
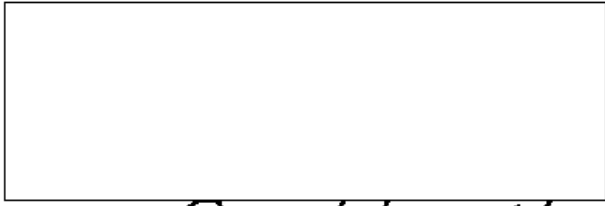


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Date 11 Dec 1981

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

12

1 December 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 254

SUBJECT: Regionalism and Orientation Trends in Asia

Problem:

1. Regionalism.

- a. To identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the common interests which tend to draw Asian governments and peoples into a regional association.
- b. To identify the conditions under which the various nations of Asia might participate in a regional association.
- c. To estimate the willingness of the various countries of Asia to join a Pacific Association such as outlined in NSC 48 (25 October 1949 draft).

2. Orientation.

To estimate trends in Asia toward or away from the US or the USSR.

Document No. 001
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 DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77
 Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763
 Date: 4/1/77 By: 023

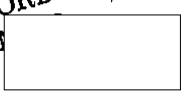
Notes For the purposes of this memorandum, Asia is defined as that part of the continent of Asia south of the USSR and east of Iran, together with the major offshore islands of Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Ceylon.

This memorandum has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

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1. Regionalism.

a. Common Interests of Asian Governments and Peoples.

(1) General.

In comparison with the West, the heritage of Asiatic states has produced a much smaller degree of homogeneity and common interest. Centuries of domination by native despotisms and theocracies - and, more latterly, by western colonial states - have caused the development in the Far East of compartmentalized groups of peoples, relatively self-sufficient, and frequently with their economies geared more to the needs of a European overlord than to those of an Asiatic neighbor. The small amount of free thought or action now permitted in Asia has been a recent development.

The mere existence, therefore, of interests common to the governments or peoples of two or more areas of the region - or even of interests common throughout the region - does not assure that such a community of interest is recognized, and much less that it is currently an active factor favoring regionalism. At best, most of the following common interests found within the region are merely factors out of which, with extended and patient nurturing, regionalism might develop.

(2) Nationalism.

The inescapable demand of Asiatic nations for freedom and self-determination, which at present is taking the form of strong nationalistic aspirations, is the only factor of common interest sufficiently dynamic to be of current significance in the development of regionalism in Asia. Typically but not universally expressed in the form of anti-colonialism, Asian nationalism is bolstered by a feeling of mutual antipathy toward western nations which have subjected Asian peoples to various forms of political and social subordination in modern times. This generally hostile reaction to western subordination is further reinforced by differences in race, culture, and patterns of behavior that, even under the most favorable circumstances of rapprochement with the West, will incline the Asians to make common cause.

While nationalism is universal among Asian peoples and governments, it can serve most effectively as a unifying factor, regionally speaking, only when a common threat exists and is recognized as such. As long as examples of "western imperialism" continue to exist in Asia, the common interest in nationalism operates to unify the several nations along regional lines which will be in opposition to US interests.

otherwise, a splitting force

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At present, Asian nationalism is vulnerable to seizure and exploitation by international Communism in furtherance of interests of the USSR. With progressive elimination of western imperialism in Asia, however, this vulnerability to Soviet exploitation will diminish. Whether nationalism then will continue to be a unifying factor, or whether it will evolve primarily as a dividing force, will depend in large measure on the character, manner of application, and timing of US and other western influence. As long as nationalism is the predominant force in Asia, either an abandonment of western interest in the area or a program of premature and excessive stimulation of regionalism will render more likely the development of sharp cleavages within the region. Lacking an extended and patient nurturing, and in the absence of general US-USSR hostilities, regionalism in Asia cannot be expected to develop out of present predominant nationalistic impulses along lines favoring US security interests.

(3) Other Common Interests.

