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STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK,
SECRETARY OF STATE,
BEFORE THE SENATE PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE,
AUGUST 25, 1966

I am pleased to appear before this Committee at the beginning of its hearings on the subject of this country's international defense commitments. I should like to begin by reviewing briefly with the Committee the reasons lying behind those commitments.

The central object of our foreign policy, as I have stated before, is what it has been since the founding of the Republic -- to "secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." To this should be added our determination, expressed so eloquently in the preamble to the U.N. Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

The basic political and military means that we and many other nations have chosen to achieve a lasting peace is, in the words of Article 1 of the U.N. Charter,

"to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;"

The United Nations itself, of course, represents the world's most ambitious attempt to organize collective security during peacetime. It is well to recall that while the United Nations has perhaps fallen short of the far-reaching hopes that many entertained for it in 1945, the world Organization has had many notable successes. The contribution it has made to maintaining some semblance of order in the post-war world has been indispensable.

U.N. machinery has been used for peacekeeping operations in such diverse situations as Indonesia, Greece, Palestine, Kashmir, Korea,

Trieste

Trieste, Suez, Lebanon, Laos, the Congo, West New Guinea, the Yemen, and Cyprus. We have participated in the financing of all these operations. We have furnished logistic support and personnel for international observer teams in other instances. We contributed large combat forces in the case of the aggression against Korea.

The United Nations has not been able to deal effectively with all threats to the peace, nor will it be able to do so as long as certain of its Members believe they must continue to compromise between their professed desire for peace and their short-range interest in achieving greater power or place in the world. Some member States have not been willing to place at the disposal of the United Nations means adequate to deal with all crises. There has not yet been found a solution to the problem of financing in the future such peacekeeping operations as those in the Middle East and in the Congo. Saddest of all, the United Nations has not been able to bring to the conference table the parties engaged in war in Viet-Nam.

Nevertheless, the United Nations continues to offer the nations of the world the most promising means of maintaining international peace and security. A major share of the credit for preventing the sharp clash between India and Pakistan of last year from erupting into a major conflagration must go to the prompt action of the Security Council in bringing world opinion so forcefully to bear on the parties.

It was recognized from the outset, however, that the United Nations might not prove able by itself to carry the full burden of collective security. The Charter explicitly provides for the existence of regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States, which would deal with problems of international peace and security in their respective areas. It also explicitly recognizes the inherent right of both individual and collective self-defense.

Consistently

Consistently with the U.N. Charter, we have entered into multi-lateral and bilateral treaty arrangements with more than 40 countries on 5 continents. Chronologically, these arrangements begin, appropriately enough, with the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, commonly called the Rio Treaty of 1947. It is the basic collective security instrument of the inter-American system and has been ratified by all 21 American Republics. The Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification on our part by a vote of 72-1.

While we were turning to the problems of collective security in our hemisphere, the nations of Western Europe, faced with the fact of Soviet military power and unmistakable evidence of pressures by the Soviet Union against Europe, were organizing for security on their continent.

In March 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the U.K. concluded the Treaty of Brussels by which each nation pledged itself to assist the others in the case of military attack. One month later these 5 nations established a permanent military committee.

In June of 1948 the U.S. Senate adopted the resolution proposed by Senator Arthur Vandenberg calling for the "association of the U.S. by constitutional process with such regional and other collective arrangements as are based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid and as affect its national security." Pursuant to the Vandenberg resolution, negotiations for a wider defense arrangement in the North Atlantic area were begun, and in April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty

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was signed by the United States and Canada and 10 nations of Western Europe. The Senate advised ratification by a vote of 82-13. In 1952 Greece and Turkey became parties, and in 1955 the Federal Republic of Germany did so.

The subsequent commitment of forces to NATO by the member countries, and the integrated planning for the use of these forces, represent an achievement in international organization that it had been hoped would be reached in the United Nations. Despite explicit provisions for such arrangements in Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, it has not proved possible to implement them within the world Organization.

