EAST-WEST CENTER

Dear President Clinton: Voices from Asia and the Pacific

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AsiaPacific

ISSUES

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SUMMARY On the eve of President Clinton's trip to Tokyo to attend the July summit of industrial nations, the East-West Center asked 14 leading Asian and Pacific journalists—all of whom have been associated with the Center—for their assessments and expectations of America's new leadership. Addressed directly to the president, the resulting "letters" reveal the complex issues America faces in the region. There is often agreement on issues: "The tough U.S. position on trade comes at a time when your government has not shown any real commitment to regional security in Asia," says a Thai journalist, summing up the feelings of many. But sharp disagreements also emerge: Some writers applaud the president's emphasis on human rights, while others feel America's view cannot easily be accepted in Asia. One message comes through clearly: While America has a large reservoir of goodwill throughout the region, dissatisfactions are mounting. As the writer from Australia states: "The warning signs are there for Americans to see, if only they will pay attention."

EAST ASIA

China
C. L. Feng

America's relations with China today are strained. On 25 May you announced a one-year renewal of the provision that gives China most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment equal to that of other major nations trading with the United States. You attached no conditions this year but said you might impose conditions next year, depending on developments on human rights in China, the proliferation of weapons, and trade practices.

A China policy will lead nowhere if it is based on wild demands.

The Chinese government immediately lodged a protest with the U.S. government, as could have been expected. In the Chinese view, human rights and weapons proliferation have nothing to do with trade. As for trade balances, Chinese have been buying more U.S. goods.

Chinese maintain that MFN status should be reciprocal and not based on ideology and politics. Chinese officials have said they would not accept MFN status with strings attached. If China is deprived of equal access to the U.S. market, the Chinese would take similar steps, bringing huge losses to both countries as well as to Hong Kong and even to Taiwan. Losing a big market will not help the U.S. economy.

Your view on human rights is not easily accepted in Asia. On 2 April 1993 delegates from 49 Asian countries at the Asian and Pacific Human Rights Conference in Thailand adopted the "Bangkok Declaration," which criticizes Western countries for using human rights as a political weapon to browbeat other nations. You may disagree, but the declaration represents the voice of two-thirds of the world's population.

Chinese have been seeking to improve Sino-U.S. relations. Premier Li Peng told the National People's Congress recently: "So long as the U.S. government observes the principles of the three Sino-U.S. communiqués, all obstacles can be brushed aside, and relations between the two countries can continue to improve and develop." Those communiqués, issued in 1972, 1979 and 1982, embody the principle of one China, the principle of peaceful coexistence and the principle of opposing any nation that seeks hegemony.

China's President and Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin has suggested a four-phrase formula for improving Sino-U.S. relations: strengthening mutual trust; minimizing troubles; developing cooperation; no confrontation.

In the United States, however, a more positive China policy has yet to take shape. China-bashers are busy raising new demands every day. They accuse China of trampling human rights in Tibet and call for Tibet's independence. China says Tibet is part of China and that it has rid Tibet of serfdom under the former lama clergy who truly trampled human rights. China-bashers support those plotting for Taiwan independence and to block China's plan to reunify the island province with the mainland under the concept of "one country and two systems."

The China-bashers ignore the agreements made by China and Britain for governing Hong Kong after 1997 when Britain returns Hong Kong to China. They encourage the governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, to push unilateral "political reform," thus endangering a smooth transition. They drum up tension over China's Nansha [Spratly] Islands, even though China has said that it is for peaceful negotiations and joint exploration of the islands. They accuse China of military expansion, whereas China's military budget is only $7 billion—far less than that of Japan, South Korea, India or even Taiwan.

Mr. President, do not let these claims influence you in formulating a China policy. A China policy will lead nowhere if it is based on wild demands. A forward-looking China policy, however, would help to improve U.S.-China relations and create a favorable environment for Pacific Rim development.

C. L. Feng, a senior Chinese journalist, was a Visiting Fellow at the East-West Center in 1991.

Hong Kong
Terry Cheng

Since your assumption of the American presidency, you and your senior aides on several occasions have spoken publicly on Hong Kong's future, and you took time to meet with Governor Chris Patten during his visit to Washington in May. As a citizen of Hong Kong, I thank you.

Your scheduled travel to Asia in July highlights the United States's commitment to the Asia-Pacific community. I would draw your attention to issues that are vital to Hong Kong's well-being and its relations with your country.

The maintenance of Hong Kong's robust economy is totally in line with your commitment to reviving the U.S. economy. About 40 percent of your country's trade is with the Asia-Pacific region; Hong Kong occupies a significant portion of that trade. The continuing economic boom in Hong Kong will thus be good for the American economy.

