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# Mayaguez Incident Seen Impr

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American foreign policy makers, cheered by the successful recovery of the SS Mayaguez and its crew, said the quick action would improve the image of the United States among its friends in Asia and even have a salutary impact on relations with China.

"I think it's helpful in Asia, particularly among our friends who have been worried about our resolve," was one American diplomat's comment that typified what was being said at the State Department yesterday.

Most officials tended to discount the damage done to relations with Thailand, whose ambassador here pronounced the landing of Marines in his country "an unfriendly act by a friendly country."

Secretly, said one top official, even the Thais are glad to see that the United States can act decisively.

"My guess," said one American diplomat, "is that all of the East Asian non-communist countries are not at all unhappy. The Indonesians, Malaysians, Singaporeans, Koreans, even our friends in Japan are not unhappy, because they don't like to think the United States will not exercise its power in a blatant case like this. After the fall of Vietnam they've all been pretty shaken, and psychologically this will be refreshing."

As for Thailand, he said, "We're hopeful this will not cause a major reason for difficulties and that in the final analysis the Thais will understand that if we were to do this job we had to do it quickly and clinically."

Despite the Chinese government's charge that the military action was an "act of piracy," American officials suggested that even Peking will find comfort in the demonstration that the United States has no intention of fading out of Asia.

It is the American assessment that the Chinese do not want a total U.S. withdrawal that would leave Asian nations prey to Soviet influence.

But some officials conceded that while the Chinese may see some silver lining in the action it does not mean that they liked it

or that they want to see us clobber a people that they've been fostering.

The operation, in the view of some officials, also had a message for Moscow; that America remains capable of protecting its interests and that the United States is not abandoning Asia to Soviet influence.

Except for the Chinese and Thai government reactions, governments around the world have been largely silent on the American action. Newspapers have editorialized, but even governments that often find fault with Washington have not been quick to condemn.

"The biggest plus," said one American official, "is the widespread support in the country and in Congress for the operation." He said, "We're dealing in the psychological realm, and I think we've made our point: That you don't put up with such acts, that you have the means to protect your interests and that the President has the capacity to act."

Possibly the only major diplomatic breakage, aside from Thai relations came at the United Nations, where the United States requested help from the secretary-general in obtaining the release of the ship and the crew and moved in Marines even as he was asking that both sides "refrain from further acts of force."

U.N. officials declined to comment on the suggestion that the United States gave them no time to act, because, as one said, "it is all too obvious."

But an American official said enough time was provided. "The other side wasn't ready for diplomacy," he said.

The following other reaction was reported from around the world by Washington Post correspondents and news agencies:

## China

PEKING—China accused the United States of "piracy" in bombing Cambodian territory and ships in the recapture of the American merchant ship Mayaguez, Reuter reported.

In the first official Chinese comment on the events, Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien told guests at a banquet celebrating the cap-

ture of Saigon that the American actions "should be condemned by world public opinion," the dispatch said.

"When an American ship invaded Cambodia's territorial waters, Cambodia took legitimate measures . . . But the United States went so far as to make an issue of the matter and sent planes to bomb Cambodian territory and ships.

"This is an outright act of piracy that should be condemned by world public opinion," he concluded.

[In Hong Kong, however, some observers felt that top Chinese officials might be glad—at least privately—to see a firm American stand,

because it may serve to stabilize the region and allow Peking to proceed with its own development programs, Philip A. McCombs of The Washington Post Foreign Service reported.

[These observers cautioned, however, that Peking's earlier view that turbulence may favor China, which they said had been the line until January, has not yet subsided, McCombs said.]

## Japan

TOKYO—Opposition political parties and mass-circulation newspapers raised objections to U.S. use of Japanese bases to mount the rescue operation, Don Oberdorter of The Washington Post Foreign Service reported.

More than a thousand U.S. Marines based in Okinawa were moved to Thailand for the whirlwind maneuver, according to news reports. While the United States informed Japan of the alert through diplomatic channels on Tuesday, Washington did not tell Tokyo where the troops were headed nor ask Japanese permission. *13 MAY*

Under the U.S.-Japanese security treaty, Washington must abide by prior consultation—in effect, Japanese approval—before "military combat operations" can be undertaken from Japanese bases.

Vice Foreign Minister Fumihiko Togo said no such approval was required in this case, calling the U.S. maneuver "a just action for the rescue of Americans from piracy." The Foreign Ministry is proceeding on

the theory that the Marines were simply shifted elsewhere from Okinawa and given their combat orders after leaving Japanese soil.

