
Asia

Shultz midwives Sino-Soviet deal

by Linda de Hoyos

"Since the Second World War, the United States has been the indispensable stabilizing influence in Asia and the Pacific," said Secretary of State George Shultz in Honolulu July 21. Speaking at the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii after a two-week trip to Asian countries, Shultz proclaimed that thanks to the U.S. presence in the region, "long-time adversaries have become allies, friends, and trading partners. Once-poor nations have become prosperous. Nations once divided from each other are working together pragmatically to realize shared interests and concerns. And authoritarian political orders of the past have given way to give-and-take of democratic policies." The United States, Shultz, "will continue to be "the fundamental guarantor of the balance of power" in Asia.

A review of the policies that Shultz took to Asia corroborates the secretary's assertion that the United States is acting as a guarantor. However, the purpose is the obverse of Shultz's claim. The "mission" in Shultz's trip had nothing to do with the well-being of American allies in Asia. Shultz instead attempted to play the midwife to "New Yalta" agreements for a shared condominium over the Asian nations by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and subsidiarily the West. In short, Shultz was negotiating the ways in which the vacuum left by the American policy of withdrawal from the region—a policy begun with Henry Kissinger and his China Card—will be filled by the Sino-Soviet combination.

The high point of Shultz's trip, which also took him to Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, and Seoul, was his visit to Beijing. Shultz, according to liberal press media, would carry a stern message to China not to engage in sales of missiles to third countries, especially in the Mideast. With that rap on the knuckles accomplished, Shultz and Chinese leaders got down to the business at hand: negotiations around the future contours of imperial agreements over Asia, specifically the Korean peninsula and Indochina. In the entire endeavor, Shultz was not negotiating on behalf of the United States and its allies, but found himself in the peculiar position of mediating reciprocal imperial arrangements between the Soviet

Union and China.

From this standpoint, Shultz's trip was not without some success. On July 20, the Soviet Union and China announced they had agreed to hold special talks at the end of August on the Kampuchea conflict. According to "informed sources," Chinese leaders reported that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev would come to Beijing to discuss Kampuchea, which China has declared is the major obstacle to a full Sino-Soviet summit. Representing China in the talks will be Vice Foreign Minister Tian Zengpei. It is expected that Rogachev and Tian will also meet in New York in September during the the U.N. General Assembly.

The Soviet decision to discuss Indochina was seen as Moscow's recognition of China's interest in the region. On July 5, Rogachev told TASS that "as far as our position is concerned, we are ready to hold talks with Chinese leaders any time, any place. In such talks, the Soviet Union is prepared to discuss any issue either side may propose, and the Soviet Union will not put forward any preconditions. Therefore I think an answer should be given by the Chinese side." But Beijing has insisted that Moscow solve the Kampuchean conflict by enforcing the removal of Vietnamese occupation troops from Kampuchea. Evidently Moscow is now prepared to deal.

(Moscow's concessionary attitude toward China stands in contrast to its posture toward Japan. When former Japanese prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone traveled to Moscow as head of a newly organized World Peace Institute, he was greeted with harsh words from General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov for Japan's failure to relinquish its claim on four Kurile Islands the Soviets seized in the last days of World War II. "We regret that over the three years of perestroika, when the U.S.S.R.'s relations with many other countries have made significant headway," intoned Gorbachov, "those with Japan have stayed put and at times even rolled back. Ultimatum-style approaches and demands are unacceptable to us.")

Equivocation on the Khmer Rouge

Publicly, the most significant point of Shultz's trip to Beijing was the Kampuchea conflict, given that China's backing and full supplying of the genocidal Khmer Rouge has proved the major obstacle to Vietnamese troop withdrawal.

While speaking before foreign ministers of the Asean countries in Bangkok, Shultz repeated his commitment to prevent the return to power of the Khmer Rouge. But once in Beijing, Shultz backtracked fast. Despite China's full backing of the Khmer Rouge, Shultz declared that Beijing and the State Department hold "rather similar views" on the Khmer Rouge. According to the *Washington Post*, various Chinese leaders told Shultz that they view the Khmer Rouge, which murdered 3 million Kampuchians from 1975-79, only as an anti-Vietnamese military force. The State Department also

claimed that Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen had indicated that the most odious leaders of the Khmer Rouge might retire, or at least "that was the implication," a State Department official said. Continuing their equivocal stands, Shultz said that both the U.S. and China agree that Cambodian Prince Sihanouk is a "potential principal person around whom a future government of Cambodia should be organized" (emphasis ours), whereas all factions of Kampuchea say that Sihanouk is the key to a settlement.