At the same time, Hong Kong has a close, symbiotic relationship with China and will be integrated into China in 1997. Thus, America's relations with China are most important to Hong Kong.

While there is genuine concern in America for human rights in China and anxiety about weapons proliferation, these are Cold War notions. As the Middle Kingdom is becoming an economic power and is carving out its own role in the world, Americans should learn to manage a more complicated relationship with China.

There should be better ways to achieve American goals than attacking China's trading status every year. The Chinese are becoming resentful of this annual exercise, and this sentiment is shared by an increasing number of Hong Kong people who think politics should not be mixed with economics.

For Hong Kong, it is important for the world to maintain a proper concern beyond 1997. This concern, however, should not be seen by China as interference in its internal affairs. For Beijing to be harboring suspicions about Hong Kong's

President Clinton surely doesn't remember it, but he has personally greeted at least four of the journalists writing to him in this report. As **Lee Sang Seok** of Korea points out, he and his Asian colleagues in the 1992 Jefferson Fellowships program attended a Clinton campaign rally in Orange County, California, in June 1992, as part of their fellowship travels across the United States.

As curator of the Jefferson Fellowships, I accompanied the Fellows that day. As usual, candidate Clinton was late. We waited for more than an hour; finally, the black limos drove up and out popped the candidate. Mr. Clinton worked his way through the crowd, shaking hands with those in the front row, including the Jefferson Fellows from Asia.

The annual Jefferson Fellowships program brings to the East-West Center 12 to 14 mid-career journalists—half from the United States, half from Asia and the Pacific. The fellows, selected in open competition, spend four weeks in intensive seminars. Then they travel for five weeks, the Americans going to China, Japan and other Asian countries, the Asians to the U.S. mainland. All return to Honolulu for a final week of evaluation. Since 1967, there have been 237 fellows—from Afghanistan to Western Samoa.

Some of the program's most distinguished alumni have contributed to this report. **Mochtar Lubis,** the first Jefferson Fellow, has won numerous awards for his commitment to press freedom in Indonesia. That has taken courage, as it has for **V. N. Narayanan** of India to edit an honest newspaper in the violent province of Punjab. It has taken courage for **M. Kamran Khan** of Pakistan to report in Karachi, where thugs stabbed him after he criticized those in power. It has taken courage for **Amando Doronila,** who is editor-in-residence at the Center this year, to retain his editorial independence in the Philippines. The other contributors, no less distinguished, are among a growing circle of journalists who have been affiliated with the East-West Center.

JOHN SCHIDLOVSKY

relations with other countries does not serve Hong Kong well. Maintaining your country's concern for Hong Kong without being seen as meddling in China's internal affairs will be a test of the United States's diplomatic wisdom.

Terry Cheng is the China editor of the Hong Kong Standard. *He was a Jefferson Fellow in 1993.*

Japan
Takemoto Iinuma

Many Japanese are puzzled by your policy toward Japan. Or, it might be better to say, they are afraid you may have no policy regarding Japan except for a results-oriented approach to trade relations.

Four months after assuming the presidency, you have yet to clarify how you plan to work with Japan, a key country in Asia, in security and economic relations. To our eyes and ears, your views appear to be fragmented and delivered case-by-case.

Americans are not making an adequate effort to expand their markets in Japan.

On trade, you are definitely right when you talk about the need for a more open market in Japan, which has many outdated barriers such as restricting rice imports and blocking foreign competition in construction. These old Japanese customs must be changed to bring Japan into step with common global rules. The Japanese public and some intellectual leaders also want to see more imports of less expensive foreign products.

A main cause of slow change is the old-fashioned politics of Japan, with its cozy relations among politicians, bureaucrats and business executives, against which there are mounting calls for reform. We know you can't wait until we achieve political reform to open our market wider. The United States cannot tolerate a trade deficit of more than $40 billion, as was recorded in 1992.

You speak of import quotas. But rushing to impose import quotas item-by-item will lead to managed trade rather than to expansion of free trade. Moreover, there is room for greater effort by Americans to reduce your nation's deficit. Your computer chip industry is reviving and your cars are more efficient now. But Americans are not making an adequate effort to expand their markets in Japan. One American said to me: "They are not trying to move ahead because they are fettered by what they believe is the uniqueness of Japan."

In Asian security, almost all Japanese believe the U.S-Japan relationship is the key to stability in the region and that the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty should be maintained for many years to come. It is hoped you will reconfirm your plans to preserve the treaty. Although Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa shares responsibility in this regard, I was disappointed that the recent U.S.-Japan summit in Washington did not touch on this.

