Chapter 13

Limited Retrenchment in East Asia

President Nixon's 1972 visit to the People's Republic of China (PRC), the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, and the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from South Vietnam promised to begin a new era in U.S. relations with East Asia. Yet important aspects of U.S. policy toward the region remained unchanged after 1973. The Nixon administration first outlined its approach to East Asia in 1969. The Nixon Doctrine called for U.S. allies to assume greater responsibility for their own defense; indigenous military forces would receive military aid and training to handle small conflicts and insurgencies on their own. National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 27, signed by Nixon in October 1969, stipulated that the United States should prepare to wage a regional war in East Asia. In February 1973, after Nixon's second inauguration, the president ordered an interagency reassessment of U.S. strategy for East Asia. The resulting study did not change the U.S. approach. American and allied forces would remain capable of combined conventional defense. In the event of regional war, U.S. planners expected to reinforce allies with "the full range of land, naval, and tactical air forces." The United States would keep military forces forward deployed throughout the region—and use security assistance to help allies meet indigenous challenges. To be sure, Nixon's resignation weakened the presidency and strengthened the hand of Congress in the design and implementation of foreign military relations. The fall of South Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975 likewise tested U.S. relations with its Asian allies. The Ford administration navigated these crosscurrents, embraced continuity, and reaffirmed the enduring U.S. commitment to key East Asian allies.[1]

Keeping a Foothold in Thailand and the Philippines

Presidents Nixon and Ford wanted to maintain U.S. military bases in Thailand and the Philippines after the Vietnam War. Strategic, political, and historical forces produced different outcomes in the two countries. Since the 1960s U.S. Air Force facilities in Thailand enabled the bombing campaigns against North Vietnam and Laos. Thailand had authorized the U.S. presence for the duration of the conflict. After the Paris Peace Accords President Nixon planned to reduce the U.S. military presence in Thailand. By year's end he wanted to trim the number of B-52s in Thailand from 50 to 17, tactical squadrons from 15 to 9, and AC-130 gunship squadrons from 2 to 1. Nixon also proposed a 30 percent cut in U.S. personnel in Thailand; he invited recommendations from Defense, State, and the Central Intelligence Agency on what facilities and equipment to turn over to the Thais. In mid-April Schlesinger directed military officials to complete initial drawdown by September 1. Despite interagency arguments to stretch out the redeployments, Schlesinger decided to accelerate the move in response to congressional pressure. By announcing a large reduction of 10,000 personnel he hoped to preempt more severe legislatively mandated reductions.[2]

After the U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam, Thailand became the main base of U.S. operations in Southeast Asia. Schlesinger considered access to air bases in Thailand as essential to U.S. operations in the region. He insisted that the P-3 Orion surveillance missions, launched from the U.S.-built U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, continue after the end of combat operations in Vietnam, largely because they allowed the United States to monitor Soviet naval activities in the Indian Ocean. Thailand had misgivings about the bases and P-3 missions but did not immediately want to break with the U.S. military. For U.S. defense officials, funding for the bases in Thailand become problematic. Thailand expected sizable compensation for use of the

defense sites. Reductions in the military assistance program, the U.S. ambassador to Thailand, William R. Kintner, warned Schlesinger in May 1974, had created doubts among Thai leaders about the reliability of the United States. Congress wanted to cut fiscal year 1974 grant aid for Thailand below the previous level of $35 million. For Kintner, such a reduction would upset Thailand's military, the strongest U.S. ally in Southeast Asia, and endanger U.S. access to Thai bases.[3]

Prospects for maintaining the then-current levels of military assistance remained poor in late 1974. In October, Schlesinger told Kintner about the likelihood of still further reductions in U.S. assistance. Defense Security Assistance director Lt. Gen. Howard M. Fish added, it might become difficult to provide the Thais with equipment they purchased in prior years. At that time, Thailand's military keenly wanted to add to its fleet of OV-10 Bronco observation aircraft. Kintner pressed Schlesinger to support the request to bolster U.S. relations with Thailand. Instead, Schlesinger suggested a swap: OV-10s in exchange for Thai support of U.S. P-3 operations at U-Tapao Airfield. In December the quid pro quo reappeared when the Thai government asked for $175 million to replace obsolete weapons; Deputy Defense Secretary Bill Clements opposed the request unless Thailand agreed to P-3 flights and U.S. terms for a new basing agreement.[4]

The fears of reduced military aid for Thailand were well-founded. In March 1974 the White House asked Schlesinger to reduce U.S. force levels for Thailand for FY 1976 and beyond. Schlesinger recommended lowering U.S. personnel to 7,000 during FY 1976 but added a warning. The pace of a U.S. withdrawal would likely affect the timing of North Vietnam's return to large-scale combat operations in South Vietnam. He contended that the U.S. presence in Thailand and the ability to surge U.S. forces rapidly with B-52s and tactical aircraft represented a

valuable deterrent to egregious North Vietnamese violations of the peace agreement. Hoping to accommodate the Thai government, Schlesinger recommended in October 1974 that the White House cut manpower from 27,000 to 7,000 during FY 1976 and retain only the U-Tapao facility plus a logistics port and a support complex. He expected the Thais to seek compensation in exchange for a long-term U.S. presence. President Ford, who had taken office in August 1974, decided in February 1975 on a FY 1976 force level of 10,000 personnel, more than the defense secretary proposed. In addition to U-Tapao, Ford also wanted to maintain U.S. infrastructure at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base in caretaker status through FY 1977; he delayed a decision on U.S. operations at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base. In the meantime, Ford directed the State Department to negotiate a contract with the Thai government for maintaining access to certain Thai bases. Thereafter, American diplomats charged with negotiating basing agreements languished in the absence of clear guidance on key issues, the result of bureaucratic confusion in Washington.[5]

Events in South Vietnam upended the administration's schedule. As South Vietnam's political and military control unraveled in March and April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to accelerate reductions in Thailand. The United States, they recognized, would not intervene to defend South Vietnam, and therefore did not need forces in Thailand. In addition, the JCS saw no immediate danger to Thailand from an outside aggressor. On April 28, with Saigon's fall only hours away, the military chiefs recommended removing all Air Force combat forces from Thailand by September 30, 1975, absent overriding political considerations. Clements disagreed, believing it was important to maintain U.S. forces in the area to reassure the Thais. As U.S. officials debated force levels, other developments damaged U.S. relations with Thailand. To recover the hijacked container ship SS *Mayaguez* and its crew in May 1975, the United States

transported Marines and launched tactical air sorties from bases in Thailand without first consulting Thai officials. To assuage the Thais, who lodged a strong protest with U.S. officials, and to prevent further deterioration of relations, the White House ordered the redeployment of all B-52s and F-111s, the closure of Ubon Air Base, and the reduction of all associated personnel from Thailand by the end of June, if possible.[6]

The communist victory in Vietnam and Cambodia had a significant impact on U.S.-Thai relations. Robert Ellsworth, assistant defense secretary for international security affairs, went so far as to suggest in June that it was no longer essential to maintain a U.S. military presence in Thailand. He detailed how Thailand's ineffective government, the looming threat of a military coup in Thailand, the loss of Indochina, and congressional resistance to U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia meant that "the special rapport which the US has enjoyed with Thailand from 1950 until the early 1970s has come to an end." He suggested cutting the American presence "to the bone," but did not want to eliminate it completely because he thought the Thai government would desire a residual relationship. Defense, State, and the Central Intelligence Agency proposed leaving 3,000 U.S. personnel at U-Tapao for intelligence collection and support activities. President Ford approved on October 24, 1975.[7]

Even these modest goals proved unattainable. In 1976 Amos Jordan (as acting head of ISA since Ellsworth's elevation to deputy secretary in December 1975) informed Secretary Rumsfeld that the Thai government had raised new issues that jeopardized long-term ties with the United States. As a matter of sovereignty, the government insisted, according to Jordan, that "American facilities and personnel be subject to Thai jurisdiction unless exempted by specific agreement," and threatened to expel all military personnel except the Military Assistance Advisory Group. American officials found the terms unacceptable. As Jordan noted, South

Vietnam's collapse had completely changed Thai attitudes toward the U.S. presence. The weak civilian government in Bangkok was likely to be replaced by a military coup. In that environment, no Thai official could defend a U.S. presence. The Thai government announced on March 20, 1976, that all U.S. forces had to leave within four months. In NSDM 327, issued one month later, Ford prescribed a low-key approach: the continuation of a modest security assistance program without hindering Thai efforts to adjust their international relationships. The president wanted to continue economic aid and improve trade with Thailand. Still, the special rapport of 1960s had vanished.[8]

