Bank.

The American policy of detente with the major communist powers has affected the policies of Southeast Asian countries toward the Soviet Union, China, and other Communist states. There is a great deal of support within the region for a policy of neutrality, although several of the major governments disagree on the definition of irrationalism and how best to achieve it. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is becoming increasingly active in world affairs and will play an important role in the future of Southeast Asia. The PRC currently follows a two-tiered policy in the region, seeking improved government-to-government relations on the one hand, while, on the other hand, supporting Communist insurgencies and emphasizing a "special relationship" with the Overseas Chinese elements in Southeast Asia. Soviet interest in the area has grown considerably since 1965, with Moscow increasingly offering itself to the nations of the region as a "protecting power" against China and advocating a collective security pact in Asia.

Despite the influence of the Communist powers, it is quite apparent that the Soviet Union, China, North Vietnam, and the Communist parties of Southeast Asia are not united in a monolithic campaign of conquest. However, all of the non-Communist countries except Singapore face Communist insurgencies of varying strength and most still are apprehensive over the future policies of the People's Republic of China in Southeast Asia.

In 1973, Japan's overall economic involvement in Southeast Asia was greater than any other country in terms of trade, investment and aid. This role is likely to grow, and it is also likely to result in increasing Japanese political and diplomatic activity in the region. This does not mean, however, that Japan will undertake security commitments in the area. Strong restraints still exist against adoption of such a policy, including the domestic political situation in Japan, the new Sino-Japanese relationship, and the fear and distrust of the Japanese by the Southeast Asian peoples themselves.

5. Members' Attitudes Toward SEATO

SEATO member nations now exhibit less enthusiasm for the multilateral treaty than they did in the 1960's. Even in that period several of the members placed qualifications on their own involvement. Other countries in the area, such as Indonesia, refused to join. There have been no new members since SEATO was formed, and one member has withdrawn.

Pakistan was active in SEATO until the early 1960's but it viewed the alliance from two standpoints: (1) protection from Communist aggression and (2) protection from India. Until 1962, Pakistan's policy had been in line with the anti-Communist aims of SEATO. But U.S. military assistance to India following the Sino-Indian border fighting in the fall of 1962 and Washington's neutrality during the India-Pakistan War of 1965 prompted Pakistan to re-evaluate its SEATO ties and become increasingly inactive in the alliance. In November 1972 Pakistan submitted its notice of withdrawal from the Manila Treaty. By that time East Pakistan, which bordered Southeast Asia, had become the independent state of Bangladesh as a result of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, thus ending the already tenacious Pakistani interest in the region.

France also has been an inactive member and has announced it will stop paying SEATO dues after June 1974. France, however, has not given notice that it intends to withdraw from SEATO. Great Britain pays its dues and participates in SEATO meetings and exercises, but there is serious doubt that it would deploy troops to defend any Southeast Asian countries other than Malaysia and Singapore. Britain has deliberately made a vast reduction in the size of its forces east of the Suez Canal.

Australia and New Zealand are not usually considered part of Southeast Asia but are interested in the area because of their close proximity to it. The new

8 For example, the granting of base rights to the United States, Ayub Khan's public declaration of December 1960 that Pakistan was ready to "shoulder its burden" in Laos if called upon under SEATO, Ayub's 1965 offer of a defensive alliance to India against China which he renewed in March 1962. See Lerski, George R., The Pakistan-American Alliance: A Revaluation of the Past Decade. Asian Survey, v. 18, May 1968: 406-415.
governments installed in the two countries in late 1972 expressed grave mis-
givings about the future participation of their countries in SEATO. However,
when U.S. officials pointed out that their withdrawal from the treaty might
prompt American withdrawal and might also raise questions about maintaining
the triangular defense pact between the United States, Australia, and New
Zealand (ANZUS), the two Pacific nations reaffirmed their commitment to
SEATO. However, they also called for a “limit to outside interference” and
expressed support for a neutral zone in Southeast Asia. They both prefer an
emphasis on the economic development role of SEATO and would like to broaden
its membership.