Overall, your foreign policy so far seems merely to be an extension of U.S. domestic affairs or is intended for consumption by your constituents. One example is Russia. No one is opposed to assisting a democratic Russia. But Japanese—not only government officials but specialists and intellectuals—are at a loss when the United States presses Japan to provide a major portion of such aid. It is not because we do not wish to help reform Russia, but because pouring money into Boris Yeltsin's pockets will amplify the power struggle among Russian factions, possibly leading the country to civil war.

Learning to consult with allies is crucial for a cooperative world strategy. If you endorsed Japan's dispatch of members of our Self-Defense Forces to Cambodia, then criticism of Japan from neighboring countries would be minimized. If your administration enthusiastically participates in reforming the United Nations, Japan will be encouraged to take part in UN activities. At present, few people are seriously considering a permanent seat for Japan on the Security Council.

It is my hope that you will take diplomatic steps with a long-term perspective without being influenced by immediate advantages.

Takemoto Iinuma is director of the Yomiuri Research Institute at the Yomiuri Shimbun, *Japan's largest newspaper, where he formerly served as foreign editor. He was a Jefferson Fellow in 1977.*

South Korea
Lee Sang Seok

Welcome to "Shin-Hankook," which means New Korea, the phrase that has become the password for reform since the inauguration of President Kim Young Sǎm in February.

You have a good chance of forging new ties between Korea and America because you are considered a tough champion of democracy and human rights. I remember seeing you campaigning in Orange County, California, a Republican stronghold. As I listened, a Korean adage came to mind: "If you want to catch a tiger, you should venture into a tiger's den."

Please try to avoid the appearance of an older brother preaching to a younger brother.

Your tough image has been accepted by most Koreans. But Koreans were worried after your election because they believed you might take a tough stand on trade issues. They are still wary about you pushing ahead with an "America First" foreign policy.

It might be helpful to understand that Koreans tend to mistrust foreigners because Korea has often been the victim of outside aggression. Most Koreans are thus concerned about the real intentions of foreigners; we judge from what foreigners do, not from what they say.

Two issues stand in the way of improving ties between Korea and the United States—trade and defense. In both, your style could affect the outcome. Please try to avoid the appearance of an older brother preaching to a younger brother when you talk with Korean officials about the principle of fairness. It might be better for you to play the role of a longtime friend giving a Korean friend some advice.

In defense, please spell out what your policy toward North Korea is. Do you want to use military force if North Korea does not comply with nuclear safeguard agreements? If you do, are you going to do it unilaterally? Most South Koreans are opposed to using military force against North Korea.

As your predecessors have, please reiterate the American commitment to a strong defense posture in Korea but avoid pushing Korea to assume a greater share of defense spending. Most Koreans want American troops to stay here until the two Koreas become one nation. It would be wise for you to say the United States will pull its troops out of Korea whenever the Korean people want it to do so.

There is one more thing that you could do to improve Korea-U.S. relations. Your itinerary should include a brief trip to the city of Kwangju, which many Koreans see as a black hole in the annals of democracy and human rights. Many Koreans believe the United States allowed Korean troops under its command to crush an uprising against the military junta in power 13 years ago. By going to Kwangju, you could send a strong message to North Korean and Chinese leaders, as well as to the Korean people. You would make clear that your administration will emphasize human rights in every corner of the world.

As you have seen from recent press reports, some Koreans have anti-American sentiments; such feelings are stronger among younger people. These sentiments are related to an overall surge in nationalism around the world. In particular, anti-Americanism here should be blamed on American support for dictatorial regimes over the past 30 years. Even with these lingering feelings, however, there has been a sharp decrease in anti-American demonstrations.

Lee Sang Seok, assistant world news editor at the Hankook Ilbo *in Seoul, was a Jefferson Fellow in 1992.*

Taiwan
Patrick Nai-tien Mo

When you were governor of Arkansas, you visited Taiwan several times, so I am sure you have a clear understanding of Taiwan. Furthermore, during your campaign and after you became president, you praised the economic and democratic achievements of Taiwan; for this, I would like to express our gratitude.

On the eve of your trip to Asia, I would like to tell you about our worries and expectations regarding your government.

The first of our worries is that the economic lifeline of Taiwan, a small and overpopulated island with limited natural resources, is dependent on trade, especially with the United States. In recent years, we have spared no effort in abiding by fair trading practices and protecting intellectual property rights. Even so, the U.S. government time and time again has applied pressure to us, seriously stifling our economic growth.

The second of our worries is that, although we always seek to improve our relations with the People's Republic of China, it has never abandoned its intention of invading Taiwan. The most worrying development is that the People's Republic of China is continually building up its military strength, thus threatening Asia and, indeed, the whole world.

The third of our concerns stems from the communist control of China for more than 40 years. Chinese lives, property and liberty are still without much protection. While other communist countries are collapsing one by one, those ruling the world's most populous country tighten their grip on the people.

