
Year in Review

U.S. warfare in 1989 targeted four strategic allies in Asia

The Dec. 9-11 visit to Beijing by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger—despite the Bush administration's stated policy to ban all high-level contacts with the Beijing regime in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacres in June 1989—was clear proof that Henry Kissinger's "China card" still dominates Washington's policy toward Asia, as it has since 1971. The Bush administration justified its kowtowing to the Beijing regime by declaring that U.S. strategic interests lie in maintaining its special geopolitical relationship with the People's Republic of China, although given Washington's appeasement of Moscow, it is impossible for the Bush administration to claim that the "China card" is *anti-Soviet* policy.

However, the corollary of Kissinger's "China card" also continues in the Bush administration: The United States maintains a posture of imperial hostility to those nations which represent its longstanding and most loyal strategic allies. In particular, over the last year, Washington has carried out a policy of extreme political, military, and economic pressure on four of its key allies, all of which are sites for U.S. military presence: Turkey, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Philippines, and Japan.

Hostility toward Turkey

Turkey is the site of U.S. naval bases, several air bases, and strategic listening posts—pertinent with respect to both the Soviet Union and Iran. The U.S. military capability in Turkey is, in essence, the key to the eastern Mediterranean. However, Bush's decision to appoint State Department intelligence director Morton A. Abramowitz as ambassador to Turkey indicated that U.S. policy toward Turkey would become increasingly hostile. As a Carter administration Defense Department official, Abramowitz had authored the 1977 policy of pulling U.S. ground troops out of South Korea. While ambassador to Thailand, Abramowitz oversaw the 1980 collapse of the government of Premier Kriangsak Chomanan. As the chief of the State Department's Policy Planning Committee during the Reagan-Bush administrations, Abramowitz played a role in the 1986 overthrow of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and in the policy of supplying arms to Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, which inclusively had as its objective the eventual undermining of the

secular Turkish state.

Bush's policy toward Turkey has been summarized in a series of threats written by Abramowitz's deputy George Harris to the government in Ankara, and leaked last fall. In these documents, Harris demanded that the government of President Turgut Özal "place less emphasis in Turkey's agenda for the 1990s on the Soviet threat and more on relations with the Soviet Union," and ridiculed Turkey for having a "hairshirt mentality." Referencing the U.S.-Soviet deal, he gloated, "The Turkish argument that emphasizes geostrategic location and its value to NATO has become a less useful selling point in Turkey's relations with the U.S."

Former U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson, currently U.S. special envoy to the Philippines, underlined Washington's policy in his conclusion in this same set of documents: "Gorbachov has embarked on an ambitious program of internal reform. . . . His aim is to reduce both risks of conflict and the cost of Soviet engagement. This kind of realism calls for comparable realism on our side through step-by-step moves that reduce the risk of war." Then, the conclusion: "All these considerations apply to the U.S. relationship with Turkey and to Turkey's relations with Western Europe. Turkey and the U.S. should be able to look confidently toward a lessening of tensions with the U.S.S.R."

Ankara, however, has remained unconvinced. In May 1989, the most recent Soviet anti-Turkey campaign began in earnest, timed with Bulgaria's launching of the mass expulsion of its Turkish minority. A May 22 speech by Armenian First Secretary Suren Arutunyan called for "the return of Kars Province" from Turkey to Armenia—a province in northeastern Turkey which was annexed by Czarist Russia in 1878 through the Russian-dictated San Stefano Treaty, and then reverted back to Turkey after the Russian Revolution in 1917. The call for the province's return to Armenia was repeated June 3 in the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and reprinted in *Izvestia* June 4.

The United States responded with provocation—also against Turkey. In the fall of 1989, Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.) sponsored an "Armenian Genocide Day" bill in the U.S. Congress, which accused the Ottoman dynasty of genocide against Armenia, back in World War I. The accusation is still an emotional one in the region.

So, on Oct. 18, Ankara started to implement five counter-measures, including reducing the number of U.S. jet fighters deployed in Turkey from 26 to 24; restrictions on U.S. war vessels anchoring in Turkish ports; restriction of the movement of U.S. military personnel on Turkish territory, and restrictions on U.S. training flights. If the Dole bill passes in the next session of Congress, as it is expected to, the Turkish response will undoubtedly escalate. If the Turks continue their sanctions into the spring, then Bush and the Congress will have the pretext to veto the U.S.-Turkish bilateral treaty on military cooperation. Why this should suddenly become an issue was left unexplained. However, the bill hit the mark, since the accusation is an emotional topic throughout the region. Turkey reacted immediately against the United States.