Thailand is the nation which apparently receives the greatest benefit from
SEATO. Indicative of the Thai interest are the facts that SEATO is head-
quartered in Bangkok and that three of the four men who have served as Secre-
tary General have been Thais. The SEATO treaty is the only formal commit-
ment by the United States to help defend Thailand.

In 1962, Thailand—worried over the fighting in Laos between communist and
anti-communist forces—sought and received from the United States a strong
reaffirmation of the U.S. defense commitment under SEATO. This statement,
known as the Rusk-Thanat Communique, declared that the United States con-
sidered its commitment to Thailand under the SEATO Treaty to bilateral as
well as multilateral. (For the text of the relevant clause of the Rusk-Thanat
Communique, see Section B.2.)

The Thai Government has strongly supported the SEATO treaty link with
the United States as security against the Communist threat from Indochina and
as assurance of continuing American military assistance related to the Govern-
ment’s efforts against Communist insurgency within Thailand’s borders. In
recent years, however, some Thais, including former Foreign Minister Thanat
Khoman, have questioned the U.S. military presence in Thailand and, by in-
fERENCE, the SEATO link between the two countries. Thanat has expressed doubts
over the value and credibility of the American defense commitment and has
asserted that the current U.S. role prevents Bangkok from moving toward im-
proving relations with Peking and Hanoi. Since the overthrow of the military
government in October 1973, similar views have been expressed by student leaders
and by some newspapers. However, the caretaker government of Premier Sanya
Thammasak likely will move slowly with respect to any major changes in foreign
policy, because its limited mandate being concerned primarily with govern-
ment reform, adoption of a new constitution, and holding of democratic
elections.

The Philippines is the only other Asian member of SEATO, and although it
has been an active supporter, in 1972 its leaders called for a transformation in
the organization and a clarification of its purposes. The Philippine Foreign
Secretary, Carlos P. Romulo, even characterized SEATO as needlessly provoca-
tive in the warmer climate now prevailing in Asia. The Philippines also has
voiced support for a neutral Southeast Asia. The U.S.-Philippine Mutual De-
fense Treaty is the main U.S.-Philippine security link, and the SEATO Treaty
is more or less a weak duplication of the bilateral pact.

Some Southeast Asian nations, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and
Burma prefer neutralism and other regional groupings. Japan has carefully
avoided military commitments.

B. THE UNITED STATES AND SEATO OBJECTIVES

I. Original Purposes and Historical Context of the Treaty

In the spring of 1954 the United States attempted to form a coalition of West-
en powers and Southeast Asian nations to support France in its struggle to
defend Indochina against Communist attack. America was contributing large
amounts of military assistance to the French, but the Eisenhower Administration
believed it could not intervene militarily except as a participant in such a coali-
tion or treaty organization. It also felt that U.S. intervention could be taken
only upon urgent request of the French and Indochinese Governments

concerned, and only with the approval of Congress. Great Britain, which the Administration considered an essential partner in the endeavor, was reluctant to join for several reasons: it had reservations about including some of the countries suggested by the United States for the organization; it did not want to upset the Geneva Conference on Indochina scheduled in May; and it doubted that the naval and air operations being considered by the United States would be sufficient to salvage the situation in Indochina. Because of British hesitation, because of vocal opposition within the Congress, and because of divided opinion within the Administration, President Eisenhower decided not to intervene. The French garrison at Dienbienphu was overrun, and a ceasefire and partition of Vietnam were arranged at the Geneva Conference. Following these developments an alliance seemed even more necessary to the Administration, and on September 8, 1954, SEATO was formed.

To put the treaty further into the context of the period, it should be noted that communism then appeared to the U.S. to be a monolithic threat to friends and allies in East Asia. China had fallen to communism in 1949; North Korea during the Korean war received vast amounts of material assistance from the Soviet Union and massive troop support from China; and Communist insurgents had threatened the Philippines and Malaya as well as Vietnam and Laos. It generally was assumed that the Soviet Union and Communist China would continue efforts to spread communism in vulnerable areas in East Asia. The domino theory, under which Communist success in Vietnam or Laos was believed to present a serious threat to all of Southeast Asia, was widely accepted by Administration officials and by many members of Congress. Massive retaliation was then the U.S. strategic policy and former Senator Joseph McCarthy was conducting his hearings on the U.S. internal threat of communism.