Given these concerns, our expectations of you are:

First, please affirm our efforts for fair trade with the United States and reduce your economic pressure on Taiwan.

Second, please view seriously the military threat that the People's Republic of China poses to world peace and stability and to the freedom of millions of Chinese.

U.S. pressure on us has seriously stifled our economic growth.

Third, Taiwan is trying to re-enter the international community, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations. We believe our rejoining the United Nations will help it to aid poor countries and to fulfill its goals of promoting world peace and prosperity. We hope that you will assist us in re-entering the United Nations soon.

Fourth, President Lee Teng-Hui recently proposed an "Asian-Pacific collective security system," which is not a military pact but an economic cooperative. We believe it could be a great force in maintaining the security, stability and prosperity of the region. We hope you will endorse this project and help make it a reality.

Patrick Nai-tien Mo, the deputy managing director of the news department of China Television Company in Taipei, was a Jefferson Fellow in 1973.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Indonesia
Mochtar Lubis

When you went around the United States during your campaign for the presidency, your voice reached many people in the Pacific and Asia. We liked many of your international views, especially on human rights and the environment, and your dreams for a better and saner world.

Your administration should set an example in the protection and sustainability of the environment.

We have great expectations that your administration will put into practice the ideas you expressed during your campaign. People in Asia and the Pacific want to be assured of continued peace in this part of the world; of course, everybody wants to see the cessation of hostilities and destruction in other parts of the world too. We would like to see less military build-up here, with no expanding military power in Japan, China, India, Pakistan and, of course, America. No more arms race in Asia would make people sleep better.

We are anxious to see better economic cooperation between the United States and our countries. Trade wars or conflicts should be avoided. We would like to see continued developmental aid to those countries in the Pacific and Asia that are falling behind in economic development. There should be closer scientific and technological cooperation between the United States and Asian and Pacific countries, including cooperation among universities, research centers and individuals.

In the practice of democratic and human rights, Americans should not act like the Japanese, who only give lip service to the idea. Governments that persistently ignore or suppress democracy and human rights do not deserve developmental aid. The United States should carefully look into the state of democracy and human rights in the countries to which it provides aid. Only with real democracy and human rights can a more balanced and just distribution of income be achieved, and the people empowered to obtain justice.

Your administration should set an example in the protection and sustainability of the environment. Thus you will be in a strong position to exercise moral pressure upon countries in Asia and the Pacific to do the same. The remaining forests in Asia play a most important role in maintaining the world's climate, and in many countries they are disappearing fast.

In agriculture, many Asian and Pacific countries are poisoning their fields and streams, and themselves, with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. There is an urgent need to propagate techniques for natural farming, and to control pests in rice fields and farms. What is called "integrated pest management" is working in some parts of Indonesia, gaining experience and knowledge for our farming people. I hope your administration will continue to support this "back-to-nature farming program," as today this is the only method for poison-free farming.

The United States is not only an Atlantic country, but a Pacific country and therefore very close to Asia. We understand that the United States alone cannot resolve Asia's or the world's problems. What needs to be done must be done together by the nations in the world. But your country is in a strong, persuasive position to mobilize the international cooperation needed to secure a better and happier future for all humankind.

Mochtar Lubis, who is one of Indonesia's most prominent journalists and authors, was the first Jefferson Fellow, in 1967.

Philippines
Amando Doronila

As the first American president elected in the post-Cold War era, you could shape a foreign policy that would respond to changing realities in America's relations with Asia and the Pacific. But there is growing disappointment in this region, which is posting the world's most dynamic

economic growth and accounts for more than a third of America's trade, over the slowness with which your administration has addressed the issue of a new Asian policy.

We understand the priority given to reducing deficits to rebuild your nation's economic power. We agree that the global economy can only benefit from America's revival. Like most of our Asian neighbors, however, we cannot respond to your initiatives until we know what they are.

Filipinos deeply feel a need to correct this uneven relationship with the United States.

The Philippines urgently needs a redefinition of its relations with Washington. The decision by the Philippines to do away with U.S. military bases at Subic Bay and Clark Field last year ended nearly a century of special relations in which America not only defended the Philippines but nurtured our democracy.

The departure of American forces has drastically reduced the strategic importance of the Philippines in American-led security arrangements in Asia. At the same time, the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union have robbed the United States and the Philippines of an "enemy." That "enemy" was the organizing principle of America's alliances around the globe; with its dissolution has gone the critical element in the U.S. alliance with the Philippines.

Thus, with the freight of colonialism cast off, there is a clean slate on which could be drawn a new relationship that would be balanced and would respect Filipino sovereignty. Filipinos deeply feel a need to correct this uneven relationship; this cannot be ignored, given the spread of nationalism in Asia.

