

CHAPTER III

OBLIGATIONS OF NEUTRALISE STATES:
ACCEPTABLE PRICE FOR PEACE AND STABILITYAbrogation of Alliances

The main consequence of neutralisation of South East Asia for these states is the abrogation of formal military alliances that are presently operating. The two that are most prominent are the South East Asia Treaty Organisation under the patronage of the United States and the Five Power Defence Arrangement.

(a) Five Power Defence Arrangement

As far this Arrangement is concerned there is little doubt that the member states of Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, New Zealand and Australia will be glad to see it go. As have been pointed earlier, the Arrangement does not provide Singapore and Malaysia with sufficient protection from foreign attacks. The three other countries which are supposed to provide the bulk of the defensive mechanism in the Arrangement will be greatly relieved from this commitment which they had undertaken merely as a dignified facade to total military withdrawal.

(b) SEATO

SEATO presents quite a problem. While the Thais have not made a clear-cut unsympathetic statement on it, the Philippines has expressed her willingness to leave the Treaty. The Foreign Minister of the Philippines once said that it was time "to begin building a new organisation on the ruins of SEATO, one which would concentrate on economic cooperation". This means that the two United States bases in the Philippines will have to go.

Thailand still maintained that it would allow the continuation of the United States military presence in the country. There are seven United States bases in Thailand and these bases do generate the Thai economy with their G.I. spendings. But it is submitted that with the recent "Maraquez" incident which had caused considerable embarrassment to the Thai government, and the mounting public opinion against the United States in Thailand, this steadfast attitude will surely change. Especially now that the staunch United States friend, Prime Minister K. Nikachom is no longer in power, any form of a guarantee from China that she will not aid their communist insurgents will likely be enough inducement for the removal of these bases. As a matter of fact, foreign minister Thamat Khoman revealed that the agreement with the United States provide that United States troops and aircraft would only remain in Thailand until the end of the Vietnam War.¹

¹ Nordin Spiee, Neutralisation of South East Asia, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Conference Asia and Western Pacific, Session 2, Paper 5, pp. 20.

The war is over. The question is does the United States want to go home? The Nixon Doctrine says yes.

(c) The United Nations Organisation

A neutralised state is obligated to abstain from military intervention in other states and also from any action that might at some future time involve it in hostilities. A state with such obligations cannot participate in international organisations whose members are required to undertake military, political, or economic sanction against other states or to vote on issues regarded by major competing coalitions of states as critical to their political role.

Article 2, paragraph 5 of the United Nations Charter states:

"All members shall give the United Nations assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action."

In addition, the Articles 39-43 provides that the Security Council may take measures, include the use of armed forces, to implement its decisions with respect to the threats of peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression. No state is in principles exempted from being asked to participate in military measures.

Most South East Asian states are members of the Organisation ever since their independence. There is obvious incompatibility of these obligations with the status of permanent neutrality which

they sought. Withdrawing from this Organisation will be too drastic a measure especially for those emerging states which tend to gain substantially from the other United Nations roles in the economic and social fields.

There are two possibilities in getting around this problem.. Firstly, Article 48 provides that, for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council may call for participation "by all members" or "by some of them", as it may determine. This option suggests that the Security Council has the authority to exempt certain states. Neutralised states might so be exempted.

Another way would be an appeal for an amendment to the Charter under the provisions of Article 108 with a view to formalizing an exceptional status within the United Nations of neutralised states along the above lines, as has been incorporated in the draft treaty in the earlier chapter.