To counter the threat of Communist expansion in Asia, the United States had negotiated bilateral military pacts with Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and a multilateral treaty with Australia and New Zealand. To complete the barrier against communism it appeared that the weak Southeast Asian nations needed to be wedded into an anti-Communist front covered by pledges from the major Western powers. The report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommending that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, described the treaty’s main purpose as follows:“Designed to promote security and to strengthen the fabric of peace in Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific, the treaty is intended to deter aggression in that area by warning potential aggressors that an open armed attack upon the territory of any of the parties will be regarded by each of them as dangerous to its own peace and safety (art. IV, par. 1).”

The report also quoted the testimony of Secretary of State Dulles at the committee’s hearings in describing the type of American military involvement contemplated under the treaty:

“We do not intend to dedicate any major elements of the United States Military Establishment to form an army of defense in the area. We rely primarily upon the deterrent of our mobile striking power. I believe if there should be an open armed attack in that area the most effective step would be to strike at the source of aggression rather than try to rush American manpower into the area to try to fight a ground war.”

[25] Ibid., p. 8. See also U.S. Department of Defense. United States-Vietnam Relations 1945–1967. Book I. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973: Section IV, 2, A13–A25. This unwillingness to commit forces to a permanent SEATO force was a cardinal principle of U.S. policy toward SEATO. At the Manila Conference, the United States resisted all proposals that the signatories make permanent commitments of troops to SEATO and that they establish a permanent military organization, thus structuring SEATO along the lines of NATO. At Manila and at the 1966 SEATO conference at Bangkok, the Asian members and the United States and New Zealand expressed a willingness to make permanent troop commitments to a SEATO force, arguing that explicit commitments were necessary if the treaty was to have the desired deterrent effect on the Communist countries. The United States went no further than to support the periodic meetings of the Military Advisers Group and the establishment of a small secretariat.
It also was emphasized by the report that the treaty “includes a provision of major, importance against subversive attempts by international communism to destroy the territorial integrity or political independence of any party to the treaty.” 28

The report concluded that by strengthening the resolve of the member nations “to defend their freedom against the menace of international communism,” through the formation of SEATO, “the United States will make a substantial contribution to the preservation of free governments and to the defense of its own security.” 29 It added: 30

“The principle underlying this treaty is that advance notice of our intentions and the intentions of the nations associated with us may serve to deter potential aggressors from reckless action that could plunge the Pacific into war.”

2. Evolution of U.S. Commitment to SEATO Objectives

In the twenty years since the establishment of SEATO, there has been a noticeable shift in U.S. policy toward the area, resulting both from reevaluation of overall U.S. foreign policy, and from significant developments within the region. SEATO has not taken action in major security problems in the area, including the Vietnam War, and has been criticized for ineffectiveness. Official American references to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty have changed their tone and emphasis.

Three weeks after the treaty was signed in Manila, the United States and France issued a joint communiqué regarding aid to the nations of Indochina. It stated in part: 31

The conclusion of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty . . . has provided a firmer basis than heretofore to assist the free nations of Asia in developing and maintaining their independence and security.

The representatives of France and the United States reaffirm the intention of their governments to support the complete independence of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

However, several times in 1955 and 1960, Prince Sihanouk renounced SEATO protection of Cambodia offered by the protocol of the Manila Treaty. 32

The United States continued to support SEATO throughout the 1960's, especially in the treaty's Application to Vietnam. President Eisenhower gave an expanded interpretation to the treaty in a joint communiqué signed in Washington with South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem on May 11, 1957. The communiqué noted that the Republic of Vietnam is covered by Article 4 of the treaty; and the two Presidents agreed that “aggression or subversion threatening the political independence of the Republic of Vietnam would be considered an endangering peace and stability.”