American officials encountered some similar challenges in the Philippines, a former U.S. colony, but achieved different results. The United States and the Philippines shared a long, intricate history—and strong economic ties—that predated the Cold War. The U.S. bases on Luzon, U.S. defense officials believed, were vital to U.S. national security interests. U.S. Naval Station Subic Bay served as an important repair and maintenance site for the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet; Clark Air Force Base, at the time, was the largest overseas U.S. military base in the world. During the early 1970s, the Philippines encountered social, economic, and internal security problems. In September 1972, President Fernando E. Marcos, elected in 1965, declared martial law, dismissed congress, and arrested political opponents. Hardly revolutionary, Marcos's "revolution from the top" enabled rampant corruption and political repression. It also disrupted the U.S. relationship with the Philippines. "Growing Philippine nationalism," Kissinger told Nixon in March 1973, threatened "unacceptable restrictions on our base access and on U.S. private investment" in the archipelago. Yet, Kissinger noted, "There is no viable alternative to Marcos … [who would] be in effective control at least for the near-term." In what Kissinger described as a "nationalistic ploy," Marcos called for a revision of the U.S.-Philippines security

alliance "in a framework of national dignity," notably the restoration of Filipino sovereignty over U.S. defense sites. Marcos understood he needed the United States to accomplish his domestic goals. Nevertheless, he raised pressure on the United States after the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh. "Philippine leaders were shocked by U.S. inaction in the face of the collapse of Indochina," U.S. Ambassador William H. Sullivan told Brent Scowcroft, then deputy national security adviser, in July 1975. Beyond basing matters, Filipinos openly questioned the U.S. commitment to the defense of the Philippines against external aggression.[9]

The U.S. basing arrangement in the Philippines differed from the situation in Thailand. During the mid-1960s, the United States expanded Thai military facilities to accommodate U.S. forces. Thai officials commanded the bases, which belong to Thailand. In the Philippines, however, the United States controlled Subic Bay Naval Base, Clark Air Force Base, and other defense sites. According to the Military Basing Agreement of 1947, amended in 1959, U.S. facilities in the Philippines were U.S. territory, with leases running through the late 20th century. In 1974, President Marcos called for a revision of the military basing agreement—not the withdrawal of U.S. forces.[10]

In addition to basing issues, U.S. diplomats encountered Filipino concerns about provisions of the bilateral Mutual Defense Agreement of 1951. Filipinos expected the United States would defend U.S. bases and major cities, such as Manila, but questioned how the U.S. might react to an attack on Filipino forces in other contested areas like the Spratly Islands. Marcos, Ambassador Sullivan reported to the National Security Council, therefore sought "at least the appearance of sovereignty" over the bases, increased U.S. military and economic assistance, and a "security commitment on the basis of the NATO model." The Marcos government, too, conflated U.S. military assistance (about $20 million per year) as rent for U.S.

bases. As a matter of principle, Secretary Schlesinger strongly opposed a formal quid pro quo with the Philippines—although he proved willing to use assistance as leverage, as during U.S. negotiations with Thailand. Concerned about the deterioration of U.S. relations with the Philippines, President Ford stopped in Manila after his visit to the People's Republic of China in December 1975. Ford's state visit included a memorial ceremony at Corregidor on December 7. That day, Ford and Marcos agreed to negotiations on the future of U.S. bases in the Philippines. Formal bilateral talks began in April 1976. American diplomats, however, complained about the pace of developments during the months that followed, largely blaming inattentive officials in Washington. The sluggish U.S. bureaucracy, Sullivan complained, "is distressingly reminiscent" of its handling of "the Thai [base] negotiation." He warned Secretary Kissinger: "The capacity of the Filipinos (and their talent) to harass our bases is infinite." Secretary Rumsfeld, too, urged action: "I am concerned about the status of base negotiations with the Philippines and the potential impact of these negotiations on the operations of our bases as Subic and Clark…. The Defense Department continues to view the unhampered operation of these bases as necessary to our air and naval operations in the Southwest Pacific and Indian Ocean areas." Then, in late 1976, the Filipinos began stalling talks, calculating they would reach more favorable terms from Democratic Party presidential candidate Jimmy Carter. The two countries did not reach a new basing agreement until January 1979. While U.S. military bases in Thailand had become a casualty of the Vietnam War, U.S. facilities in the Philippines—an enduring feature of the 20th century to that point—would remain through the end of the Cold War.[11]

South Korea: How Much Self-Reliance?

With the end of U.S. combat in Indochina in 1973, the Korean peninsula remained the only place on the Asian mainland where U.S. and communist forces directly confronted each other. The 1953 armistice ending the Korean War had divided the peninsula between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—Kim Il Sung's communist dictatorship in the north—and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south, which was allied with the United States and under Park Chung Hee's authoritarian leadership. In 1973 the U.S. military had 42,000 personnel in South Korea. That number included the 2nd Infantry Division, an F-4 wing, a Hawk surface-to-air missile battalion, and two surface-to-surface missile battalions, one equipped with MGM-29 Sergeants and the other with MGR-1 Honest Johns. A four-star general served as both commander in chief (CINC) of U.S. Forces, Korea, and as CINC of the United Nations Command overwhelmingly composed of U.S. and South Korean forces. The UN command gave the CINC operational control over ROK forces. Annual U.S. support to Korea for stationing troops and providing economic and military assistance reached nearly $1 billion in FY 1972.[12]

At the start of Nixon's second term, some in Congress questioned whether keeping U.S. soldiers in South Korea was in the national interest. Critics alleged that the U.S. military presence helped keep the autocratic Park Chung Hee in office and increased the danger of embroiling the United States in another Asian war. Robert S. Elegant, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, alluded to how the rapprochement between Washington and Beijing and between Washington and Moscow exposed the difficulty on the Korean peninsula: the United States, he claimed, had not yet been able "to adjust its troop dispositions to the new realities of its international relations. And neither Peking nor Moscow has adjusted its ideological posture to those realities." The basic situation in Korea had not changed.[13]

Secretary Richardson defended the existing arrangements in Korea as essential to U.S. interests and policy. In his view, the security assistance program, "the linchpin of the Nixon Doctrine," gave Korea and other countries "the means of military self-sufficiency." The 1971 five-year modernization plan for South Korean forces had enabled the United States to withdraw 20,000 U.S. soldiers from the peninsula and allowed South Korean units to assume responsibility for frontline defense along the Demilitarized Zone. The secretary acknowledged these as positive steps, but averred, "We have not yet reached the day when no U.S. forces are needed." Until that time, the United States needed to maintain a peninsular presence "both as an earnest signal of our intent to defend a staunch ally, and as a guarantee that the modernization program…will be completed."[14]

In April 1972, shortly after his visit to China, President Nixon ordered a wide-ranging policy study to identify U.S. interests, objectives, and options during the next three to five years. The review examined the possibility of Korean reunification and political accommodation. It also investigated the impact of improved Sino-American relations as well as the continued UN presence in Korea. Limited North-South contacts had already begun. Reacting with caution, Nixon in July 1973 directed the State and Defense departments to encourage Park to continue the North-South dialog but to avoid trying to force their pace. He issued interim guidance stating he would make no changes in U.S. force levels. The United States would also continue its support for the ROK five-year military modernization program.[15]

The limited North-South contacts ultimately had no discernible effect on the contest for military supremacy on the peninsula. Indeed, North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung held fast to his nationwide military readiness agenda. His doctrine evinced no political moderation. Neither did Beijing when it renewed its military assistance to North Korea even as the United States and

China worked to improve relations in the early 1970s. Meanwhile, Soviet military aid to Pyongyang continued.[16]

Nixon had withdrawn the U.S. 7th Infantry Division from Korea during his first term as part of his effort to encourage regional self-reliance and cut defense spending. To help compensate for the withdrawal, the administration had agreed to provide South Korea $1.5 billion in grants, sales, and arms transfers during FYs 1971–1975 under a five-year modernization program, a manifest example of the Nixon Doctrine's emphasis on regional self-reliance. Modernization funds amounted to $200 million per year in grant military assistance and the provision of excess U.S. equipment. Economic assistance came to $50 million annually. However, Congress balked at the cost of U.S. assistance to South Korea. For FY 1973 Congress cut the $235 million request to $150 million. That sum included about $14 million to pay for an F-4D squadron that the ROK had loaned to South Vietnam during 1972. In February 1973 Secretary of State William Rogers alerted Richardson to a severe shortfall in grant aid funds for FY 1973 that could harm U.S. credibility with the ROK government and undermine modernization. Richardson advised Rogers that, since diversions from other country programs would be unwise, any reallocation of funds must be done within the $150 million ceiling. Money had to be reprogrammed to cover a $20 million shortfall in operations and maintenance costs of the ROK armed forces.[17]

