

## In Southeast Asia, doubts about China's intentions

*The following are excerpts from an article entitled "Doubts Over Peking Trip," which appeared in the Indian weekly paper New Wave Nov. 26, 1978. The article focuses on relations between India and China, but contains insights on the situation in Southeast Asia. Particularly appropriate are the comments cited in the article that were made by the Indonesian Foreign Minister during his recent trip to India, which stand in stark contradiction to comments by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, Richard Holbrooke last week.*

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, had come to New Delhi (last week — ed.) straight from Hanoi, and had first hand knowledge of what is happening there. It is true that the Indonesians still persist in their "once bitten, twice shy" attitude towards the Chinese, but they are no lovers of the Vietnamese and the Soviets either. His view that Chinese aggressiveness has left no option for the Vietnamese except to seek a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, should therefore carry conviction in New Delhi.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister is fully convinced that the Vietnamese would neither invoke the treaty in their dispute with Kampuchea (Cambodia — ed.) nor allow their nonalignment to be compromised. There is therefore no reason why our foreign policy makers should have any doubts about the treaty signed between the Vietnamese and the Soviet Union. The Indonesian Foreign Minister was not speaking for himself alone when he said that before signing the treaty the Vietnamese had taken steps to remove whatever doubts lingered among their neighbors about their intentions.

Indeed, the treaty which Vietnam has signed with the Soviet Union is on the same lines as the Indo-Soviet treaty, and the clauses of the two documents which lay down that in the event of aggression or threat of aggression against either contracting party the two sides would hold consultations for effective steps to end the threat and eliminate aggression, are identical. It seems that the Vietnamese as also the Soviet Union deliberately took the Indo-Soviet treaty as the model for their draft instead of the treaties which the Soviet Union has signed with some other countries like Angola and Ethiopia.

With our own experience of the Indo-Soviet treaty, our Foreign Minister does not need any assurance that the Vietnamese treaty would not result in Soviet intervention in Southeast Asian affairs, contrary to what the Chinese allege. But the Indonesian Foreign Minister seemed to feel that the Chinese have failed to remove the suspicions in these countries about their own intentions. These doubts have in fact, been strengthened by Chinese involvement in Kampuchea, their pressures on Laos, and their aggressive attitude against Vietnam.

## Third World battles

*At the UN, heated debate over the role*

Nonaligned nations around the globe have been steadily pursuing an effort stemming from before the Colombo Non-Aligned Nations' meeting in 1976 to rescue news control from the mouths of British-sponsored propaganda outlets which systematically "filter, mutilate, and distort", developments of vital interest to these nations. The largest press agencies of the West, notably Reuters (British) and Associated Press and United Press International (U.S.) are among the major targets.

At the center of this battle is the controversial Tunisia-Group of 77 (Third World nations) study entitled "The New World Order of Information." The study asserts that "in the absence of adequate regulations, one must expect a veritable invasion of television programs and broadcasts constituting a violation of national territory and individual homes and

### Free expression ...

*Third World diplomats and journalists have numerous cases where Western journalists' exercise of "free expression" passed over into disinformation and outright falsehood. Some examples:*

- At the height of the recent demonstrations against the Shah of Iran, UPI reported from Teheran that the Shah had been assassinated, causing panic on Iranian financial markets. Iran expelled the UPI correspondent responsible.
- The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast appeals from exiled Shi'ite leader Ayatollah Khomeini to strike, demonstrate and blow up the oil fields; the government responded by jamming BBC Persian language broadcasts and expelling BBC correspondents.
- Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff addressed the European Commission last month regarding consistent British press falsification of matters relating to him personally and to his government's policies. Malta over the past two years named the BBC, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily Mail* as failing to retract stories as they had agreed, and was forced to take court action to receive retraction and civil penalties.

# for press responsibility

## of the media

the rape of men's minds. This threat cannot be too strongly denounced."

And the study calls for the right of any nation to receive news that is not "filtered, mutilated, or distorted"; the right to equality in the use of the world's airwaves; the right to a code of ethics for reporters to ensure fair and honest reports and the right of reporters to be free from reprisals from their employers; the "right of correction" to distorted, false or misleading news stories; and the right to break the Western monopoly of news agencies which the developing sector views as a colonial holdover.

The Tunisian study, which was supported by the Soviet bloc, further points out that the five largest international agencies control 80 percent of news circulating in the developing sector and maintain 4,300 foreign correspondents and over 500 news bureaus,

with virtually all telecommunications and satellite services in Western hands.

The study has been the target of a bitter and intense opposition campaign by Western media led by the British press and such U.S. outlets as the *New York Times* and CBS's Walter Cronkite, who charge that the study's effort to impose standards of professional accountability on newsmen amount to censorship of their right to "freedom of expression."

But the underlying issue is the fact that too many Western news gatherers — far more than what was suggested in the Church Committee report in 1977 — have become tools of Western intelligence and economic agencies. They regularly, almost instinctively, Third World spokesmen charge, slant their coverage in favor of their own government's foreign policies (to the point of encouraging coups and government

## or disinformation and lies?

- The Belga Press Agency (Belgium) released the story of the French rescue operation in Shaba Province, Zaire, four hours before it took place, precipitating the massacre of Western medical and mining personnel.
- On July 3, 1977, UPI correspondent Van Benniker announced that President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen of Colombia had been assassinated by terrorists. Van Benniker was expelled from Colombia, as he had been expelled previously from Peru for asking President Poveda if he ran drugs. Van Benniker is still employed by UPI — now in Nicaragua.
- The Church Committee of the U.S. Senate exposed the CIA-fed story carried by UPI just before the Chilean coup in 1973, announcing that the coup was going to take place. This destabilization from without was run by 970 press outlets in the next three days.
- CBS's "60 Minutes" program, Sunday, Feb. 26, 1978 accused Cuban President Fidel Castro of running cocaine into the U.S. and laundering drug money.
- The *New York Times*, on March 19, 1978, during the Colombian presidential campaign, ran a story entitled "Drugs, the New Treasure," blaming Colombian government officials for drug running.
- The March 22 *New York Post*, in a story titled "Cocaine still pouring in," claimed that Julio Caesar Turbay, then running for President of Colombia, was involved in drug trafficking.
- CBS's "60 Minutes" program claimed that Rosalyn Carter had handed Colombian President Michelsen a list of names of drug runners which included Turbay as one high government official who "possibly" ran drugs. This was two weeks after CBS had agreed to, but had not aired, a retraction of earlier slanders.
- UPI's Juan Tamayo, just hours before the deadline for agreement on the tense Beagle Islands dispute between Argentina and Chile, ran a lengthy dispatch, "War Noises in the Southern Cone," asserting that war between Peru and Equador was inevitable because Peru had no oil. This war never occurred, and Peru certainly has oil.