As stated previously, further interpretation to the treaty was given on March 6, 1962 in a joint statement issued by the U.S. Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister of Thailand. Partial text of that document, known as the Rusk-Thanat Communiqué follows: 33

“The Secretary of State reaffirmed that the United States regards the preservation of the independence and integrity of Thailand as vital to the national interest of the United States and to world peace. He expressed the firm intention of the United States to aid Thailand, its ally and historic friend, in resisting Communist aggression and subversion.

“The Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State reviewed the close association of Thailand and the United States in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and agreed that such association is an effective deterrent to direct Communist aggression against Thailand. They agreed that the Treaty provides the basis for the signatories, collectively, to assist Thailand in case of Communist armed attack against that country. The Secretary of State assured the Foreign Minister that in the event of such aggression, the United States intends to give full effect to its

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 15.
30 Ibid.
obligations under the Treaty to act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. The Secretary of State reaffirmed that this obligation of the United States does not depend upon the prior agreement of all other parties to the Treaty, since this Treaty obligation is individual as well as collective.

"In reviewing measures to meet indirect aggression, the Secretary of State stated that the United States regards its commitments to Thailand under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and under its bilateral economic and military assistance agreements with Thailand as providing an important basis for United States actions to help Thailand meet indirect aggression."

Later in 1962, Laos was removed from the jurisdiction of the treaty protocol. As part of the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, signed on July 23, 1962, it was agreed that Laos would not "recognize the protection of any alliance or military coalition, including SEATO." 26

President Kennedy, in a television interview, expressed satisfaction with SEATO's performance and continued dedication to its objectives: 27

"We would like to have Cambodia, Thailand, and South Viet-Nam all in harmony, but there are ancient differences there. We can't make the world over, but we can influence the world. The fact of the matter is that with the assistance of the United States and SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization], Southeast Asia and indeed all of Asia has been maintained independent against a powerful force, the Chinese Communists. What I am concerned about is that Americans will get impatient and say, because they don't like events in Southeast Asia or they don't like the Government in Saigon, that we should withdraw. That only makes it easy for the Communists. I think we should stay. We should use our influence in as effective a way as we can, but we should not withdraw."

The private assessment of SEATO by the Kennedy Administration was less optimistic. At various times during the buildup of U.S. advisors in South Vietnam, the Administration assessed the possibility of a SEATO military force for Indochina; but each time it was concluded that the idea was impractical. Following his mission to South Vietnam in 1961, then Vice-President Johnson reported to President Kennedy that SEATO was not the answer to Southeast Asian security because of British and French unwillingness to support decisive action. Johnson recommended consideration of a new collective security alliance of all free nations of the Pacific and Asia that would have a clear cut command authority (thus similar to NATO). Other assessments of SEATO by the State Department, Defense Department, and CIA gave similar evaluations. 28

The Rusk-Thaïnat communiqué of 1962 was, in effect, an admission that SEATO could not be counted on to act collectively. The Kennedy Administration placed its emphasis on individual country action under Article IV, Section 1, as the communiqué indicated. A Memorandum for the President submitted by Secretaries Rusk and McNamara in November 1961 stated the policy more explicitly:

"We now take the decision to commit ourselves to the objective of preventing the fall of South Viet-Nam to Communism and that, in doing so, we recognize that the introduction of United States and other SEATO forces may be necessary to achieve this objective. (However, if it is necessary to commit outside forces to achieve the foregoing objective our decision to introduce United States forces should not be contingent upon unanimous SEATO agreement thereto.)" 29

This emphasis on individual rather than collective action became the standard policy of both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

In August 1964, after U.S. naval ships had been fired on by North Vietnamese gunboats, and U.S. aircraft had retaliated, President Johnson referred to U.S. commitments under the SEATO Treaty in his call for congressional support of

26 TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTS 5416. 14 UST 1104.
29 Ibid., p. 129.