Blackmail against Korea

Although the United States worked actively behind the scenes to bring about the election of Noh Tae Woo as the successor to former South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan, the Bush administration in its first year has acted on all fronts to render the Noh Tae Woo government as impotent as possible.

The Bush administration signaled its policy with the appointment of Donald Gregg, a former CIA station chief in Seoul and close associate of George Bush, as ambassador to the Republic of Korea. Although Seoul felt it could not submit any protest to Washington, privately R.O.K. officials voiced concern over Gregg's appointment, due to his known links to the Korean opposition. These included Gregg's sponsorship of the ruling party opponent Kim Dae Jung and his saving of Kim's life in 1973 and 1980, and a close relationship to Kim Chong-pil, opposition leader (and former KCIA intelligence chief) who was briefly President during Gregg's previous tenure in Seoul.

Aside from its obvious potential for domestic mischief, Gregg's appointment also signaled the revival of the Carter administration's policy to withdraw the 40,000 American ground troops from the R.O.K.

Speaking at his Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination hearings on May 12, 1989, Gregg stated, "I think we are at the point where we can begin to think about sitting down with the Koreans and negotiating, in a truly consultative way, eventual reduction of our troops." Shortly after Gregg's arrival in Seoul, the commander of the U.S. forces in Korea, Louis Menetrey, told the *New York Times* that there will be no military need to keep U.S. forces in South Korea after the mid-1990s, if present trends continue.

Aside from the opposition, there is no equivocation in official government circles on the requirement for the United States to maintain its strategic forces in the R.O.K. President Noh Tae Woo has repeatedly spoken against the removal of the U.S. troops. On Oct. 18, 1989, he told a joint session of the U.S. House and Senate that tragic results would follow

any weakening in the U.S. defense commitment or a precipitate lessening of the military presence might cause North Korea to "misjudge the U.S. commitment to peace in the region."

This U.S. strategic presence is the foundation of President Noh's repeated efforts to initiate relations with the North—Noh's so-called "Northern Policy," by which he has offered the cash-strapped Kim Il-Sung regime the South's aid and technology in building its economy.

The United States, however, has preferred to deal with the North Koreans outside of the parameters established by Noh Tae Woo. While Noh was in Washington, on Oct. 20, Bush sent former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur to North Korea for a week-long series of negotiations with the Kim Il-Sung regime. Politely commenting on this U.S. intrigue, the Korean daily *Chosun Ilbo* noted on Oct. 8, "We are concerned about the possibility that the United States, being less familiar with the North Korean authorities' way of thinking and way of behaving than we are, could fall victim to the fraud of the 'Kim Il-Sungists.' "

Gregg has also used his background to run U.S. foreign policy toward Korea through the opposition, bypassing the Noh government. The ruling party, South Korean press outlets have made clear, is not at all relaxed about the dynamics between Gregg and the opposition parties. The decision of the three opposition Kims to unite to bring down the government unless it agreed to their "pro-democracy" demands, during Noh Tae Woo's mid-October visit to the United States, some sources believe, was orchestrated by Gregg.

However, if the U.S. strategic policy toward R.O.K. remains in the realm of possibilities and speculation, U.S. trade policy toward R.O.K. has taken a heavy toll in the here and now. As South Korean news service YONHAP said Dec. 16, reflecting on the trade friction between the two countries in 1989, "persistent U.S. trade pressure was one of the major drags on the Korean economy."

concessions to the United States, Seoul barely escaped being cited under the U.S.-legislated "Super 301" clause—which once cited includes the penalties such as 100% tariffs on exports. Once Seoul had gotten over that hurdle, however, Washington moved in and forced Seoul to further open agriculture markets, brought pressure to bear on the telecommunications industry, and called for the immediate announcement of a schedule for opening the service sector.

The South Korean economy is particularly vulnerable to this type of economic warfare, given its structure. The economy is heavily dependent on export, in particular export to the United States. An economic survey in July reported by publication *Chugan Maekyong* notes that business activity is plummeting downward, due to a reduction in exports and investment; that exports and business investment were increasing at a mere 3.52% rate. January-May exports in the auto industry, for example, were down 33% from the corresponding period of the previous year.

Japan: surveying the horizon

Although Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu declared shortly after the Dec. 2-3, 1989 Malta U.S.-Soviet summit that Japan would stand by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, it is clear that various sections of the elite in Japan are preparing for the eventuality of a decisive shift—albeit unlikely a break—in U.S.-Japan relations.