The outbreak of the Korean war in 1950 in an area in which we had entered into no collective security arrangements brought home forcefully the need to try to prevent potential aggressors from again miscalculating what our reaction would be to an aggression threatening U.S. security interests as well as the peace of the world. In August 1951 we signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines, to which the Senate gave its advice and consent by a voice vote. The next month saw concluded a Security Treaty with Japan, to which the Senate gave its advice and consent by a vote of 58-9, and a tripartite security pact with Australia and New Zealand, commonly known as ANZUS, approved by the Senate by voice vote. Mutual Defense Treaties were also concluded with the Republic of Korea in October 1953 and the Republic of China in December 1954, and a new Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with Japan was signed by the United States in January 1960, replacing the Treaty signed in 1951. The senate gave its advice and consent to these treaties by votes of 81-6, 65-6, and 90-2, respectively.

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The ANZUS Treaty of 1951 with Australia and New Zealand stated that it was entered into "pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific area." In 1954 Communist military successes in Viet-Nam accentuated the need for such a system. Even before the Geneva Accords were concluded negotiations were proceeding among the governments concerned for a Southeast Asia defense pact. In September at Manila 8 nations -- Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the U.K. and the U.S. -- concluded the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty.

The Southeast Asia Treaty was designed to protect from aggression not only the parties to it, but also the States and territory unanimously designated in a protocol -- the States of Cambodia and Laos and the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Viet-Nam. Inasmuch as the United States was the one party to the treaty without territory of its own in the region, its commitment was limited by the understanding, made a part of the treaty, that only Communist aggression would be regarded as necessarily dangerous to its own peace and security and thus would activate its commitment to act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. It was well understood at the time that these obligations covered the case of attacks by the North Vietnamese regime against Parties to the Treaty and Protocol States. In the event of other than Communist aggression in the area, we are obligated to consult immediately in order to agree on the measures to be taken. The Senate's advice and consent to this treaty was given by a vote of 82-1.

These

These treaties represent legally binding commitments to take appropriate action at the request of an ally that is the victim of aggression. These commitments do not bind us to any particular course of action. Most of them state that in the event of aggression we would act to meet the common danger in accordance with our constitutional processes. How we act in fulfillment of these obligations will depend upon the facts of the situation. Some situations will require less participation on our part than others. What is fundamental to the fulfillment of our obligations under these agreements is that we act in good faith to fulfill their purpose. Thus, while the agreements permit great flexibility in choosing the means by which we would assist other countries in their defense, we could not expect that we would be regarded as fulfilling our obligation through the provision of minimum assistance when the survival of the country concerned clearly necessitated greater aid.

The Committee on Foreign Relations well expressed the purpose of these commitments in its report on the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. In urging the Senate to give its advice and consent to the treaty, the report stated:

"The principle underlying this treaty is that advance notice of our intentions and the intentions of the nations associated with us may serve to deter potential aggressors from reckless action that could plunge the Pacific into war. To that end, the treaty makes it clear that the United States will not remain indifferent to conduct threatening the peace of South-east Asia.

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"The committee is not impervious to the risks which this treaty entails. It fully appreciates that acceptance of these additional obligations commits the United States to a course of action over a vast expanse of the Pacific. Yet these risks are consistent with our own highest interests. There are greater hazards in not advising a potential enemy of what he can expect of us, and in failing to disabuse him of assumptions which might lead to a miscalculation of our intentions."

I should like to emphasize that our defense commitments are fundamentally efforts to avoid the eventuality of armed conflict in which this country might become involved. These commitments do not increase the likelihood that we will have to fight. Rather, by making clear in advance our estimation of the requirements of national security, they reduce that likelihood.