Schlesinger reached a different conclusion about modernization when he took office in July 1973. He considered it necessary to "begin a gradual and delicate weaning away of the Koreans from a dependence on the U.S., but in a way that does not offend their national pride." The pressure of congressional cuts forced the Defense Department in that direction. The modernization program for FYs 1971–1975 had already fallen about $230 million behind

expectations, and Schlesinger did not expect Congress to provide enough money to complete even a stretched-out plan. Korea, he noted, was only part of the larger military assistance program: “Korea eats into such a large amount of the total MAP that we are unable to fund emergency situations in other countries.” Moreover, Schlesinger considered some items in the ROK modernization program—like the Hawk and Chaparral surface-to-air missile systems—to be overly exotic and of questionable utility with high operations and maintenance costs. In his judgment, South Korea had to understand that “the U.S. cornucopia is not bottomless.”[18]

Nixon stayed on course, despite Schlesinger’s concerns. His interim policy guidance of July 1973 maintained current U.S. force levels and extended the modernization program through FY 1977. It put more emphasis on air defense to allow the possible withdrawal of ground troops. Two months later, at the annual U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting in Seoul, the two nations agreed to make qualitative improvements in ROK air defense and stretch out the modernization program because of the limited availability of U.S. funds.[19]

On September 24, 1974, Clements conferred in Hawaii with Suh Jyong-Chul, the South Korean minister of defense. Suh urged the United States to complete the force modernization program by FY 1977, but Clements thought the timeline would be difficult because Congress had to authorize funds. He advised the Korean government to seek credits rather than grants and build the Korean defense industries needed to support the armed forces. The U.S. Army 2nd Infantry Division was also a major topic in the discussions. The House Appropriations Committee in August had suggested the DoD redeploy the division, stationed near the DMZ, to the south of Seoul—and then withdraw from Korea beginning in FY 1976. Clements assured the Koreans that the administration strongly opposed moving the infantry division.[20]

In October 1974 President Ford ordered a review of the ROK security assistance program—to include a study on the future of U.S. grants to the South Korean military. In January 1975, after the policy review was completed, he decided the U.S. must complete the modernization program "at an early date" and shift over time from grants to military sales. The president set no date for terminating grant assistance, but certainly expected it to continue at some level beyond FY 1977. This was a slower timetable than Clements and JCS Chairman General George Brown preferred. They had proposed to reduce grants from $75 million to $25 million between FYs 1975 and 1977 while increasing sales and credits from $52 million to $175 million. They also had recommended ending practically all grant aid once the modernization program was completed.[21]

South Korean leaders pondered what to do should Congress stint on military aid or compel the Pentagon to reduce the U.S. military presence in Korea. In mid-March 1975 Richard L. Sneider, the U.S. ambassador to South Korea, told Schlesinger he believed President Park expected the United States to pull out of Korea in two to four years. In the face of congressional pressure, Schlesinger was inclined to do just that, according to Scowcroft. Naturally, Park wanted to prepare Korea economically and militarily for that possibility. Sneider noted that some Koreans even led Park to regard an independent nuclear capability as crucial. To that end, South Korea assembled a staff of researchers and began to acquire necessary equipment abroad, notably from France. Nothing, Sneider feared, could be more destabilizing to East Asia than a nuclear explosion by the South Koreans. Sneider thought a nuclear South Korea might motivate the Japanese to develop their own nuclear program, which in turn could bring China and the Soviet Union into a closer alliance.[22]

The U.S. abandonment of South Vietnam leading to its total collapse in 1975 only heightened South Korean concerns. On April 2, with a communist victory imminent, Korean ambassador Ham Pyong Chung told Schlesinger that Korea, caught between two superpowers, felt acutely vulnerable. The ambassador contrasted the United States' inability to aid an ally like Cambodia with the unshakeable determination of the communists to support their side. He noted the Nixon Doctrine put a heavier defense burden on Korea, but many South Koreans opposed their nation's emphasis on defense. Schlesinger reassured South Korea, counselling the ambassador not to "misread the implications for American power of the fall of South Vietnam." The American public had grown disenchanted with that war, he continued, but no one was questioning U.S. treaty commitments elsewhere. The secretary made an important distinction between Korea and Vietnam. The South Vietnamese—unlike the South Koreans—had failed to develop a cohesive national unity and will.[23]

The failure of the United States to challenge North Vietnam's offensive in spring 1975 greatly disturbed South Korea's president, even raising doubts about the reliability of the United States as an ally. The divided Korean peninsula bore an unmistakable resemblance to the division of Vietnam. As South Vietnam began to collapse, Ambassador Sneider urged Washington to review its policies in Korea and take measures to boost South Korea's confidence in U.S. support. He also raised a larger point: it was time for the Ford administration to modify policy to changing circumstances inside South Korea. The Seoul government might still depend on the United States for military assistance, but with a growing economy it could no longer be regarded as a client state. The United States needed to establish a new foundation for a lasting partnership with South Korea. In June 1975 Morton Abramowitz, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Inter-American, East Asian and Pacific Affairs, visited Korea to canvass a wide

range of U.S. and ROK officials to help him develop a new U.S. long-term policy for Korea that fit changing circumstances. "Despite their rhetoric," he reported, "influential Koreans do not fear an all-out attack by the North. That particular fear is aroused only by the prospect of the removal of U.S. troops." A coherent U.S. political and military policy that considered Korea as an emerging mid-level power would assuage Korean concerns.[24]

After Saigon fell, Schlesinger thought it prudent for political reasons to suspend for six months any realignment of U.S. forces in the Pacific area. Disengagement was too risky as long as North Korea remained hostile and militant. In no mood to weaken the U.S. military presence, the Joint Chiefs recommended in July 1975 that the entire 2nd Infantry Division remain deployed north of Seoul and that a U.S. Army company remain stationed at the DMZ line. The division and the company stayed in place. Likewise, the program to "Koreanize" the I Corps Group, a joint command under a U.S. officer that included the 2nd Infantry Division along with 10 ROK divisions and three ROK corps headquarters, came to a halt.[25]

Responding to Korean concerns about continued U.S. engagement, Schlesinger arrived in Korea in August 1975 for meetings with Admiral Noel Gayler, the commander in chief, Pacific Command; General Brown; and South Korea's military and political leadership. President Park welcomed the high-level visit, judging it "a significant demonstration of U.S. resolve to meet its commitments and a clear warning to North Korea." Nevertheless, South Vietnam's fall had spurred the Korean government to become more self-sufficient. At an August 27 meeting with Schlesinger, President Park disclosed Korea's five-year force improvement plan to upgrade combat capability to defend against an attack by a North that did *not* have substantial help from the Soviet Union or China. The plan would upgrade Korea's navy and air force and improve the mobility and firepower of ground forces. Park explained his government's thinking. South

Vietnam's collapse created tension on the Korean peninsula, making South Koreans wary that it would give North Korea an opportunity to attack the South. To prevent any miscalculation by North Korea, Park wanted to make clear his determination to stem aggression, with or without direct U.S. involvement. Envisioning the U.S. role as preserving the balance of power to prevent a war in the region, he requested that U.S. forces remain at the same level until the five-year plan was completed and that a substantial number of U.S. personnel remain afterward.[26]

Schlesinger assured President Park that the United States was prepared to help with logistics, air combat, close air support, and artillery. He praised the five-year plan for showing U.S. critics that South Korea was in fact taking responsibility for its own defense. The United States, Schlesinger said, needed to maintain forces in Northeast Asia and the Western Pacific to deal with possible intervention by China and the Soviet Union. He privately assured South Korea's president that he foresaw "no basic changes over the next five years" in the number of U.S. troops stationed in Korea, a position not explicitly embraced by the Ford administration. With the 1976 presidential election on the horizon, however, the president would make no changes in Korea.[27]