There are, in addition to the universal preoccupation with nationalism already discussed, certain other interests common to two or more Asian states. Under appropriate conditions, these interests could provide a foundation for concerted action and therefore represent factors favoring regionalism. One such factor is religion; another is the familial and village pattern of Oriental life; both are inimical to the extension of Communism. The development of a threat to these traditional and common interests could conceivably result in the development of opposition to Communism on a regional scale. In any other regional context, however, these factors would not only be ineffectual but might actually prove disruptive.

Economic forces favoring the development of regionalism in Asia are slight, although some elementary relationships, such as those between the food-deficit and food-surplus countries of the region, exist. While Asia has a potential for the development of complementary economies, particularly with industrial expansion in Japan and India, the major products of this fundamentally agricultural region are exported outside the Far East and there is only a small amount of intra-regional trade. Long-range planning and the careful expansion of present primitive economic relationships, however, together with development of the region's unrealized economic potential, could create broader, more inclusive, and more highly developed economic patterns conducive to regional integration.

The ambitions of individual Asian states represent another stimulus to the development of bonds of common interest among the remaining nations. The general antipathy felt in most Asian countries toward the Chinese, based on decades of experience with ruthless Chinese commercial

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exploitation, is the most important of these stimuli to the development of regionalism. Strong in proportion to the size of the Chinese community in any particular state, this sentiment is particularly intense in Indochina, Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia, and the approach of the Chinese Communist armies toward the borders of nearby states has further increased Sinophobia. A parallel situation exists in the suspicions on the part of other Asian states toward the ambitions of India, where strong Pan-Asian sentiments are accompanied by equally strong desires for hegemony. Similar suspicions, most intense in the countries which have suffered Japanese military occupation, could be expected in the event of a resurgence of Japanese power.

(4) Forms of Regionalism.

Present efforts on the part of various governments in Asia to join in some sort of association can be expected to provide little more than a starting point for eventual regional development. Future efforts can be expected to develop generally along one or a combination of the following lines:

- (a) Efforts on the part of a single nation within the region to establish itself in a position of domination over all or part of the region. The urge of nationalistic aspirations might prompt some one Asian nation, such as India, to assert a position of leadership in regional development for actual purposes of self-aggrandizement.
- (b) Action by threatened nations within the region to oppose the intra-regional threat of hegemony posed by such efforts. The countries of Southeast Asia under Philippine leadership, for example, might create a regional organization, ostensibly for economic cooperation but actually as a measure of opposition to the threat of Indian domination.
- (c) Acceptance of Communism by most or all of the nations within the region as a measure for the total elimination of western influence. Most or all of the Asian nations might accommodate to the individual forces of Communism within their own borders in the belief that only by this drastic action could they achieve their nationalist aspirations. With political systems in common, these Communized nations of Asia would be subject to central control and would, therefore, represent a regional bloc.
- (d) Joint action by most or all of the nations within the region, growing out of the realization that "western imperialism" is not the only nor the greatest extra-regional threat to Asian nationalistic

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aspirations. This action would grow, primarily, from a realization of Soviet objectives and a discernment of Soviet methods and instruments of expansion. Associated with this increased realization of the Soviet threat would be an appreciation of the advantages growing out of continued association with the West on a basis of mutual benefit.

(e) Development of intra-regional cooperation and concord, growing out of the realization that studied intransigence in international relations does not solve domestic problems arising largely from economic maladjustments. A gradual realization by former enemies, for example, that renewed trade with Japan would provide economic benefits otherwise unattainable. Such a realization could lead to conscious development of intra-regional trade patterns, thus fostering a regional economic union.

None of these general patterns of regional development will necessarily emerge in the immediate future: the first three, in which nationalism appears to be the major motivating force, could develop within the next decade; the last two, in which other interests supersede nationalism, may require considerably longer to develop, perhaps a generation or more.

b. Conditions for Participation in a Regional Association.