The Japanese Socialist Party, which is opposed in principle to the U.S. security treaty, announced a vigorous protest and called the maneuver "a serious threat to peace in Asia."

Evening editions of the three largest Japanese newspapers carried editorial notes and comment critical of the American action, though none of the three treated the issue as a first-rank controversy.

## India

NEW DELHI—An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said he did not expect his government to issue any comments now because "We have no facts beyond what we've read in the newspapers and secondly this doesn't concern us, Washington Post correspondent Lewis M. Simons reported.

Indian newspapers, however, reacted swiftly.

In an editorial prepared for its Friday morning edition, the respected Times of India condemned the U.S. firing on Cambodian ships and called related U.S. actions "shocking," especially in the "scant respect for the susceptibilities and interests of Thailand" they revealed.

[In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, UPI reported officials attending the foreign ministers' meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations expressed "grave concern" and "unhappiness" over the developments.

[North Vietnam issued a statement condemning the American action as a "serious act of war" reflecting a continued "hostile attitude and policy of interference and aggression" in violation of American commitments.]

## Soviet Union

MOSCOW (UPI)—The Soviet Union's official news agency, Tass, reported the retaking of the vessel and the recovery of the crew without comment.

In a report from Washington, Tass gave the basic details of the operation against Cambodia, mentioning the fighting and the sinking of three Cambodian

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vessels. It quoted the Cambodian allegation that the Mayaguez was engaged in intelligence activities, without elaboration.

Tass said there has been dissent in the United States about the action, and quoted Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) as saying President Ford had acted with "undue haste."

## Britain

LONDON—The American operation was publicly applauded by most Britons, but in private some officials expressed disquiet over what they characterized as a precipitate use of force. The Washington Post's Bernard D. Nossiter reported.

In Parliament, a wide spectrum of members praised what one Tory called "a magnificent operation." Another Conservative introduced a motion to congratulate the United States.

A left-wing Labor member said that the Americans "obviously took the action with reluctance, having exhausted diplomatic channels," and called it a "good augury" for American foreign policy in contrast to what he described as the more "violent responses" of the past.

In Whitehall, the center

for government officials, several aides said they were relieved that the incident had ended but thought that Washington had taken unnecessary risks. Military men, however, were unstinting in their admonition.

The news came too late for the morning papers to comment, but both of London's evening journals were full of praise. The Evening News headlined, "Well Done The Marines," and its editorial said that this was one occasion "when might is right."

The morning papers did comment on the initial assault, the sinking of the Cambodian gunships, and most approved.

## Europe

In Belgrade, Yugoslavia's semiofficial news agency Tanjug compared the American actions to the Tonkin Gulf incident, suggesting that Washington might be using the incident as an excuse for new military involvement in Indochina, reported Dusko Doder of The Washington Post Foreign Service.

The agency, in a dispatch headlined "The Seventh Fleet Against Seven Boats," said the United States had not exhausted all peaceful

ways of getting the ship back before deciding to "show its teeth," Doder reported.

He added that the U.S. embassy in Belgrade had expressed its displeasure to the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry over the agency's reports.

News agencies recorded other reactions in Europe:

• West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher called for further "close cooperation with the United States . . . We know that not only can we depend on the U.S.A., but that the U.S.A can depend on us." Most West German politicians and news media expressed general support for the U.S. action.

• The dollar made strong gains, closing at its best rate in a week on most European money markets, as confidence grew that the incident did not herald another Southeast Asian war.

## Middle East

BEIRUT—The timing of the action, and Arabs' general preoccupation with Middle East affairs, limited reaction here reported Jim Hoazland of The Washington Post Foreign Service.

Morning newspapers reported the sinking of three

Cambodian gunboats but did not have time for editorial comment.

A limited sampling of opinion indicates, however, that if part of the reason for the action was an attempt to convince the world of continuing American might, it had little success here.

A middle-class, Westernized Lebanese newspaper editor called the operation "the last act of a defeated imperial power." "The United States could get the boat back, but it couldn't get Cambodia back."

"What will be remembered here," said a Lebanese politician, "is that the Americans sent troops into an allied country [Thailand] against that country's wishes to protect American interests. Oil-producing countries friendly to America will remember it."

An Arab diplomat saw it as "an act of frustration more than of strength. But the Cambodians should not have provoked the United States right now."

(In Tel Aviv, an Israeli government spokesman said his country was pleased that "a dangerous situation has been brought to an end," but would not comment further on the action, AP reported.)