THE U.S. AND ANZUS AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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The ANZUS Treaty between the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand has served the cause of peace well since it came into existence in the 1950s. The three nations in ANZUS believed that the threat to democracy and stability, posed especially by the Soviet Union, required joint defensive measures by like-minded countries if that threat were to be contained. The American navy has, of course, played a major role in these joint defensive measures and continues to do so.

New Zealand, however, has chosen to curtail the activities of the U.S. navy, so essential to defensive strength in the South Pacific area. It has done so for reasons having to do with nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered ships.

As is well known, there has been a great deal of public concern about nuclear weapons and the spread and danger of such weapons since Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The so-called "nuclear allergy" is a phenomenon witnessed in many countries and it is certainly understandable.

As President Reagan said before the Japanese Diet in the Fall of 1983, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." This is an absolutely accurate statement. Reagan also made it his policy to begin the mutual destruction of nuclear weapons by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to lead eventually to the removal of all nuclear weapons from the world.

In the meantime, the policy of "nuclear deterrence" is
indispensable to the maintenance of peace. A potential aggressor
must know that the United States is prepared to protect itself
and its friends and allies from nuclear attack and the threat of
such an attack. This is the best way to keep the peace and avoid
war in this dangerous world in which we live.

In order to ensure the maximum protection for all of the
free world, the United States has a "neither confirm nor deny"
(NCND) policy as regards nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Lange
of New Zealand chose not to accept such a policy and as a result
refused to allow U.S. naval vessels into New Zealand harbors.
The United States did its best to work out an acceptable
compromise with Lange and his government, as it has with all free
governments in the world. However, all U.S. proposals were
turned down. In mid-1986 U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz
met with Lange in Southeast Asia and made one final effort to
reach agreement. The New Zealand Prime Minister was adamant in
his refusal and Shultz came out of the meeting saying to the
waiting press about the U.S.-New Zealand security relationship:
"We part as friends, but we part."

The United States strongly hopes that New Zealand will
abandon its unhelpful attitude and will return as a full partner
to ANZUS. As U.S. officials have often said, "The chair at the
ANZUS table is there for New Zealand to sit in whenever she is
ready." This is what both the U.S. and Australia would like to see.

In areas other than security, the U.S. has excellent
relations with New Zealand. Trade and economic ties are strong. New Zealand is a strong supporter of efforts in multilateral fora to liberalize international trade and often works with the U.S. to that end, despite some bilateral friction over economic issues such as the meat voluntary restraint agreement (VRA).

The U.S. suspension of security obligations to New Zealand reflects the American government's view that allies cannot dictate highly selective terms for security cooperation. New Zealand's policies on port and air access are incompatible with both the U.S. global NCND policy and operational requirements of U.S. naval vessels.

The U.S. government has only limited military and intelligence cooperation with New Zealand, thus stripping New Zealand of the special access and influence normally accorded an ally. The administration has been careful, however, to refrain from imposing trade and other economic sanctions which some members of Congress have proposed.

The U.S. and Australia have continued their close cooperation under ANZUS as evidenced by the many U.S. Navy ship visits to Australia and the 1988 revision and extension for ten years of an agreement on joint defense facilities in Australia. The U.S. and Australia also closely collaborate on the diplomatic front, such as in regard to the chemical weapons conference and multilateral efforts at trade liberalization.

Agricultural trade has been the major area of friction in the U.S. relationship with Australia: e.g., U.S. efforts under
the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and Australian concern over the price effect in world markets. However, the EEP is aimed at regaining the U.S. market share from agricultural subsidizers, such as the European Community. The U.S. does its best to administer the EEP taking into account the interest of non-subsidizers, such as Australia.

In April of 1989 I accompanied Vice President Dan Quayle on a trip to Australia as senior advisor. While the Australians made clear their opposition to America's Export Enhancement Program, they also strongly reaffirmed the U.S.-Australia alliance and its importance to Australia and the U.S. and the free world. U.S.-Australia relations are very good indeed and the personal relationships existing between Prime Minister Hawke and President Bush are excellent.

During the Reagan administration a great deal of attention was given to relations between the U.S. and South Pacific states. I personally believed that we had not worked sufficiently at maintaining and building good ties with the peoples of that region. For years, the U.S. government had been trying to close on the Compacts of Free Association for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. This Compact was implemented in the past couple of years and those nations are now self-governing and no longer subject to the Trusteeship. Each has established bilateral diplomatic relations with ten nations and acceded to bilateral and multilateral treaties.
The Soviet Union continues its bid to become a more active player in the region. Fishery agreements concluded with Kiribati in 1986 and with Vanuatu in 1987 were both allowed to lapse after one year, although intermittent renewal talks with Vanuatu continue. The Soviets have also talked about concluding a regional agreement, similar to the U.S. Regional Fisheries Treaty which entered into effect June 15, 1988. The Soviets also continue to offer oceanographic cruises and training to the island states. Papua New Guinea has announced that it will permit the Soviet Union to establish a resident embassy, which will be its first in the islands.

In my opinion, however, the United States need not be overly concerned about Soviet attempts to expand their ties with the Pacific island states. These states are democratic in their outlook and see the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Japan as their friends. If we live up to our responsibilities and commitments to our neighbors in the South Pacific I am convinced that we will continue to have a close and rewarding relationship.