The closure of American bases has been seen as a triumph for Filipino nationalism, but that has also robbed our nationalists of a whipping boy against which to organize popular support and made America-bashing redundant. Thus, despite the bitterness in the debate over the bases, there remains a deep reservoir of Filipino goodwill for Americans that could provide a good starting point for rebuilding our relations.

In the new international environment, the Philippines is moving away from a narrow focus on the United States to identify more with its partners in ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Manila is also emphasizing economic development, an obsessive goal for President Fidel Ramos.

Consequently, two issues should define the new relationship between the Philippines and the United States. The first is a new regional security arrangement in which the United States could play a key but not hegemonic role in concert with ASEAN and Japan. The security interests of the Philippines could be best served by a regional security arrangement that would bring together the United States, China, Russia, Japan and ASEAN in a concert of nations forming a new balance of power. The second would be an expansion of mutually helpful economic agreements.

President Ramos called his recent visit to China a "voyage of discovery." America recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the New World, which took place during the European "Age of Discovery." In this sense, both your administration and the Ramos administration are poised to embark on a new "age of discovery" in relations between our two nations.

Amando Doronila is the editor of the Manila Chronicle *and the East-West Center's editor-in-residence for 1993.*

Singapore
Lee Siew Hua

For Singapore's leaders, your presidential victory last November was a mild letdown after 12 years of excellent ties with the Republicans. Obviously, with a new president come new unknowns and, for Singpore's prosperous but vulnerable Brooklyn-sized island, unknowns can be prickly.

On your first Asian trip as president, Singaporeans will expect to be reassured about your stand on three urgent issues:

Security—A clear U.S. military presence, even as your global role diminishes, projects power and stability in Southeast Asia. Will the United States remain a guarantor of security?

Trade—The United States is Singapore's biggest trading partner. Will you moderate the protectionist tendencies of America?

Economy—A revived U.S. economy will enable Americans to spend and invest more in Asia, to finance military commitments and make protectionism less likely. Singapore alone accounted for 17 percent of American investments in the Asia-Pacific region in 1991. When will you decisively turn the recession around?

Currently, the Clinton administration's China policy is of much concern. When Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew visited China in May, he noted that the West will slow down China's passage to a free-market economy if trade is linked to Western norms of democracy and human rights.

He said: "There's little to be gained by taking this issue to the brink because if it tips over the brink, it will affect China's growth, probably by 35, maybe 45, percent." A weakened China would have a ripple effect on its investor countries, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Singapore.

Singapore and its neighbors fear a power vacuum following the U.S. exit from the Philippines. What they want now is "the fullest American involvement in Asia . . . concentrated on the most strategic area—which is economics," according to Noordin Soopiee, director-general of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

With a new president come new unknowns and, for Singapore, unknowns can be prickly.

On the whole, the Singapore business community believes that you will not carry your hardline campaign strategy into your presidency. You are not likely to depart from President Bush's open policies towards Asia and become inward looking.

When your predecessor came on a short visit to Singapore in January 1992, bilateral ties were brought to a new peak, with U.S. commitments underlined and the region's profile raised in the calculations of U.S. industrialists.

When it is your turn to visit here, you can expect Singapore to continue to express its staunch friendship. Here there is no anti-American posturing and the Republic was among the first to support the U.S.-led coalition during the Gulf War. You will have the opportunity to heighten the understanding about the role that the United States—itself a Pacific power—wishes to play in the Pacific Century.

Lee Siew Hua, a correspondent for The Sunday Times *in Singapore, was a Jefferson Fellow in 1992.*

Thailand
Kavi Chongkittavorn

Trade and security are the two key issues that could make or break the future of the United States in Asia and the Pacific.

With you now in charge at the White House, Thais and other people in Southeast Asia are trying to figure out what to expect after 12 years of Republican foreign policies. Generally, Thais think Democrats are more trade protectionist than Republicans but that a Democratic administration will normally take a tougher stand for democracy and human rights.

Thailand was once considered one of America's closest allies in Asia. With the end of the Cold War, however, security issues have become secondary to economic issues. Now when senior officials of the two countries meet, chances are they will discuss economic cooperation rather than defense cooperation.

That explains why Thai-American relations are somewhat strained. As of now, Thai leaders view you and your team as "American First" advocates. They fear that Washington's growing frustration means that you will train your sights on parochial issues such as trade deficits, which will undermine overall relations between Thailand and the United States.

Washington, for instance, has asserted that Bangkok has violated intellectual property rights. Thais are unhappy with this trade move, thinking it comes at an inopportune time when the country is seeking to strengthen its democratic process.

