

# The Washi

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## World Power

Post 1/25/66

Senator J. William Fulbright unjustly accused the Administration of a "radical departure in American foreign policy" last Friday in his attack on what he called President Johnson's "Asian doctrine." His accusation produced an unproductive semantic dispute over what is meant by the assertion that the United States is a *Pacific Power* and an *Asian Power*. If these terms mean that the United States is and long has been a nation with enormous interests in the Pacific and in Asia, it has, of course, been a *Pacific Power* and an *Asian Power* for generations. Neither President Johnson nor his immediate predecessors are responsible for that.

The Senator from Arkansas has become so querulous and cantankerous a critic that President Johnson could not state the most obvious truth about foreign policy without inviting the Senator's distempered dissection. His faultfinding started out with the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and now he would even repeal the Monroe Doctrine.

His somewhat belated dissent from the Monroe Doctrine, of course, has a certain amount of logic. The great doctrine violated all his precepts. It was a unilateral declaration. It came about without Senate advice. It committed us beyond our shores. And it succeeded. It was, moreover, an initial public assertion of our role as a *Pacific Power*, something the Senator is unwilling to have a President say even now, 143 years later. Of the three major premises of the Monroe Doctrine, the first (declaring the two continents no longer open to European colonization) was called forth by claims of Russia to the Pacific Northwest and by her attempts to found a colony in California.

But the mainland was not the limit of our Pacific interest, even then. A newspaper rumor of American intent to colonize the Pacific areas provoked a bitter quarrel between Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and Minister Canning of Great Britain in 1821. Adams bluntly refused to renounce American ambitions in the Pacific. In 1824, after long controversy, the United States obtained a treaty with Russia giving it "the liberty of navigating and fishing in the Pacific Ocean and the South Sea and of freely trading with the natives at the unoccupied points."

For nearly 150 years the United States has been

a *Pacific Power*, it that means publicly proclaimed interest in the region, the possession of territory bordering the great ocean, or concern about events in all the lands washed by its waters. That the President could be criticized, at this late date, for asserting our responsibilities as a *Pacific Power* is quite extraordinary. Such criticism must arouse painful sensations in Hawaii which, someone ought to tell Senator Fulbright, is completely surrounded by the Pacific Ocean.

American interests in Asia also have early beginnings. The ship *Empress of China* made the first American commercial contact with China in 1784. In the year George Washington became President, there were 14 American ships at Canton. In July, 1900, Secretary of State John Hay, in disclosing the open door policy, went far beyond narrow economic interest to assert that the United States desired an Asian solution that "may bring permanent safety and peace to China, and preserve Chinese territorial and administrative integrity." In the words of Nathaniel Peffer, in his book *The Far East*, it was then that "for the first time the United States had broadened its position from the economic to the political and taken its stand: China must survive as an independent country."

To declare, in our day, that we wish South Vietnam to survive as an "independent country" is no "radical departure" in American foreign policy. For nearly 70 years we have been taking political positions in Asia. We have a long established Asian doctrine under which we have frequently denounced and often resisted aggression in Asia.

The Monroe Doctrine developed by John Quincy Adams, the open door policy enunciated by Hay and the Asian doctrine given expression at White Sulphur Springs do not rest on express congressional sanctions. They do not need to do so, because all are merely declaratory of situations acknowledged to exist. They affirm foreign policy proceeding from a long train of decisions by Congress and growing out of the logical imperatives of our history. James Monroe's biographer said of him that he "had the genius of apprehending the opportune moment for the formal enunciation of a principle which previously had been simply a matter of American public opinion and aspiration." That is what Hay did. That is what President Johnson did.

Senator Fulbright may not like it. The White House may shrink from admitting it. But there it is. The United States is a *Pacific Power*. It is an *Asian Power*. This circumstance does not compel it to intervene everywhere in the world, automatically, blindly, violently and stupidly. It does compel it to use the means most appropriate to the situation and best proportioned to the crisis whenever and wherever the vital interests of the United States as a great power are involved. The United States now is, and long has been, a *Pacific Power*, an *Asian Power* and a *World Power*.