The effect of Shultz's backtracking was to spike the talks in Jakarta, Indonesia, July 25, which for the first time brought together the three factions of the resistance coalition, the Phnom Penh government, and Vietnam. The Beijing exchanges functioned as approval to the Khmer Rouge to take a stance of complete intransigence in the discussions. Khmer Rouge representative Khieu Samphan repeated the demand that Vietnam must "unconditionally and totally withdraw its forces" without linkage to the Khmer Rouge issue.

This is a formula for catastrophe, as stated by Sihanouk from Jakarta. In an interview with the *Washington Post* July 24, Sihanouk warned that the countries supporting the Khmer Rouge-dominated resistance coalition must accept "the entire responsibility for a new holocaust of the Cambodian people . . . which is becoming inevitable" now that Vietnam has begun withdrawing its troops. Sihanouk even proposed that the Cambodia seat in the U.N.—held by the resistance coalition "government"—be left vacant this year.

Diplomats in Bangkok now report that the Khmer Rouge has a well-equipped force of 60,000 men ready to seize control of Kampuchea, once the Vietnamese withdraw.

But Sihanouk's warnings have been lost on the State Department. In hearings before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs July 28, Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur refused point-blank to relinquish U.S. oblique support of the Khmer Rouge. As reported in the *Washington Post*: "Rep. Chester G. Atkins, declaring himself 'angered and disgusted' that the United States would 'cynically use' the Khmer Rouge to attack Vietnam, pressed Sigur to call for an immediate cutoff of Chinese aid to Pol Pot's guerrillas. Sigur . . . argued for a policy of 'simultaneous action' in what he called a 'delicate situation.' The U.S. position, he suggested, is to press for an aid cutoff to the Khmer Rouge if and when there is clear-cut progress toward the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces."

The Korean peninsula

In the case of the Korean peninsula, all parties—Washington, Beijing, and Moscow—find themselves more easily in agreement. The immediate question would appear to be: how to restrain the ultra-paranoid Kim Il Sung of North Korea from using his 120,000-man spetsnaz force from carrying out a major terrorist provocation against the Summer Olympics to be held this year in Seoul? And to this purpose, Shultz carried messages from Seoul to Beijing asking China to at-

tempt to restrain Kim Il-Sung.

In the last month, the Seoul government of Roh Tae Woo has been posing various offers to Pyongyang, in order to alleviate North Korea's fear of losing all face if Seoul carries off the Olympic Games successfully. After maintaining a position of stony silence to such offers, North Korea made proposals of its own—requiring at least discussion between Seoul and Pyongyang. The North Korean offer reportedly came after both representatives of China and Moscow had snagged Kim Il Sung during the latter's trip to Mongolia earlier in the month.

On the New Yalta gameboard, however, overtures and counter-overtures between the two Koreas are designed to pave the way for negotiating a pathway for Korean "reunification" under Moscow's aegis and the withdrawal of the 40,000 American troops stationed there. The objective is to exchange South Korean military dependency on the United States for a shared condominium by China and the U.S.S.R. over a "nuclear-free" Korean peninsula.

However, if Moscow decides to shed its "detente mask," the Korean peninsula will immediately become a flashpoint for confrontation.

Afghanistan games

On July 28, the State Department declared that based on a "new assessment," the Reagan administration believes that the Soviet Union will meet its first major deadline—Aug. 15—for carrying out its phased withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The assessment came after the United States denied contentions of Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq that the Soviets were reversing the direction of Soviet troops, and renege on the Geneva accords. To this claim, the State Department responded July 26 that it had accepted as "authoritative" assurances from Soviet chief of staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev that Moscow was meeting the withdrawal schedule.

But reliable sources indicate, that the Soviets are leaving behind well-entrenched special forces which would be used in what the Soviets see as prolonged, internecine warfare in Afghanistan. In this case, the Soviets will attempt to play the "Muslim card" against Afghanistan, as indicated by Major General Kim M. Tsagolov in a July 24 interview with the weekly *Ogonyok*. Tsagolov declared that he expects "the activation of the Islamic factor not only in Afghanistan . . . but in all of Islam." Accordingly, on July 22, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov visited Teheran to ask Iranian leaders to "contribute to the cause of normalizing the situation in Afghanistan."

However, the "Islamic scenario" for Afghanistan includes the Soviet annexation of northern Afghanistan, while the southern half crumbles into warfare. Such warfare will slide into Pakistan, placing additional pressures on the fissures of tribe and region in that country. But on this threat to Pakistan the word from Washington is mum.