The conditions under which the various nations of Asia might participate in a regional association are so varied as to preclude comprehensive generalizations. Any sub-regional organization directed against a single nation's threat of regional domination would doubtless attract those countries most imminently threatened. Additionally it is estimated that the degree to which the several nations would find US approval, support, or participation acceptable would depend largely on their desire for material assistance which would be most readily available from the US. Beyond these considerations, the following digest of individual reactions best summarizes the current appreciation:

India strongly favors a regional association but only under conditions of Indian leadership. Moreover, the character of the association must avoid an appearance of being an instrument of western policy and avoid either an anti-Soviet or an anti-US character.

Pakistan at this time would only participate in a regional association which was directed against Indian dominance and still was neither anti-Communist nor anti-Western in character.

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Ceylon would join a regional association only under pressure of the UK and would tend to be hostile to any movement that sought to develop a community of interests with its Asian neighbors.

Afghanistan would assiduously avoid any regional association which the USSR might find offensive and would be generally reluctant to join any regional association.

Southeast Asia would tend toward a preference for regional development along lines and in a form which enjoyed US support. Opposition to Japanese membership will continue for some time.

Korea under Rhee would join any non-Communist association but would prefer that it be actively anti-Communist. Japanese membership would not necessarily preclude Korea's joining.

Japan would welcome an opportunity to join in a regional association, particularly one enjoying US support, both as a security measure and as a step toward regaining a position in international affairs.

g. Willingness to Participate in an Association as Envisaged in NSC 48 (25 October 1949 draft).

Based on the considerations noted above, the willingness of the several governments of Asia to participate in an association such as envisaged in NSC 48 (25 October 1949 draft) is estimated as follows:

India would refrain from joining and would even oppose the association.

Pakistan would refrain from joining.

Afghanistan would refrain from joining.

Ceylon would refrain from joining unless urged by the UK.

Southeast Asia in general would favor joining, with some reservations as to the inclusion of Japan and as to the anti-Communist character of the association.

Japan would join the association, although any lack of security guarantees would be a deterrent.

Korea would join the association.

2. Orientation.

Trends in Asia toward or away from the US or the USSR are estimated for individual countries as follows:

India - There is evidence of a growth of pro-US orientation and increased disaffection with the Soviet Union, particularly during the last year.

Pakistan - Although Pakistan is believed basically pro-Western, it has since 1947 adopted a fluid and equivocal attitude toward the East-West dispute.

Afghanistan - Traditionally fearful of Russia, Afghanistan remains anti-USSR. However, a distinct pro-US orientation of some five years' standing has been considerably lessened in recent months.

Ceylon - The pro-US orientation of Ceylon has diminished somewhat during the past year, but strong pro-UK sentiment continues to protect the US position.

Southeast Asia - In general, a pro-US orientation continues in the area, with noticeable improvement in Indonesia. Although there is little evidence of any overt alignment with the USSR, neither is there evidence of disaffection with the Soviet Union.

China - There is no evidence of change in Communist China's pro-Soviet orientation.

Korea - No significant changes in orientation.

Japan - Minor indications of Japanese attitudes evidence no clearly defined trends either toward or away from the US or the USSR.

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23 Nov 49

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REL

Regionalism in Asia

NBC staff (memo dated 21 Nov)

To estimate the development of regionalism in South Asia

The area comprehended by this paper is that portion of Asia east of Iran.

The estimate should include an outline of common interests; conditions under which Asiatic nations might participate in a Pacific Association; specific estimates on attitude of Asiatic nations on joining a Pacific Association as outlined in NBC 48 draft of 25 Oct 49; evidence of development of pro-US orientation and disaffection with USSR.

IM

See attached copy of request memo.

1700 ²⁹ Nov 49

1 Dec 49

D/FR

D/NE and others as necessary

None

Top Secret

Requester, IAC agencies

It is considered that this estimate will be coordinated estimate (which will include point 3 of the memo of request) to be disseminated possibly in January 1950.

Point 3 of memo of request is not included in the present estimate; this has been cleared with requester.

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Editorial Review

Project: IM-254

Received from: D/FE

Date: 30 November 1949

Priority:

Subject: Regionalism and Orientation Trends in Asia

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Reviewed in ~~XXXX~~ by: (1)
(2) _____
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