

“Much has been said at our meetings here about the inward-looking nature of Europe today,” Rockefeller said. “With the tectonic scale of changes on that continent in 1989, and the attention demanded by the truly heroic efforts at European integration, a certain amount of self-absorption is certainly understandable. I would argue, however, that in the world today, sustainable growth and acceptable living standards for all the inhabitants of this Earth depend on a free flow of trade and investment among all nations. If that is so, then a successful outcome of the Uruguay Round must be the number one priority of us all, including Europe. . . . I firmly believe that there is no greater priority for the Trilateral region at this time than a success of the Round, and I hope that all of us will bend every effort to put this crucial agreement through.”

Rockefeller next turned his attention to Japan, which he argued should bankroll for the new world order. Chase Manhattan Bank, which Rockefeller chaired for many years, is one of a dozen major U.S. commercial banks dependent on Japanese investment in America to avert bankruptcy. Rather than resorting to the Japan-bashing rhetoric that has characterized the public posture of many Bush administration officials, Rockefeller praised Japan for its “extraordinary economic success” and declared that “Japan is a major player upon the world stage, and all our international structures must recognize that or risk becoming obsolete.”

Rockefeller proposed to have Japan brought into the inner sanctum of the U.N. Security Council, in return for writing the checks for the new order:

“I must say here that I am personally convinced that one can’t ask an individual or a nation to shoulder greater responsibility, without conferring on them comparably greater authority. That is why I favor Japan’s inclusion as a permanent member of the Security Council. I realize there are serious problems with achieving this objective, particularly as it would mean opening up the U.N. Charter to revision. It may be . . . that these problems are insurmountable, and we will have to fall back on a second best alternative, which would be to create an ancillary consultative group of the Trilateral nations who are members of the Security Council, in which Japan would have a real and equal voice. The best long-run solution, however, will be to find a way for Japan to be on a par with the other permanent members of the Security Council.”

A further indication that the Trilateral Commission is very much focused upon the pivotal role of the U.N. in furthering the world federalist agenda, was the announcement at the close of the conference that the 1991-92 agenda of the group would focus upon migration and refugee issues.

The commission also announced the release of a new Trilateral report, “Beyond Interdependence: The Meshing of the World’s Economy and the Earth’s Ecology,” which is a followup to the Brundtland Commission report advocating deindustrialization, population reduction, and other such measures to “save” the environment.

Kaifu boosts Tokyo’s presence in S.E. Asia

by Linda de Hoyos

Visits to Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines by Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu appear to have significantly boosted ties between Japan and the ASEAN countries, as both Japan and the ASEAN countries seek some maneuvering room against the imposition of the Bush regime’s “new world order.”

In a speech in Malaysia on May 2, Kaifu laid out the Japanese perspective: the growth of the ASEAN countries, in combination with Japan’s, gives the region a potential to hold a significant place in the world. The trend of cooperation, he said, must be extended to “go beyond the economic realm and work in the political, social, and foreign policy spheres as well as to become a major force for stability grounded in freedom and democracy. . . . Now is the time for us to combine our strengths and wisdom to build a regional community that we can be proud of before the world.”

Japanese initiative to accomplish this goal is welcomed among most Southeast Asian factions, as an editorial in the Malaysian *Business Times* indicated April 5: “Japan cannot escape from its responsibility of leading the region, particularly in seeking East Asia’s rightful economic rights. Already, Japanese economic power has become so influential in the region and, as a member of the Group of Seven developed nations, is shouldering the responsibility of being the voice of the non-Western countries.” This view was precisely echoed by Thailand’s Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin, who said, on the eve of Kaifu’s visit, that Japan, as an Asian country, should have its primary focus on Asia and represent the “Asian thinking and perception” on issues concerning the region.

These statements are not mere platitudes. Kaifu traveled with a 60-man delegation, including top members of the Japanese trade-industrial organization Keidanren, ready to do work to tighten the Japan-ASEAN economic relationship, which has acted to make ASEAN’s growth rate the highest in the world.

Openness to Mahathir’s plan

Kaifu further signaled that Japan takes ASEAN’s call seriously by stating in Singapore that Japan was “interested” in the plan put forward by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad for the creation of an East Asian

Economic Group (EAEG). The proposal, which calls for a trade cooperation pact among various Asian countries including Japan and the People's Republic of China, notably excludes the United States and Australia. Said Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, who has given the bloc idea enthusiastic support: "Japan will have more clout to negotiate with Europe and the United States if it joined with EAEG," reported the *New Straits Times* from Singapore.

Japan had earlier indicated its opposition to EAEG. However, Kaifu told the *New Strait Times* of Malaysia, "Dr. Mahathir has explained to me adequately the concern he has that has led to this idea. This includes fear that the North American Free Trade Arrangement may turn into a trading bloc or the European Community would restrict itself to becoming a bloc. . . . We shall remain very much interested in the discussions amongst the ASEAN countries concerning EAEG." In short, Japan will not take the lead in creating the EAEG, but will be ready to back up any decision the ASEAN countries might make. The EAEG will be a main topic on the agenda of the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in early July. Privately, members of the Kaifu delegation expressed keen interest in the plan.

Notably EAEG was not on the agenda in the talks between Kaifu and Philippines President Corazon Aquino. Manila is still "studying" the proposal, and its extreme economic dependence has forced it to back the Australian-created Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Kaifu also reassured ASEAN leaders that Japan would not decrease any of its Official Development Assistance to ASEAN, which currently accounts for 32% of the ODA's disbursement. The major recipients are Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

In late April, Japan also agreed to finance more infrastructure projects in the Philippines, through the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF). Among the projects set for target monies are the expansion of the Light Railway Transit (LRT) system, the construction of an elevated expressway in Manila, the building of industrial plants in four cities, the modernization of domestic shipping, and the setting up of power transmission lines for the islands of Leyte and Samar.

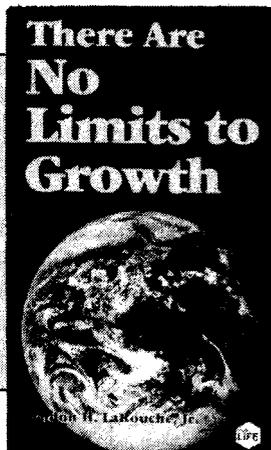
Thailand will also be the recipient of increased funds for infrastructure, where the growth of Japan investment in the country has strained Thailand's energy and transport grids to the maximum. The Japanese affirmation that such investment would continue was also seen as an acceptance of the new Thai government, after the February military coup that overthrew Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan.

In addition, Kaifu, in discussions with Thailand's new prime minister, Anand Panyarachun, said Japan is fully ready to pour money into the rebuilding of Cambodia, once a political settlement is reached. Demonstrating continuity with his predecessor's foreign policy, Anand welcomed any and all Japanese initiatives on Cambodia.

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