To achieve self-sufficiency South Korea, ironically, still needed U.S. materiel and equipment. In 1976 Seoul wanted to replace an aging fleet of 421 M47 tanks with an equal number of M48A1s. The JCS, the assistant secretary of defense for Installations and Logistics, and the Army all endorsed the sale, but Edward Aldridge, acting assistant defense secretary for Program Analysis and Evaluation, opposed the transaction. He feared that diverting 421 M48s to Korea would deplete the U.S. Army's inventory for a year, delay the conversion of two infantry divisions into mechanized/armored formations, and hinder the restoration of prepositioned stocks in Europe. The Army contended that a sale would not harm either short-term readiness or the

upgrading of M48A5 tanks with 105mm guns. Agreeing with the Army, Donald Rumsfeld, who had replaced Schlesinger in October 1975, approved the sale in June 1976.[28]

In January 1976 Acting Assistant Secretary (ISA) Amos Jordan assessed Korean issues for Rumsfeld. Jordan described the military balance on the peninsula as “reasonably satisfactory” and stressed that the U.S. military presence was essential to keeping peace. He noted the South Korean economy’s “fantastic growth” had allowed the ROK to finance 90 percent of its defense expenditures. Korean resources devoted to defense had risen from 4.5 percent to 6.5 percent of the country’s gross national product. Meanwhile, the U.S. military presence in Korea was losing support in United States. Fearing a U.S. withdrawal, Park had begun a secret program to develop nuclear weapons and surface-to-surface missiles. Schlesinger had told Park in August 1975 that Seoul needed to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. A South Korean effort to acquire nuclear weapons, Schlesinger warned, could undermine the U.S.-ROK political relationship. A nuclear ROK would destabilize Northeast Asia and undermine U.S. public support for Korea. Several months later a high-level team of U.S. missile experts helped to convince Park that his bid for missiles and advanced conventional technology was unnecessary.[29]

In May 1976, during the annual Security Consultative Meeting, Rumsfeld assured South Korea’s defense minister Suh that the United States had no plans to withdraw forces. He praised the South Korean government for its decision regarding nuclear materials. Any other outcome, he said, would have adversely affected the whole spectrum of U.S.-ROK relationships. Minister Suh reaffirmed that South Korea had no plans to acquire nuclear weapons. Seoul ended its efforts, even though Pyongyang had initiated its own nuclear weapons program. The Korean peninsula would long remain an area of tense confrontation, and the U.S. military presence there

would remain politically controversial. Ford's democratic opponent for president, Jimmy Carter, advocated complete withdrawal of American ground forces from the Korean peninsula, and as president took steps to do so.[30]

Indonesia: Standing With Suharto

Indonesia's pro-western alignment dated from 1965–1966. After the failed coup by the Indonesian 30 September Movement (1965), Indonesia's anticommunist army, under the command of General Suharto, launched a bloody purge that killed at least one million Indonesians. Then, in 1967, Suharto seized power from Indonesia's founder President Sukarno. Suharto ruled with dictatorial powers for 31 years, bringing to Indonesia political stability and economic growth, but also an oppressive national police force and rampant corruption. Presidents Nixon and Ford provided modest U.S. military support for Indonesia under Suharto. During 1971–1972, the Nixon administration sought a mere $25 million in grant military assistance. Even though MAP outlays reached only $17.9 million in FY 1973 and $14.4 million in FY 1974, Indonesians tended to regard $25 million as a commitment by the administration.[31]

Clements met with Defense Minister Maraden Panggabean in Jakarta in September 1974. The Indonesian minister voiced concern over U.S. MAP outlays—below the $25 million target Indonesian officials expected. Clements acknowledged Indonesian concerns, stressed the U.S. desire for regional security, and expressed his hope that U.S. grant aid would at least continue for one or two more years. Clements openly worried, however, that a strong feeling in Congress about the rising price of oil, which benefited Indonesia as a large oil exporter, could create obstacles for future U.S. military assistance, even at reduced levels. Clements met separately with Suharto, who said his nation would buy frigates from Britain after the United States turned

him down. Clements had been unaware of this but noted that DoD was developing a frigate that would be available to other countries. On his return, he advised Schlesinger, "We have a great opportunity to develop our relationship with Indonesia and should work vigorously to do so."[32]

On July 5, 1975, President Ford hosted President Suharto at Camp David, Maryland. Ford and other U.S. officials wanted to deliver some military aid, but also manage Indonesian expectations. "We would be able to make available some equipment," Ford told Suharto, including "four naval vessels which would not be in tip-top condition, some trucks, some aircraft such as C-47s and four C-123 transports." Contrary to U.S. intentions, Indonesians left the meeting expecting large amounts of grant aid.[33]

East Timor, part of an island in the Indonesian archipelago, emerged as a troubling issue in 1975. A 1974 revolution in Portugal prompted steps to end colonial rule and inspired the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor to push for immediate independence. The front controlled nearly all East Timor by September 1975, and by the end of November the group declared the territory's independence. Jakarta, however, wanted to control the entire island and make East Timor Indonesia's 27th province. Indonesian special forces infiltrated East Timor and Indonesia issued a "declaration of integration" incorporating East Timor into Indonesia.[34]

With Indonesian forces poised for invasion, President Ford and Secretary Kissinger stopped in Jakarta on December 5, 1975, on their way home from China. Suharto asked them for their "understanding if we deem it necessary to take rapid or drastic action" on East Timor. Ford replied, "We will understand and will not press you on this issue." Kissinger added, "It is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly." The Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor, apparently delayed by their visit, began the next day. The Indonesian military occupation of East Timor became a violent decades-long conflict with the separatists.[35]

Bilateral agreements stipulated that U.S.-supplied arms could be used only for defensive purposes, but the invasion was carried out with U.S. weapons and equipment. Writing to Secretary Rumsfeld on December 16, Senator Gary W. Hart (D-CO) cited press reports that the invasion had been preceded by a naval bombardment and airlift and asked if U.S.-supplied destroyers and transports were involved. Officials in ISA advised Rumsfeld to be straightforward in answering. The intelligence community had already amply documented the Indonesians' use of U.S.-supplied weapons. An honest response, though, could elicit questions about how substantial the violation had been and whether Indonesia should remain eligible for grants and credits. Pending a review by the State Department, the Defense Security Assistance Agency had already stopped processing new credit guarantees, letters of offer, and MAP orders. Deliveries arranged before the East Timor invasion were going ahead, though, and ISA deemed it inadvisable to inform Senator Hart of these developments. With State's concurrence, Rumsfeld told Hart that local sources indicated that at least some U.S. equipment was used but that the United States had no observers in East Timor to confirm. During FYs 1976 and 1977, assistance to Indonesia amounted to just $13 million in grants and about $23 million in foreign military sales credits.[36]

Seeking Balance on Taiwan

After Nixon's visit to the People's Republic of China in 1972, his administration sought to improve relations with the revolutionary government but at the same time maintain links with the anticommunists it had defeated, the Republic of China (ROC) on the island of Taiwan. At the end of Nixon's historic trip, the United States and the PRC issued the Shanghai Communique, which detailed an agreement to move toward normalization of relations and reduce the danger of

military conflict. Both agreed not to seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States reaffirmed its regional commitments to Japan and South Korea, but there was no agreement on the status of Taiwan. China demanded sovereign control over Taiwan and the withdrawal of U.S. forces and installations from the island, a condition unacceptable to the United States. The United States made a vague, open-ended pledge to "progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as tension in the area diminishes." Complete withdrawal was the "ultimate objective." From the U.S. perspective the communique preserved continuity of policy with Taiwan for the near term and had no immediate effect on the U.S. defense commitment to the region. As Kissinger explained, Nixon had made no binding commitment to the communist regime to withdraw or reduce forces from Taiwan. The president wanted to preserve Cold War alliances in the Pacific, protect national security interests, and position the United States so it could play the Soviet Union and China against each other.[37]

Taiwan remained a sensitive issue. If Washington was perceived as remaining too close to the government in Taipei it would jeopardize ties with mainland China. Taiwan, on the other hand, wanted assurances that the United States would not abandon the ROC. Taipei relied on the U.S. military to maintain its independence. At the end of Nixon's first term in January 1973, the president briefly met with the ROC vice president, Yen Chia-Kan, who was in Washington to attend the funeral of former President Harry S. Truman. Yen Chia-Kan wanted U.S. support for keeping Taiwan in international organizations: "We have to do everything to prevent our isolation.". He also reminded Nixon of Taiwan's assistance to the United States when the administration had asked Taiwan to transfer aircraft to help South Vietnam during the 1972 Easter Offensive. Under the Enhance Plus program to bolster South Vietnam's defenses Taiwan

had provided 48 F-5 fighters. The U.S. Air Force in turn had deployed two squadrons of F-4s (36 aircraft) to Taiwan as temporary replacements.[38]