The U.S. government might think that rapid economic growth in Thailand has been due to the U.S. open market, which has been taking 22 percent of all Thai exports. Washington wants Thailand to do more to reciprocate and to help

solve American economic problems at home. Thus, undeniably, trade and economic interests dictate Thailand–United States ties at every turn. But most Southeast Asian leaders think that the U.S. trade deficit is partly caused by shortcomings at home.

The tough U.S. position on trade comes at the time when your government has not shown any real commitment to regional security in Asia. Thailand and other Southeast Asian nations are concerned because U.S. forces left Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base in the Philippines last year. They seem to think that eventually U.S. forces will be reduced in the region.

Bangladesh needs American support to nourish democracy.

That helps explain why some of the Asian countries are adding to their arms stockpiles to safeguard their nations amid new uncertainties after the end of Cold War. With you as president, the United States has already cut its defense budget. If such a trend continues, Thais believe it would mean a diminished role for Washington.

Beyond that, the United States is pressing Southeast Asian nations to come up with a better record on human rights. While Thais welcome such a move, they think there is a fine line between support and intrusion. Worse, there is a danger in pushing for such a goal, especially when national policies or, for that matter, international policies, are increasingly determined by economics.

Finally, Thais now realize that it is in their interest to keep the United States engaged in Southeast Asia. To do so, they know they must help restore America's economic competitiveness by opening up markets in Thailand.

Kavi Chongkittavorn is regional editor of The Nation *in Bangkok and was a Jefferson Fellow in 1988.*

SOUTH ASIA

Bangladesh
Arshad Mahmud

It was great to hear you speak at your inauguration of American renewal and your declaration that while the United States rebuilds at home, "we'll not shrink from the challenges abroad, nor fail to seize the opportunities of this new world."

Yet in the four months since you took office your actions and utterances suggest that the new administration has little time to focus on outside issues. Whatever time is available is directed toward the former Soviet republics that have nuclear arms and the former Yugoslavia because of the mindless slaughter there.

"It seems the U.S. is losing interest in Asia and the Pacific in general," Kaiser Morshed, chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, has said, adding that "except for Japan and China, they really don't care."

An American specialist on South Asia, professor Glen Johnson, echoed that view when he spoke recently in Dhaka. "South Asia really doesn't figure in the new administration's policy," he said. The only concern of the Clinton administration, he said, is the fear of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

It's perhaps unrealistic for Bangladesh—a country largely forgotten unless disaster strikes—to expect increased American support. Yet what concerns us most is whether the existing level of assistance will be maintained now that your administration has put domestic needs and aid to Russia on top of the agenda.

Bangladesh, which has just emerged from more than a decade of authoritarian rule, needs American support to nourish democracy and sustain the market economy it has adopted.

In the two years since the democratic government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia came to

power, growth has picked up and the country appears to be on the path to recovery. A relatively new export industry, garment making, has been a major factor in this recovery. This industry is expected to earn about $2 billion this year, an enormous sum for a poor country. This phenomenal growth has been fueled largely by the relaxation of import restrictions in the United States and EEC countries that take 97 percent of the Bangladeshi garments.

But disturbing news from the United States has cast a shadow on this thriving industry: the introduction into Congress of a measure calling for a ban on imports from countries that employ child labor. American lawmakers are unlikely to consider how child labor relieves poverty here. If enacted, the bill could be disastrous for Bangladesh and we would be happy to see you veto it.

Finally, would it be too much to ask you to include Bangladesh in your travels someday? You could meet Dr. Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank about whom you spoke so glowingly in your interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine during the campaign. Bangladeshis were pleased to learn poverty alleviation projects you had undertaken in Arkansas are modeled on the Grameen Bank. So do consider visiting Bangladesh.

Arshad Mahmud is a diplomatic correspondent for Holiday, *a weekly newspaper in Dhaka. He was a Jefferson Fellow in 1992.*

India
Velamur Narasimhan Narayanan

India expects you not to treat it as just another poor country.

Changes in the global scene should now lead to altered perceptions between India and the United States, the world's two largest democracies. The new U.S. government is happily free from the hang-ups of the superpower confrontation and should move away from strategic maneuvering to basic values and cooperation between countries.

India too is on the threshold of a radical shift in its political and economic profile. Of our 880 million people, about 175 million qualified and educated Indians look to the West for economic opportunities and for the pursuit of excellence in an atmosphere of freedom and hope.

Attitudinal changes are necessary on both sides to bring about a greater degree of recognition of shared democratic values. Changes within the United States, with your new generation of leaders, and in India, which is being unshackled from a legacy of socialist economics, have made such an understanding possible.

India expects you to acknowledge its potential to grow into an economic giant and a regional power and not to treat it as just another poor country. A cooperative and comprehensive India-U.S. relationship would be important to both countries. The United States could emphasize an abiding concern for spreading freedom, human rights, democracy and secularism. India should figure high in American vision. Despite India's burgeoning population, grinding poverty and bewildering diversity, it has preserved an open society with democratic institutions, including a free and vibrant press.