In addition to United States treaty commitments, both the Congress through joint resolutions, and the Executive Branch through executive agreements and statements by the President, have indicated the United States interest in the security of a particular area or a particular country. Our interest in the stability of the Near East has been indicated through such means. In the 1950 Tripartite Declaration the United States, the United Kingdom and France expressed their opposition to the use of force or threat of force in that area. Our policy was given further expression by the 1957 Joint Resolution of Congress to Promote Peace and Stability in the Middle East. There the Congress declared that the "U.S. regards as vital to the national interest and world peace the preservation of the independence and integrity of the nations of the Middle East" and that "if the President determines the necessity thereof the United States is prepared to use armed force to assist any such nation or groups of such nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism."

Pursuant

Pursuant to this authorization, our interest in the security of the Near East has been further evidenced by our association, albeit as a non-member, with the Central Treaty Organization. The United States maintains membership on the Scientific Council and on the Military, Economic and Counter-Subversion Committees of CENTO, and is an observer on the Ministers Council. In the 1958 Declaration respecting the Baghdad Pact the United States expressed its intention to cooperate with the members of the Pact for their security and defense and followed that up with identical bilateral agreements of cooperation with Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. These agreements declared that in the event of aggression the United States would take such appropriate action as may be mutually agreed upon.

In Europe and in Africa we have similarly indicated our interest in the security of particular countries not covered by treaty arrangements. For example, the 1959 Agreement on Cooperation with Liberia, an expression of the historic ties that have existed between the two countries, states that in the event of aggression or its threat the two governments will immediately determine what action may be appropriate for the defense of Liberia.

Similarly, the Joint Declaration concerning the 1953 Renewal of the Defense Agreement with Spain states that:

"a threat to either country and to the joint facilities that each provides for the common defense, would be a matter of common concern to both countries, and each country would take such action as it may consider appropriate within the framework of its constitutional processes."

Joint Resolutions and executive agreements such as I have discussed, as well as statements by the President indicating our intentions should a country fall victim to aggression, may be regarded as supplementing our treaty arrangements. In common with the commitments expressed in those arrangements, they serve two purposes:

1. They warn

1. They warn potential aggressors that aggression would risk action by the United States.
2. They provide confidence to the country concerned which knows that the United States does not lightly indicate its intention to provide support.

As the Subcommittee is aware, the United States has military bases in a number of countries in different parts of the world. Most of these are in countries with which we have defense and security treaties. Whether or not we have such a treaty with a particular country, the presence there of a United States base clearly signifies a special interest and concern on our part with the security of that country. In the event of aggression against the country, or a threat to its security, which at the same time affected our military base, the United States would of course consult about the situation with the host government.

I should add a further word on the possibility that the United States armed forces might be used in collective defense against an armed aggression. No would-be aggressor should suppose that the absence of a defense treaty, Congressional declaration, or U.S. military presence grants immunity to aggression. For one thing the responsibilities of the United Nations with regard to aggression are world-wide. There have been many occasions when the United Nations has moved to meet a breach of international peace. The United States, as an important and responsible member of the United Nations, may be required in the future, in accordance with established Charter procedures, to take action that cannot now be anticipated with any precision. Moreover, although the matter is somewhat hypothetical because we are looking into the fog of the future, the United States cannot overlook the possibility that its own national interests and its concern for the maintenance of international peace might require us to take some action we do not now foresee. This would be for the President and the Congress at that time to determine in the light of the circumstances.

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The United States does not conceive itself to be the world's policeman. A glance at the lengthy continuing agenda of the U.N. Security Council discloses many situations posing potential threats to the peace in which the United States has not undertaken any direct responsibility. In addition, other nations, of course, have responsibilities that do not directly involve the United States. For example, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have commitments to their fellow Commonwealth member Malaysia. On the African Continent we have been pleased to see that the Organization of African Unity has succeeded in dealing with disputes between African States.

So we are not trying to establish a pax Americana, but rather a general system of peace among nations. The United States remains committed, over the long term, to strengthen world machinery for keeping peace throughout the world. This cannot be the task of one nation or a few. We look forward to the time when all will join in the effort. Meanwhile, we shall do our part, in the United Nations and in the discharge of our other security commitments.