The United States had a modest military presence on Taiwan. Only 9,349 military personnel were stationed on the island at the beginning of 1973, with the majority performing Pacific Theater missions that did not involve defending Taiwan. In dealing with the PRC, however, Kissinger believed in taking preemptive steps and told Beijing that the United States would pull its Vietnam-related forces from Taiwan immediately, thereby hoping to defer pressure for further withdrawals for a year or so. Given the small size of U.S. equipment grants to Taiwan, Kissinger concluded they were “not important to ROC security.” While he was secretary, Laird had defended the grants on the grounds that Taiwan had assisted the U.S. effort in Vietnam. After Laird’s departure, Kissinger informed Nixon that eliminating the Taiwan section of the security assistance program for FY 1974 would ease its legislative approval. Defense and State agreed. Richard T. Kennedy, one of Kissinger’s NSC deputies, noted that the small amount of aid, in the context of the size and growth of Taiwan’s economy, made it feasible to shift from grants of materiel to arms sales backed by U.S. foreign military sales credits. Nixon approved the elimination of military assistance materiel grants to Taiwan on February 14, 1973. Schlesinger later observed that Taiwan’s dramatic economic development had enabled it to increase its military expenditures.[39]

In February 1973, Secretary Richardson explained that he wanted to draw down the U.S. presence in Taiwan. He recommended redeploying two Taiwan-based C-130 transport squadrons—one of which was on a temporary assignment stemming from the 1972 Easter Offensive. After he took over, Schlesinger saw political gains in pulling out the remaining C-130 squadrons before March 31, 1974. President Nixon changed the date to December 31, 1973.[40]

Removing the two USAF F-4 squadrons temporarily deployed to Taiwan was more complicated. Under a U.S.-ROC agreement, the first F-4 squadron could only leave after 20 on-loan F-5As returned from Vietnam; the second, after 28 F-5Es replacements were provided through coproduction. In January 1974, State and Defense developed options for withdrawing the two F-4 squadrons by year's end. They recommended removing the first squadron by July 31, when Taiwan-based rehabilitation of 20 F-5As would be finished. But the second squadron would not leave until May 31, 1975, when the 28 F-5Es originally slated for Korea replaced them. Kissinger had hoped to remove all F-4s by the year's close but recognized that this deadline would not allow time to train F-5E pilots. Moreover, the Taiwanese might view the action as forcing on them an agreement made in Beijing. Accordingly, in March 1974, President Nixon directed that one F-4 squadron should depart Taiwan by July 31, with the ROC receiving 20 F-5As as replacements. The second squadron would not leave until May 31, 1975; 28 F-5Es earmarked for Korea would be diverted to the ROC until F-5Es coproduced in Taiwan became available.[41]

It soon became apparent that the United States and China were acting on different assumptions. In October 1974 the CIA discerned "a shift to harshness in Peking's policy toward the U.S." Anticipating a speedier American disengagement from formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, PRC Politburo chairman Mao Tse-tung was dissatisfied with the pace of U.S. moves. He affirmed that China would continue to support liberation movements and increase its political efforts in developing world. Other reasons for the shift in tone were decreased fears of a Soviet attack, a perception that the Third World would provide Beijing with political help, and Mao's wish to synchronize foreign policy with a sharp leftward turn at home.[42]

In October 1974, President Ford issued National Security Study Memorandum 212 requesting an analysis of U.S. arms transfer policy toward Taiwan for the next three to five years. The study assumed the ongoing normalization of relations with the PRC, continuation of the Sino-Soviet border confrontation, and no interruption in the U.S. defense commitment to Taiwan. Ford wanted to review options for arms transfers considering the threat to Taiwan's security, the roles of U.S. and ROC forces, and the deficiencies in Taiwan's defenses. The underlying U.S. interest was to have the Chinese parties reach a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question. The United States would supply arms to Taiwan but avoid steps that the PRC could interpret as inconsistent with normalizing relations or going against the Shanghai Communique. The administration also endeavored to maintain the confidence of Taiwan's leaders and avoid any action that would lead the PRC to believe that the United States no longer had any interest in Taiwan's security. For Taiwan, access to U.S. arms would grow in importance as the United States withdrew forces.[43]

Completed in November 1974, the study offered four options for navigating "the narrow ground on which the contradictory objectives of advancing normalization with the PRC while assuring the security of the ROC can be successfully pursued." The administration decided it would simply provide noncontroversial items like antitank missiles and some electronic countermeasures.[44] In 1975 Taiwan requested, with the Defense Department's recommendation, transferring three TC-28 aircraft trainers, two minesweeping ships, and four S-2E antisubmarine warfare (ASW) aircraft, as well as selling a second Improved Hawk battalion to defend southern Taiwan. The White House approved. During his visit to Beijing early in December 1975, President Ford informed the PRC that he intended to reduce the U.S. presence in Taiwan. He

would lower DoD civilian and military personnel levels in Taiwan to 1,400 by December 31, 1976. That deadline later was extended to March 1977.[45]

Domestic politics impeded the rapprochement with China. Facing a primary challenge from his party's right wing in 1976, President Ford felt unable to press forward with normalization of relations with the PRC. China was not pleased. On January 8, 1977, the chief of the PRC Liaison Office told Secretary Kissinger that the United States must take three steps before relations could improve: sever diplomatic relations with the ROC, withdraw U.S. troops from Taiwan, and abrogate the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty. The deaths of China's two Cold War leaders, nationalist Chiang Kai-shek in April 1975 and communist Mao Tse-tung in September 1976, may have ended an era but left the incoming Carter administration with a crucial decision on China.[46]

Japan

During the early 1970s, the Nixon administration wanted Japan to increase its military capabilities. Japanese officials refused, citing cultural, political, and historic reasons. Democratic Japan had been a U.S. ally since the end of World War II. It was the second largest U.S. trading partner, after Canada, and the third largest industrial economy in the world. Economic strength aside, Japan possessed little military strength. The Constitution of 1946 limited Japanese forces to homeland defense. The Japanese spent less than 1 percent of GNP on national security. With the smallest army in the region, Tokyo relied on U.S. forces for protection.[47]

At the beginning of Nixon's second term, U.S. relations with Japan were on sound footing. American disengagement from the Vietnam War had reduced the anti-U.S. protests from Japanese leftist groups, and the 1972 reversion of Okinawa to Japanese control, a landmark

agreement, had removed a major diplomatic impediment to U.S-Japanese cooperation. Under the treaty ending World War II, the United States had authority to exercise powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction over the Ryukyu Islands, of which Okinawa was part, under a U.S. military governor. Successive U.S. postwar administrations acknowledged Japan's residual sovereignty over the islands, while Japanese public sentiment and official policy overwhelmingly favored the restoration of Japanese rule. The 1972 agreement restored Japanese sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands, making them a prefecture of Japan, and recognized the defense of Okinawa as a Japanese responsibility. The U.S.-Japan mutual security pact and status of forces agreement applied through Japan, including Okinawa. The United States maintained its bases and forces on Okinawa and the Japanese mainland along with over 100 installations, storage facilities, testing ranges, and training areas in the Ryukyus. It also agreed to consult with Japanese officers before making significant changes in American deployments, equipment, or basing, while Japan agreed to contribute funds to defray the expense of stationing U.S. units in Japan. The reversion agreement addressed Japan's legitimate need for sovereignty over Okinawa and achieved Nixon's goal of preserving close political and military ties with Japan.[48]

Wanting regional partners to contribute more to regional defense, the Nixon administration pressed the Japanese to increase defense spending—and create a more capable military establishment. For the Japanese fiscal year ending in March 1973 Tokyo directly spent $3.5 billion annually on defense, plus an estimated $211 million in costs related to the presence of U.S. forces on Japan and Okinawa. The Japan Self-Defense Force included a limited number of ground, air, and sea units.[49]

In March 1973 the Japanese government announced that its Self-Defense Force has drafted a plan for defending the nation against attack by the Soviet Union or China. A rigorous

appraisal of the Japanese security situation—the first Japanese military plan since the end of World War II—the document represented a significant milestone for Japan. In many ways, the exercise embodied Japanese doubts about U.S. intentions in East Asia. The U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, the Nixon Doctrine, and other developments caused Japanese to question the U.S commitment to Japan and the reliability of the U.S. security umbrella. The 1973 defense plan identified Japanese vulnerabilities; outlined missions for ground, air, and sea forces; and projected the outcome of various types of armed conflict. Japanese planners, however, could not escape the necessity of U.S. assistance. In the event of a conventional war against the Soviet Union, for example, Japan Self-Defense Force would attempt to defend the homeland for 30 days. If the United States did not intervene on behalf of Japan at the end of that period, planners suggested that Japan should immediately surrender to Moscow. To the chagrin of U.S. officials, the document envisioned no strengthening of Japan's military.[50]