Indians expect your administration to be more evenhanded in its policy toward China and India. The preservation of India's democracy must be as relevant to U.S. global objectives as the promotion of democracy in China.

India expects the United States not to sell arms or military equipment to Pakistan or do anything to stimulate an arms race in South Asia. On the other hand, you should use all your clout to force the two South Asian neighbors to resolve their disputes and concentrate on shared security concerns.

India expects the United States to understand its compulsions in not surrendering its nuclear options. The United States should not force India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but persuade it to give up weapons research and production. India should accept international inspection of nuclear facilities. An arm-twisting approach to India's missile and space programs—as manifested in the U.S. attempt to stop the sale of Russian cryogenic rocket engines to India—would be counterproductive. That must be left to a multinational agency such as the United Nations.

Perhaps most important to India-U.S. relations

is technical and economic cooperation. The economic reforms now under way in India, coupled with the world's third largest scientific and technological manpower force and a strong private sector, has opened up investment opportunities in India. Continuing aid to Indian industry and agriculture would help the growth of the private sector. Mr. President, please give your endorsement to the Japanese proposal to allocate $20 billion to developing countries trying to implement sweeping economic reforms.

Finally, the United States should take the lead in democratizing decision making in the United Nations. The Security Council should be enlarged and countries like Japan, Germany and India should be made permanent members.

Velamur Narasimhan Narayanan is the editor-in-chief of The Tribune *in Chandigarh, India. He was a Jefferson Fellow in 1985.*

Pakistan
M. Kamran Khan

You will be glad to know that Bill Clinton is a household name in this nation of 121 million people. Thanks to the revolution of the Cable News Network (CNN), much of the presidential campaign, the intense debates and the transfer of power from the Bush administration to yours was watched with tremendous interest in Pakistan. Here, democracy is still learning its early lessons.

Most Pakistanis want severe cuts in the nation's defense budget.

The campaign multiplied respect for genuine democracy and the American political system in the minds of Pakistanis. You are now being assessed globally. "Unbelievable! The American president started his term by taking up the issue of homosexuals in the U.S. military," many Pakistanis said with some disgust. In Pakistan, where homosexuality is taboo, people were surprised to learn that gays in the U.S. army topped Bill Clinton's agenda.

Most Pakistanis expect the Democratic Party's president to be more concerned about issues relating to democracy, disarmament, human rights and nuclear nonproliferation. Having suffered at the hands of autocratic rulers, Pakistanis want to see democracy flourish in their country. They are fed up with intermittent military interventions in the garb of constitutional and extraconstitutional coups d'état.

Field Marshal Ayub Khan and General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, the two dictators who ran Pakistan for 22 of its 46 years, enjoyed the support of Washington, which was locked at that time in a conflict with the communist world. Now, communism has been buried and the Cold War is over. In the future, Pakistanis hope that a general attempting to usurp the rights of the people will not get recognition from Washington. The Clinton administration should support the forces of democracy and freedom in Pakistan.

Most Pakistanis want severe cuts in the nation's galloping defense expenditures, but they have no voice as the generals project the threat of another war with India. The Clinton administration could ease this problem by using its influence to solve through international mediation the thorny issue of Kashmir. Once the Indian threat is taken care of, either through dialogue or U.S. security assurances for Pakistan, most Pakistanis will agree to a nuclear rollback. India must also be persuaded to sign a nonproliferation treaty with Pakistan.

Islamic fundamentalists, repudiated in previous elections, are looking for an issue to stage a comeback. An American decision to declare Pakistan a terrorist state would be exactly what the fundamentalists want to fuel anti-American feelings across Pakistan. This decision would give a new lease on life to the mullahs and would not serve United States interests here.

Your administration should abandon the policy of praising Pakistan's official efforts to curtail drug trafficking. Drug traffickers have access to the highest offices in Pakistan as they enjoy immunity from the law. Pakistan has become a haven for the traffickers, who are responsible for crippling hundreds of thousands of youths across the globe. This is a field where Pakistan deserves arm-twisting.

M. Kamran Khan is the chief correspondent for The News *in Karachi, Pakistan, and was a Jefferson Fellow in 1989.*

PACIFIC

Australia
W. Rex Jory

Australia is pressing forward with plans to become an independent republic, create a new national flag, divest itself of much of its European past and seek broader acceptance in Asia. This is an historic revision that will inevitably mean a change in allegiances and less dependence on traditional ties with Britain, Europe and the United States.

Australians cannot sit idly by as the United States poaches on our traditional export outlets.

