

Soviet Union asserts military domination over the Pacific

by Linda de Hoyos

New Zealand and Australia expressed fury Dec. 9 over nuclear testing being conducted by France on the Mururoa atoll in the South Pacific. Australian Labor Party Foreign Minister Hayden declared that France's "continued defiance of the firmly expressed demand" by the South Pacific peoples for cessation of the testing "was deeply offensive to Australians." New Zealand Socialist Prime Minister David Lange, who was elected on a platform to rip up the ANZUS treaty between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, attacked France as "utterly reckless" for its nuclear testing, calling it a "pre-departure binge."

But not a peep has been heard from either New Zealand or Australia, nor any other country in the Pacific, over a little-publicized Soviet notice Dec. 3 that the U.S.S.R. would be conducting "missile tests" in the Pacific from Dec. 5 through 15. The Soviet news agency Tass warned ships to steer clear of the area around 15°, 12 min. latitude north and 176°, 52 min. longitude east. The Pacific tests involve the Soviets' lobbying intercontinental ballistic missiles into this area on the Hawaii side of the Marshall Islands.

This difference in reaction to Soviet testing and French testing must bring a malevolent little upturning of the mouth on the usually grim faces at the Kremlin. Behind the highly publicized moves by New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and other Commonwealth nations to turn the Pacific or the Indian Oceans into a "nuclear-free zone" is a different military reality: The Soviet Union is exerting its military superiority in the Pacific, moving in as fast as the United States is moving, or being thrown, out. From Siberia through to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, the Soviets are maneuvering their military chess pieces across the board with the implicit threat to all U.S. allies in Asia that they will inevitably be forced to come to terms with Moscow.

Korean flashpoint

Moscow is now placing itself in a position in which it can move at will at any point for a confrontation with the United States. Take the Korean peninsula. On Nov. 23, as press both in North and South Korea were applauding the first round of economic cooperation talks between the two Koreas, a Soviet tourist stepped over the demarcation line in the town of Panmunjom on the border and defected to the South. His action

sparked a shoot-out between North Korean, American, and South Korean troops, leaving at least two South Korean soldiers dead and one American wounded.

The Korean peninsula remains a powderkeg that could blow at any point. But Soviet military deployments in North Asia signify an increasing potential for this area to become a major "hot spot." According to intelligence reports, the Soviets have placed three marine divisions in Vladivostok on alert. Likewise with Soviet marine divisions on the Kurile Islands.

At the same time, the Soviets are exerting maximum leverage to gain control of the unpredictable Kim Il-Sung regime in North Korea, which likes to get its goodies from both Moscow and Peking. Four days before the border incident, a Soviet delegation headed by Vice Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa was in Pyongyang for "border talks." The result was the opening of trade between North Korea and Russia. The new emphasis on rail transport for this trade (Soviet-North Korea trade is usually carried by ship) has obvious military implications.

Also agreed upon in the border discussions with Kapitsa was Soviet delivery to North Korea of MiG-23 planes, T-72 tanks, and a new type of helicopter. It was earlier reported that the Soviets had sent the North Koreans scud missiles which have a 300-kilometer range. According to the Soviet defector, the Russians also discussed sending a team of atomic scientists to Pyongyang. In the last month, the North Koreans have moved three new armored corps—comprised of three divisions each—onto the border with South Korea, and have also moved guided missiles into the area. Any signal of a lack of resolve on the part of the United States in this region, as the United States has so manifested in the Middle East, would be an invitation for war, as it was in 1950.

Pressure builds on Pakistan

The gentlemen at such prestigious institutions as Henry Kissinger's Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies may perceive Afghanistan as the Soviets' "Vietnam," but the Soviets do not. Soviet soldiers who have been killed in battle in Afghanistan—5,000 of them as opposed to 500,000 Afghans—are treated as national heroes in the cultural revival of the image of Stalin and the Soviet Union at war.

In Afghanistan, the Soviets are upgrading their forces and equipment in this war which is designed to be the training ground for Soviet troops destined to fight the real battle in Western Europe. In the last month, the Soviets have poured 60,000 more troops into Afghanistan, bringing the total to 150,000, and have built two new airfields, one of them near the border with Iran. The Soviets are poised to strike either west into Iran or south into Pakistan.

Militarily and in their press, Moscow's threats are harshest against Pakistan. On Dec. 2, an article published in the Soviet government daily *Izvestia* claimed the right for Moscow to intervene militarily in Pakistan, since, author Aleksandr Bovin claimed, Pakistan is "being more and more actively involved in the general anti-Soviet strategy of the U.S.A. . . . The relations of the Pakistani government to the Soviet Union, to her interests and concerns, and to her friends, are very much also our business."

The Soviets are augmenting such press pleasantries with weekly air raids hitting Pakistani villages along the border with Afghanistan. But in typical "Big Lie" fashion, the Soviets have protested to Pakistan five times that Pakistani troops are making incursions into Afghanistan. According to Kabul, Pakistani forces have fired on the Barkikot region near the northern end of the Afghan border, causing "heavy losses." "Pakistan will be *solely* held responsible for the consequence" of these actions, said Kabul radio Nov. 29.

Chasing the U.S. out of the Pacific

Labor Party socialists like Hayden and Lange are the standard bearers of appeasement throughout the Pacific, working to turn the area over to Moscow under the slogan of "disarmament." The Socialist International, along with Soviet-allied and Qaddafi-funded separatist insurgencies are driving the French out of New Caledonia, the linchpin of French presence in the Pacific. In the newly independent South Pacific islands, Socialist International agents are island-hopping with calls for the creation of a "nuclear-free zone."

Now, a new crisis has sprung up on the Kwajalein Atoll, part of the Marshall Islands. Landowners of the atoll, comprised of 90 islands, are filing suit to force out the U.S. base on one of the islands. The Kwajaleiners, represented by the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Cadwalder, Wickersham, and Taft, say that the U.S. government has reneged on promises to upgrade their living environment and therefore they are suing to throw the \$1 billion base off the island.

This may be one of the most significant Soviet deployments against U.S. presence in the Pacific yet. The Kwajalein atoll is the U.S. site for testing anti-ballistic missile defense systems and where the successful laser intercept of a sidewinder missile was carried out last year. The Department of Defense has issued a study showing that in both its configuration and geographical location, the islands' qualifications for the site could not be replicated elsewhere.

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