At the time the Japanese announced their defense plan, Nixon concluded that a fresh review of U.S. policy toward Japan was in order. Requested in NSSM 172, and completed in June 1974, the review advocated continuation of the status quo. The United States had to ensure the credibility of its security guarantees to Japan and to allies in the region, and had to maintain enough of a military presence in Japan to accomplish that aim while not upsetting the domestic political balance in Tokyo that favored pacifism. More broadly, even though international conditions had changed, the study asserted that Nixon had the right approach to troubling issues like trade, monetary imbalances, and the number of U.S. bases on Japanese soil. "Existing policy guidelines remain effective for the attainment of our objectives" the study concluded, a finding that Clements and General Brown supported.[51]

Meanwhile, ISA and PA&E reviewed the administration's preferences for Japan to contribute more to its own defense. Unmoved by U.S. pressure, the Japanese refused to spend more on their own armed forces. The DoD then considered negotiating an offset agreement with Japan, as the United States had employed in Germany during the 1960s. Attempts to reach an offset agreement—or a formal contract compelling Japan to buy U.S. goods to offset the cost of U.S. forces in Japan—ISA and PA&E staffers advised, would be politically risky. The Japanese, DoD officials expected, would associate direct offsets of U.S. defense expenditures with financial aspects of the U.S. postwar occupation of Japan. In any case, it would be difficult to isolate the cost of the U.S. commitment to Japanese territory since U.S. forces station in Japan undertook a host of regional defense missions. The financial basis of the U.S.-Japanese security relations remained unchanged during the Nixon-Ford era.[52]

To help reduce U.S. costs in Japan, in July 1973 Clements reminded Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush that DoD wanted to have the Japanese purchase existing U.S. military items. Rush, however, saw no chance the Japanese would agree and cautioned Clements that pressuring Tokyo to buy directly from Washington would be counterproductive. It would strengthen those arguing Japan should instead diversify its suppliers and invest heavily in domestic research and development. Moreover, an increase in Japanese purchases of U.S. arms might alarm other Asian nations, fearful of the return of Japanese militarism.[53]

Japan's defense expenditures were relatively small, and the nation relied on U.S. military might, but the continued presence of American forces and bases on Japanese soil represented a political flashpoint. In mid-August 1973, Schlesinger and Ambassador Robert Ingersoll agreed that the United States needed to consolidate bases and trim U.S. personnel, especially on Okinawa. Schlesinger considered it a top priority. Moreover, U.S. budget cuts would lead to

reductions in U.S. forces and local hires in Japan and Okinawa. The Japanese government undertook substantial relocation and construction programs totaling around $383 million for U.S. forces. At the same time, Japan expressed interest in qualitatively improving the Self-Defense Forces, especially the maritime component, but steadfastly refused to embark on a major rearmament program. Pentagon officials rated Japanese air and ground forces as adequate to defend the home islands. The underlying issue, Schlesinger asserted, was getting Japan to address its vulnerabilities, not whether 0.8 percent or 1.1 percent of gross national product was the correct amount. He believed Tokyo needed to enhance the country's antisubmarine warfare capability, for example, and better protect its vital lines of communication and commerce to the Middle East, upon which Japan depended for oil.[54]

Japanese politics complicated the mission of protecting sea lanes. Seeking improved ASW aircraft, the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) had been evaluating Lockheed's P-3C since 1972. By the start of 1976, the P-3C emerged as the frontrunner. The arrest of former prime minister Kakuei Tanaka on July 27 on charges of accepting bribes from Lockheed disrupted bilateral negotiations and gave Japanese political groups opposed to the P-3C an opportunity to push for a Japanese-built ASW aircraft. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force still wanted the P-3C but other elements in the JDA as well as the Ministry for International Trade and Industry (MITI) favored the PXL, a Japanese-produced ASW airframe that would provide jobs for Japanese industry.[55]

In September 1976 Ko Maruyama, the JDA vice minister, informed Clements that his agency was evaluating two options: foreign-built aircraft (the P-3C or Canada's CP-140) or Japanese-constructed aircraft with Japanese or foreign avionics. Predictably, the Pentagon insisted the P-3 best met Japan's ASW technical and military requirements. Moreover, the P-3

could be put into service sooner than the other alternatives. The United States, however, would not release the P-3C's avionics package for use on a Japanese-developed platform. In November, to help sway the Japanese, the Pentagon sent a DoD technical development team to Japan to review ASW options with the JDA staff. Subsequently, the Japanese decided to produce in 76 P-3Cs in Japan under license.[56]

For the Japanese, the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II made the issue of nuclear weapons on their territory a politically inflammatory issue. Successive Japanese governments adhered to three principles regarding nuclear weapons: no manufacture; no possession; and no introduction. According to the status of forces agreement, the United States and Japan were to consult before introducing nuclear weapons into Japan. However, according to a 1960 private exchange of notes, the requirement for prior consultation would not apply to U.S. naval vessels entering Japanese waters and ports. Both governments left the definition of "prior consultation" deliberately vague. For its part, the United States would neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons in Japan.[57]

During his visit in 1975, Schlesinger publicly assessed Japan's defense capability. Praising Japan as an indispensable ally, he hoped it would become a less passive partner. He thought Japan's current capabilities were not robust enough to defend the Japanese homeland. He saw the need for qualitative improvement in antisubmarine warfare and air defense and the expansion of the Japan Self-Defense Force. A decline in U.S. naval forces and growing Soviet deployment of submarines had increased the level of risk. He thought that the fall of Vietnam had led Japanese leaders to consider national security more seriously. A more equitable partnership with the United States, in his judgment, could boost the security of Japan and northeast Asia.[58]

Despite the exhortations of Schlesinger and other U.S. officials for increased spending and greater effort on regional security, Japan was unresponsive. In May 1976 the Japanese government issued a white paper on national defense, clearly stating Tokyo intended to continue to rely on the United States for security. Japan planned no arms buildup of its own. The deputy director of the Japan Defense Agency, Takuya Kubo, said that in the future Japan "will have to increase its degree of dependence on the United States" for the hardware needed to handle an outbreak of hostilities. Japan's defense minister Michita Sakata succinctly emphasized, "Japan won't be a military power in the future."[59]

The defeat of South Vietnam and Cambodia and the developing rapprochement with mainland China were significant watersheds in U.S.-Asia security relations during the Nixon-Ford era. But the collapse of these two U.S. anticommunist allies in 1975 proved not to be as calamitous an event as some proponents of American military intervention had feared. One of the justifications for U.S. military intervention had been that South Vietnam's defeat would inevitably result in the downfall of other noncommunist nations in the region. That proved wrong. South Vietnam and Cambodia fell, but not neighboring nations. No longer fearing a military threat from Hanoi, Thailand cut back the U.S. military presence on its territory. Antiwar critics who contended throughout the war that South Vietnam had no strategic importance for the United States found a measure of vindication.

The defeat had little discernible effect on U.S. ties with its major allies—Japan and Korea. Saigon's swift fall and the inability of the Nixon and Ford administrations to aid South Vietnam during the enemy's final offensive raised questions in the minds of friendly nations about the reliability and permanence of U.S. support but did not disrupt the two fundamental

relationships. The United States remained the only superpower in the Pacific. South Korea needed U.S. military support as a bulwark against North Korea and its ally, China. Japan, making no serious effort to bolster its limited forces, continued to rely on the United States for its defense. The government of the Philippines took steps to address its legitimate concerns regarding national sovereignty but remained fundamentally pro-American. American officials scaled back U.S. military assistance to the entire region, but the program remained robust enough to keep key allies closely tied to the United States.

With the diplomatic opening to China, Washington adjusted its relationship with Taiwan but made clear to Asian leaders the U.S. government would not abandon Taiwan. At the end of Ford's tenure, despite the defeat in Vietnam and the harm caused by Watergate, the United States remained the dominant Pacific power. The closure of some U.S. bases and the drawdown of U.S. forces did not alter the underlying situation: no rival power at that point was strong enough to challenge the U.S. presence and influence in the region. Throughout, Presidents Nixon and Ford remained committed to the fundamentals of U.S. national security policy in East Asia, as established after World War II. The Department of Defense succeeded in maintaining a substantial degree of regional continuity during a time of significant change.