That the possible necessity for Japan to seek alternatives to its alliance with the United States—the touchstone of Japan's positive foreign policy—was a concern within Japan's ruling elite, was made clear with the publication of a book co-authored by Shintaro Ishihara, a parliamentarian of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and Akio Morita, chairman of the Sony Corp., entitled *The Japan That Can Say No*. According to Japanese sources, the book represents a growing nationalist trend within the elite, which no longer believes that Japan's role in the world should be constrained by its relationship to Washington. The book, which was translated into English against the will of the authors, was circulated widely in Washington, where it fed the worst fears of the "Japan-bashers." While Morita delivers a sound condemnation of America's "post-industrial" economic idiocies of the last 20 years, Ishihara declares that American "Japan-bashing" is the result of U.S. racism and hatred of Japan, going back to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In other words, Ishihara raises the question: Is the United States an ally of Japan at all?

In the last year, the Bush administration has given Japan ample reasons to raise such concerns:

- *The FSX jet fighter*: Not content with Japan's plans to build its own fighter, to be designed as an improvement on the U.S. F-16, Washington insisted that Japan and the U.S. co-develop and co-produce the plane. Then, once that Memorandum of Understanding for the FSX production had been drawn up, the Congress insisted that Japan just buy the F-16, a demand put forward amid hysterical charges that Japan would steal U.S. technological secrets. By the time the FSX Memorandum of Understanding was finally signed, the diplomatic damage had already been done.

- *Scandal-mongering*: In the last year, scandals concerning the fundraising practices of the LDP have downed two prime ministers. Leading the scandal-crusade was the Japanese daily *Asahi Shimbun*, which is affiliated with the *New York Times*, which ran the most vociferous anti-LDP campaign stateside. The U.S. embassy also reportedly has close ties to Japanese Socialist Party chairman Takako Doi, whose party reaped the electoral benefit of the scandal campaign.

On May 30, the Bush administration leveled "Super 301" against Japan, a trade war measure comprised of a package of threats if Japan were not to open up its markets to Washington's satisfaction.

- *Japan: the enemy*: In the last six months, the U.S. press has conjured up a view of Japan as the enemy of the

future, based on Japan's growing economic and hence political clout internationally. As even Reuters reported Dec. 19 on the effects of the anti-Japanese press campaign: "A recent opinion poll showed that many Americans already consider Japan's economic power a bigger threat to the U.S. than the Soviet Union's military might." This press campaign has fueled the perception in Japan that the United States and the Soviet Union are consistently combined against it, in a coordinated fashion. The Japanese daily *Yomiuri Shimbun's* comment on U.S. trade war tactics could be taken as a growing, if nonetheless still a minority, view in Japan: "Japanese people may begin to think that Japan-bashing by the U.S. is a greater threat to this country than the Soviet military threat."

Philippines: Hang your own puppet

In the case of the Republic of the Philippines, U.S. tactics have gone so far that it sometimes appears as if the United States were at war with itself. Even before President Corazon Aquino called upon U.S. military forces to intervene against a military coup attempt Dec. 1, 1989, Aquino was being attacked by stalwarts in her own party for her "closeness" to the United States. Even Leticia Shehani, the sister of Defense Minister Fidel Ramos, who enjoys extremely close ties to the U.S. embassy himself, lambasted Aquino for the subservience to Washington. Shehani, who is chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, remarked, "If we become too pro-American, we become subservient. We must be seen increasingly as taking decisions on our own. To a certain point, Marcos [who was excoriated by his opponents as a "U.S. puppet"—ed.] was more nationalistic. He really tried hard to make us more independent, politically and also economically."

Aquino's "pro-Americanism" is the rope that will hang her. That she was forced by the seriousness of this latest, sixth, coup attempt against her to turn to the U.S. military, is proof positive that her government continues to exist only by the good graces of Washington.

Given the Aquino regime's additional inability to deliver any economic benefits to the Filipino people, the Philippines is politically back at square one, with a government far less effective than that of Marcos.

For the United States, although some short-sighted officials might think Aquino will be forced to "pay her debt" by negotiating a new treaty for the U.S. strategic bases at Clark Field and Subic Bay, it is far more likely that Aquino's government will not survive to negotiate a new treaty. The old treaty expires in 1991. Furthermore, with this last U.S. "show of force" during the coup bid, anyone who wants to score political points in the Philippines will be forced to come out against the bases. This is a lesson that the Nacionalista Party, comprised of former Marcos and Aquino loyalists, has already learned, with its calls for termination of the bases agreement.