At the heart of Australia's change is a collapse in previously lucrative exports, the threat of emerging trading blocs and the developing wealth of the Asian market. The downfall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has strengthened Australia's independent stance. Without a threat, the ANZUS (Australia–New Zealand–United States) alliance has lost much of its importance to Australia.

Australia shares with much of Asia a concern about the paternalistic attitude, often approaching arrogance, of Americans in Asia. Asian nations are emerging as independent powers in their own right, and reject economic and defense entanglements with the United States, particularly those remaining from the Vietnam war.

The United States should learn to approach its security and trade obligations in Asia not as some irresistible power but as an equal trading partner. If Washington tries to blackmail Asia into arrangements that benefit only the United States, Americans may be restricted from lucrative Asian markets. The blunt truth is that Australia is tiring of the United States's thinly disguised policy of isolationism and trade selectivity.

Australia fears that continued procrastination by the United States over the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks will lead to a breakdown of the Uruguay Round and the consequent formation of trading blocs. If the world splits into such blocs, Australia could have nowhere to go. This was reflected during a visit to Japan by Prime Minister Paul Keating last year. Mr. Keating said Australia would line up with Japan in a trade war with the United States if it came to a crunch.

While the United States makes conciliatory noises about the need for a free international trading system, its statements deny the reality of the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and the inexorable strengthening of the European Community.

For Australia, which for years enjoyed prosperous isolation from the world market, it is becoming simpler to sell in Asian markets, including Japan, than in Europe or the United States, where it is met with tariff barriers to farm and mineral exports.

Nor can Australians sit idly by as the United States poaches on our traditional export outlets by undercutting prices with subsidized farm products. For now, Australia enjoys a trading surplus with Japan (compared with a deficit with the United States) primarily because of coal, iron, wheat and beef exports. But there are suspicions that if GATT fails, Japan may join an enlarged NAFTA.

If the United States continues to treat Australia with indifference when our farmers seek increased access for beef, sugar or wine exports, then a trading partnership favorable to the United States will be eroded and ultimately lost. That pattern will be repeated across the region. Australia wants to remain a close defense, economic, cultural, sporting and trading ally with the United States, but the warning signs are there for the Americans to see, if only they will pay attention.

W. Rex Jory, deputy editor of The Advertiser *in Adelaide, was a Jefferson Fellow in 1990.*

New Zealand

Suzanne Carty

New Zealand, as you probably know, is that small country at the bottom of the West Pacific crescent with three million people and 54 million sheep. Ask Vice President Gore: he's been here.

If this country needs one thing from the Clinton administration, it is clear leadership in advancing the principles of free and fair trade. The signals from your government so far have been mixed.

A senior politician here concedes, "We understand the domestic imperatives. As politicians, we all have these." But by the time of the G-7 summit in July, the Clinton administration will be 150 days old and still the rhetoric and reality differ.

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor says your country is committed to free trade. Yet U.S. protectionism is rife.

On the one hand, U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor says the United States is committed to free trade. On the other hand, American protectionism is rife: you subsidize your dairy farmers, maintain an unnecessary meat import law and try to block imports of New Zealand steel by claiming we're dumping.

Unequivocal American leadership is needed to conclude the Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). For its part, New Zealand unashamedly speaks from self-interest over agricultural products. It is perhaps the world's most efficient and subsidy-free primary producer and will, in the long term, be a major beneficiary of liberalized trade.

As Prime Minister Jim Bolger observed in Tokyo in May: "The level of gain [a successful GATT round] will deliver is of totally different order to the costs it will impose on a few vested interests."

Security and stability are also important to New Zealand and the Pacific. Like its Polynesian neighbors, New Zealand would urge the United States to sign the 1986 Treaty of Rarotonga, declaring the Pacific a nuclear-free zone. New Zealand supports an American military presence in Asia and the Pacific despite its own failed defense relations with the United States since the ANZUS Alliance was fractured in 1985.

New Zealand regards this American presence as vital underpinning to economic prosperity in a region that, like the United States, it recognizes as being of immense economic and strategic importance. This country respects the keystone nature of the United States's relationships with Japan, China and Russia, the other powerhouses of the region.

Since there is no tradition of widespread and inclusive security consultations in the area, the New Zealand government would like to see this on the agenda of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations post-ministerial conference.

In New Zealand, deep domestic divisions about nuclear weaponry versus American alliances make redrawing defense relations difficult. The current New Zealand government hopes it is not impossible.

Two closing points: First, remember that New Zealand has fought alongside the United States in all its Asian wars in this century and sent people to the Persian Gulf. Second, it has troops in eight peace-keeping missions worldwide because it is, and will continue to be, a reliable international citizen.

Suzanne Carty is editor of the Waikato Times *in Hamilton, New Zealand. She was a Jefferson Fellow in 1992.*

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