Endnotes

[1]. Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post Vietnam Military*, 329–362, 497; NSDM 230, 9 Aug 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 35:98 (doc 21); NSSM 171, 13 Feb 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 35:21–22 (doc 5); Talking Points NSSM 171, 25 Jul 1973, folder Asia 381, 1973, box 3, Acc 330-78-0002, OSD Records, WNRC.

2. NSDM 249, 23 Mar 1974, attached to note by BG Taylor; memo, ASD(ISA) Peet for Schlesinger, 5 Apr 1974, folder Thailand 370.02 (Jan-Apr) 1974; memcon, Thailand Matters, 24 May 1974, folder Thailand 000.1 thru 091.112 1974: both in box 74, Acc 330-78-0011, OSD Records, WNRC.

3. Memcon, Thailand Matters, 24 May 1974, folder Thailand 000.1 thru 091.112 1974, box 74, Acc 330-78-0011.

4. Memcon, Kintner and Schlesinger, 11 Oct 1974, folder Thailand 000.1 thru 091.112 1974; memo, Rear Adm. Bigley for BG Jones, 9 Dec 1974, folder Thailand 091.3 thru 311.1 1974: both in box 74, Acc 330-78-0011.

5. Memo, Schlesinger for Kissinger, 11 Oct 1974, folder Thailand 320.02 (May-Dec) 1974, folder Thailand 091.3 thru 311.1 1974, box 74, Acc 330-78-0011; memo, Schlesinger for Kissinger, 18 Jan 1975; NSDM 286, 7 Feb 1975: both in folder Thailand 320.02 1975, box 80, Acc 330-78-0058, OSD Records, WNRC.

6. Memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 20 Mar 1975; JCSM-154-75 for SecDef, 28 Apr 1975; memo, Scowcroft for Wickham, 22 May 1975; msg, JCS to CINCPAC, 021919Z Jun 1975: all in folder Thailand 320.02 1975, box 80, Acc 330-78-0058. There were 17 B-52s and 36 F-111s involved.

7. Memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 12 Jun 1975; memo, Kissinger for Clements et al., 1 Jul 1975; memo, Schlesinger for Kissinger, 23 Sep 1975; memo, Kissinger for Sec Def et al., 24 Oct 1975: all in folder Thailand 320.02 1975, box 80, Acc 330-78-0058.

8. Memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for Rumsfeld, 5 Mar 1976; memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for Rumsfeld, 22 Apr 1976; NDSM 327, 21 Apr 1976: all in folder Thailand 1976, box 83, Acc 330-79-0049, OSD Records, WNRC.

[9]. Ronald W. Dolan, ed., *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1993), 49–56, 233–235, 237, 273–277; memo, Kissinger to Nixon, 16 Mar 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 317); "Marcos Stresses 'National Dignity'," *New York Times*, 9 May 1973, 11; memcon, Sullivan and Scowcroft, 10 Jul 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 338); "Manila Moves to Change Defense Pacts," *New York Times*, 26 Apr 1975, 5.

[10]. "U.S.-Manila Pact May Be Revamped," *New York Times*, 12 Jul 1975, 5.

[11]. Memcon, Sullivan and Scowcroft, 10 Jul 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 338); memcon, Schlesinger, Sullivan, et al., 24 April 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 329); Lou Cannon, "Philippines, Ford Agree on New Talks," *Washington Post*, 7 Dec 1975, 1; telegram 9671 Embassy in the Philippines to Dept. of State, 3 Jul 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 347); ltr, Rumsfeld to Kissinger, 13 Sep 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 352).

12. Poole, *JCS and National Policy, 1973–1976*, 421. For background on the Nixon administration's policy toward South Korea, see Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 347–355.

13. "Hill Report Questions U.S. Role in Korea," *Washington Post*, 18 Feb 1973, 3; Don Oberdorfer, "On Freedom's Frontier," *Washington Post*, 8 Apr 1973, C1, C2; Richard Halloran, "Presence of U.S. Forces in Korea Again at Issue Amid Unrest in Seoul," *New York Times*, 28 Aug 1974, 8; Robert Elegant, "Outdated Policy Ties U.S. to Korea," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Sep 1974, F3.

14. Speech, "The Case for Security Assistance to Other Nations," Richardson at Civic /Military Association Luncheon, 30 Mar 1973, *Richardson Public Statements 1973*, 3:857-864.

15. NSSM 154, 6 Apr 1972, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 19:330–331 (doc 133); memo, Holdridge for Kissinger, 4 Jul 1972, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 19:369 (doc 149); airgram A-432 Embassy in Korea to Dept. of State, 10 Dec 1972, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 19:437 (doc 170); memo, Kissinger for SecState and SecDef, 18 Jul 1973, folder, Asia 381 1973, box 3, Acc 330-78-0002.

16. Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997), 59–62.

17. Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 352; ltr, SecState to SecDef, 9 Feb 1973; memo, ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 6 Mar 1973; memo, Vice Adm. Peet to SecDef, 16 Feb 1973; ltr, SecDef to SecState, 22 Feb 1973: all in folder Korea 000.1-299 1973, box 70, Acc 330-78-0001, OSD Records, WNRC.

18. Memcon, Stilwell and Schlesinger, 24 Jul 1973, folder Korea 000.1-299 1973, box 70, Acc 330-78-0001.

19. Memo, Kissinger for SecState and SecDef, 18 Jul 1973, cited in note 15; ltr, Clements to Suh Jyong-chul, 11 Jan 1974, folder Korea 091.3 1974, box 66, Acc 330-78-0001.

20. Memcon, 24 Sep 1974, folder Korea 337 1974; memo, Clements for SecAF and Director DSAA, 16 Oct 1974; memo, SecAF for Clements, 30 Oct 1974: all in folder Korea 452 1974, box 66, Acc 330-78-0011.

21. NSSM 211, 8 Oct 1974; memo, Staff Secretary, NSC for SecDef et al., 15 Nov 1974; memo, ASD(ISA) for Clements, n.d.; memo, Clements for ATP(NSA), 11 Dec 1974: all in folder Korea 091.3 1974, box 66, Acc 330-78-0011; NSDM 282, 9 Jan 1975, folder Korea 320.2 (9, 10 Jan 75) 1975, box 3, Acc 330-78-0059, OSD Records, WNRC.

22. Memcon, Sneider and Schlesinger on 19 Mar 1975, 4 Apr 1975, folder Korea 000.1-299 1975, box 67, Acc 330-78-0058; memcon, Sneider, Scowcroft, and Smyser, 27 Mar 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-12 (doc 265).

23. Memcon, Ham Pyong Chung and Schlesinger, 2 April 1975, folder Korea 000.1-299 1975, box 67, Acc 330-78-0058.

24. Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 63–68; msg, Abramowitz to Ellsworth and Admiral Crowe, 090900Z Jun 1975, folder Korea 000.1-299 1975, box 67, Acc 330-78-0058.

25. Memo, Schlesinger for Service Secretaries, 7 May 1975, folder PACOM 1975, box 76, Acc 330-78-0058; memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 9 Apr 1974; memo, SecDef for CJCS, 11

Apr 1974: all in folder Korea 320.2 1974, box 66, Acc 330-78-0011; *JCS and National Policy, 1973–1976*, 426–428, 435–437.

26. Memcon, Schlesinger, Park et al., 27 Aug 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (doc 271); Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 63–68 (quote 67).

27. Memcon, Schlesinger, Park et al., 27 Aug 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (doc 271); Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 63–68 (quote 67); *JCS and National Policy, 1973–1976*, 431.

28. Memo, Director DSAA for Clements, n.d. with concurrence by Clements, 21 May 76; memo, Director PA&E for Director DSAA, 22 Apr 1976; memo, Matthews for Director DSAA, 6 May 1976; memo, Director DSAA for Clements, 7 Jun 1976; ltr, SecDef to ROK Minister of National Defense, 23 Jun 1976; msg, Rumsfeld to Chief, JUSMAG Seoul, 271257Z Aug 1976: all in folder Korea 400-825 1976, box 74, Acc 330-79-0049. The Koreans evidently intended to buy kits for converting M48A1s into diesel M48A3s. Aldridge served as acting assistant secretary of defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation from 23 February 1976 until 18 May 1976, when the position was redesignated Director for Planning and Evaluation; he served under that title from 18 May 1976 to 11 March 1977.

29. Memo, Acting ASD(ISA) to Rumsfeld, 15 Jan 76, folder Korea 000.1-299 1976, box 73, Acc 330-79-0049.

30. Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 290007Z May 1976, folder Korea 337 1976, box 74, Acc 330-79-0049; Edward C. Keefer, *Harold Brown, Offsetting the Soviet Military Challenge 1977–1981* (Washington DC: OSD/HO, 2017), 377–378.

31. Point Paper, MAP and FMS for Indonesia, n.d., attached to memo, ASD(ISA) for Clements, 20 Nov 1974, folder I 1974, box 63, Acc 330-78-0011; William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 337; John Roosa, "Suharto," *Indonesia* 85 (Apr 2008): 137–143.

32. Msg, Jakarta to SecState, 301040Z Sep 1974; memcon, Frigates for Indonesia; Diego Garcia, 30 Sep 1974; memcon, Visit of US Ambassador David D. Newsom with Clements, 21 Nov 1974: all in folder I 1974, box 63, Acc 330-78-0011.

33. Memo, ASD(ISA) for Deputy ATP(NSA), 3 Jul 1975, folder Indonesia 1975, box 65, Acc 330-78-0058.

34. Laura Southgate, *ASEAN Resistance to Sovereignty Violation: Interests, Balancing and the Role of the Vanguard State* (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2019), 25–70.

35. Telegram 14946, Embassy in Indonesia to Dept. of State, 6 Dec 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (doc 141).

36. Ltr, Senator Hart to SecDef, 16 Dec 1975; memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for Rumsfeld, n.d.; ltr, Rumsfeld to Senator Hart, 9 Jan 1976: all in folder Indonesia 1975, box 65, Acc 330-78-0058; memo, Barnes for Scowcroft, 17 May 1976; SecState Staff, meeting minutes, 1 Jun 1976; memcon, Kissinger, Habib, Miller, and Ingraham, 29 Jun 1976: all in *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (docs 156, 157, 160).

37. "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," 27 Feb 1972, *FRUS 1969–1976* 17:812–816 (doc 203); *Nixon Public Papers, 1972*, 378; Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 358–359.

38. Memcon, 5 Jan 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:9–11 (doc 2); memo, Richardson for Kissinger, 6 Feb 1973, folder China (Nats) 320.2 1973, box 69, Acc 330-78-0002; memcon, Schlesinger's Visit with Gen. Lai Ming-tang (ROC Minister of Defense), 7 Aug 1973, folder China (Nats) 1973, box 65, Acc 330-78-0001.

39. Memcon, Nixon and Kissinger, 1 Feb 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:18–21 (doc 5); memo, Kissinger for Nixon, 7 Feb 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:22–23 (doc 7), notes 2, 4; memo, Richardson for Kissinger, 6 Feb 1973, cited in note 38; memo, Laird for Nixon, 13 Jan 1973, folder China (Nats) 091.3, box 65, Acc 330-78-0001.

40. Memos, Richardson for Kissinger, 2 and 6 Feb 1973 cited in note 39; memo, ASD(ISA) to Richardson, 27 Jun 1973; memo, SecDef for ATP(NSA), 7 Jul 1973; memo, Deputy ATP(NSA) for SecDef, 23 Jul 1973: all in folder China (Nats) 320.2 1973, box 5, Acc 330-78-0002.

41. Memo, Kissinger for Richardson, 7 Feb 1973; memo, Vice Adm. Peet for SecDef, 12 Feb 1973, folder China (Nats) 1973, box 65, Acc 330-78-0001, memo, ATP(NSA) for SecDef and SecState, 28 Jan 1974; memo, Clements for ATP(NSA), 20 Feb 1974, folder China (Nats) 320.2 1974, box 3, Acc 330-78-0010; memo, Kissinger for Nixon, 11 Mar 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:466–467 (doc 73); NSDM 248, 14 Mar 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:467–468 (doc 74).

42. CIA Paper, "The Shift to Harshness in Peking's Policy toward the US," Oct 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:543–545 (doc 89).

43. NSSM 212, 8 Oct 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:542–543 (doc 88).

44. Study, US Security Assistance to Republic of China, 12 Nov 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:545–558 (doc 90).

45. Memo, Wickham for Scowcroft, 18 Aug 1975; memo, Staff Secretary, NSC for Wickham and Executive Secretary, Dept. of State, 17 Oct 1975; memo, Scowcroft for Rumsfeld, 31 Dec 1975: all in folder China (Nats) 1975, box 62, Acc 330-78-0058; memo Scowcroft for Ford, 17 Sep 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:958–959 (doc 155); NSDM 339, 20 Sep 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:960 (doc 156); memo, Scowcroft for Kissinger, Rumsfeld and Bush, 3 Nov 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:979 (doc 158).

46. Memcon, China, 6 Jul 1975, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:696–700 (doc 113); memo, Scowcroft for Kissinger et al., 3 Nov 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, 18:979 (doc 158).

47. DoD Information Guidance Series, No. 7-31, U.S.-Japan Relations, Jan 1974, box 189, Subject Files, OSD/HO; Don Oberdorfer, "One Nation that Renounces War," *Washington Post*, 6 Aug 1975, A1, A13; Keyes Beech, "Japan—The Ultimate Domino?" *Saturday Review,* 23 Aug 1975, 2, 24.

48. Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 331–332, 343–347.

49. NSSM 172, 7 Mar 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-13 (doc 169); memo, ASD(ISA) to SecDef, 13 Aug 1973, folder Japan 092 1973, box 70, Acc 330-78-0001; Hunt, *Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 332.

50. Richard Halloran, "Japan's First Defense Plan since the War is Disclosed," *New York Times*, 4 Mar 1973, 1; Kazumi Konmi, "The Future of Japan in Terms of National Security," *Military Review*, Sep 1974, 34–40.

51. Report, NSC IG, NSSM 172—US Policy Toward Japan, atchd to memo, Staff Secy, NSC for SecDef et al., 29 Jun 1974; memo, ASD(ISA) for Clements, 15 Jul 1974; memo, Clements for ATP(NSA), 19 Jul 1974: all in folder Japan 092 1974, box 65, Acc 330-78-0011.

52. Memo, Director PA&E for SecDef, 22 Jan 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-12 (doc 185).

53. Ltr, Clements to DepSecState, 19 Jul 1973; ltr, DepSecState to Clements, 27 Jul 1973: both in folder Japan 092 1973, box 70, Acc 330-78-0001.

54. Memo, ASD(ISA) for Schlesinger, 13 Aug 73; memcon, Schlesinger and Yasukawa, 5 Oct 1973: both in folder Japan 091.112 1973, box 70, Acc 330-78-0001; memo, DASD(ISA) F. P. Shaw for SecDef et al., 19 Jan 1976; memo, DASD(ISA) Shaw for SecDef et al., 23 Dec 1976: both in folder Japan 300-899 1976, box 73, Acc 330-79-0049.

55. Memo, ASD(ISA) for Rumsfeld, 27 Jul 1976; memo, ASD(ISA) for Clements, 12 Nov 1976: both in folder Japan 300-899 1976, box 73, Acc 330-79-0049. In 1983, the Tokyo District Court found Tanaka guilty of violating foreign exchange control laws. Released on appeal, he died in 1993.

56. Ltr, JDA Vice Minister Ko Maruyama to Clements, 16 Sep 1976; memo, ASD(ISA) for Clements, 12 Oct 1976; ltr, Clements to JDA Vice Minister, 19 Nov 1976: all in folder Japan 300-899 1976, box 73, Acc 330-79-0049; *Jane's All the World's Aircraft: 1984–1985*, 158.

57. Norman Pearlstine, "Strained Alliance," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 Oct 1974, 48; Richard Halloran, "Japanese Reveal Oral Pact on U.S. Atom-Arms Entry," *New York Times*, 27 Oct 1974, 1.

58. Schlesinger News Conference Tokyo, 29 Aug 1975, *Schlesinger Public Statements 1975*, 6:1928–1935; Ronald Yates, "Tell Us More, Japan Is Urging Schlesinger," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 Aug 1975, S8; Sam Jameson, "Schlesinger Assails Japanese Forces," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Aug 1975, A2; John Saar, "Japan Needs Build-Up, Schlesinger Says," *Washington Post*, 30 Aug 1975, A9.

59. Richard Halloran, "Tokyo White Paper Says Defense Is Linked to U.S.," *New York Times*, 28 May 1976, 2; Sam Jameson, "Japan Leans More on U.S. for Defense," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Jun 1976, C1, C2, C3; Mike Tharp, "Call to Arms," *Wall Street Journal*, 24 Aug 1976, 1.