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Crisis in Japan

THE tragic thing, from America's point of view, about the Japanese storm over the Security Treaty is that immediately, at least, the right lesson from it have not been learnt. The cancellation of the invitation ('postponement' is really a rather meaningless euphemism) to President Eisenhower must have understandably enough piqued him personally, apart from being a national humiliation to the United States. All the same his mild outbursts — with pretensions to being an 'interpretation' of the events in Tokyo — will not be helpful in the formulation of a new American policy towards, not only Japan, but the whole of the Far East.

Mr Eisenhower has tried to take comfort from two delusions. One is that the entire storm against the Treaty as well as against Mr Kishi and his conservative coalition was Communist-engineered; the second is that only a voluble 'minority' was associated with the long and sustained demonstrations which culminated — if they have culminated at all — in Mr Hagerty being rescued by helicopter. Actually, the degree of Communist influence in this more or less spontaneous explosion against the Kishi regime is negligible; and many of the Socialists and Social democrats involved have an intolerance of Communists which is as lively as their hatred for Mr Kishi. Whether or not the people whose protests and demonstrations succeeded in turning the U S President from the very threshold of Tokyo are a 'minority' of the population is, strictly speaking, an unprofitable argument. The material point is that they only too obviously represent a considerable section of articulate Japanese opinion, which cannot safely be disregarded either as belonging to a minority or to agents of Communism.

The fact is that the factors which underlie the crisis in Japanese-American relations are very much the same as those which the U S policy of trying to fit democratic policies and practices into the needs of its own anti-Communist military alliances has engendered in several other countries. (Mr Eisenhower might have suffered equal humiliation in Seoul during his recent tour if Dr Rhee had not fallen already.) There is a dangerous impression at large, as a political commentator points out in a British weekly, that 'the West is prepared to forgo its own political principles in placing all its confidence in parties or regimes that chiefly serve its military convenience. This has played a major part in the Japanese crisis.

The Treaty itself has, of course, been a genuine cause of concern and worry to many thinking Japanese. The essential point of the issue has been neatly brought out by cartoonists who have shown Mr Eisenhower as sponsoring the Treaty in the determined spirit of 'Never again a Pearl Harbour!', and the Japanese resisting it with the resolve that never again would there be another Hiroshima. The U-2 incident has not failed to play its part in the building of this resistance. The Japanese have learnt from this that the existence of U S bases in Japan could easily embroil Tokyo in a nuclear war, and the fear of such an eventuality is understandably acute. It has been further sharpened by Mr Khrushchev's warning that Russia would take retaliatory action against any country - which lent its bases to American serial adventures.

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It cannot be long now before Mr Kishi resigns and the country will have sooner rather than later to go to the polls. That will be the time to find out if Japan's recent demonstration against Mr Eisenhower was the result of minority pressures. If Mr Kishi and his supporters re-emerge as victors, the treaty is safe for the rest of its ten-year tenure; but if, as is likelier, the coalition loses ground, the forced passage of the Treaty through the Diet will not save it from returning to the melting pot. The Japanese Socialists have, of course, their own considerable

weaknesses; and it can by no means be taken for granted that Kishi's fall will mean a Socialist Government in the saddle. Nevertheless Kishi's fall will be enough to alter the course of political history in Japan, and we might see the greatest American ally in Asia veer steadily towards neutrality. If that sounds like being the defeat of present American policies in their narrowest sense, the impression is not far wrong; but in the larger sense, they need not mean such thing at all. Washington itself has had sufficient evidence by now of the fact that

anti-Communist military Alliances which necessitate the artificial bolstering of regimes which are democratic only in a cynical sense are not the best basis for resisting international Communism. What requires to be done is to give these countries a personal stake in peace rather than in the fight against Communism. That in itself should ensure (certainly more effectively than the present U S policies are doing) that the countries concerned will remain aloof from active Communist alliances.

Time to Get Cracking

IN the procedure that has come to be established in India for the formulation of development plans, consideration of draft plans by the Union Cabinet serves a double purpose. First of these, and the more important one, is the endowment of formal political status on the Planning Commission's draft. Approval by the Cabinet implies that the basic objectives and policies recommended by the Commission have the concurrence of the supreme executive organ of Government in the country and the Government is willing to shoulder the responsibility of implementing the Plan. The second purpose served by this procedure is the ironing out of any differences there might be between the Planning Commission and Ministries in respect of allocations and schemes suggested for the five-year period. This provides an opportunity both for adjustments in the light of latest developments and for a bit of horse-trading.

As it happens, the political aspect of this procedure usually receives little public attention. This is because the most influential members of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, are also on the Planning Commission, and consequently the draft plan is unlikely to reach the Cabinet unless its political acceptability to the party in power is already assured. This time, however, since the Prime Minister was away on tour when the last frenzied touches were being given to the draft of the Third Plan, there was a slight possibility of more than normal adjustments being suggested by the Cabinet. But it was no more than a slight possibility, considering the

blessing which the preliminary outline of the draft had already received from the Prime Minister and the National Development Council.

In the event, the deliberations of the Cabinet have resulted in only minor modifications to the programme set out by the Planning Commission. Much the most important of these is the inclusion of the Bokaro Steel Plant project in the public sector's programme — at least in terms of the public interest it has evoked. With an estimated outlay of about Rs 250 crores for this project, the size of investment outlay in the Plan goes up from Rs 9.950 crores to Rs 10.200 crores. Besides the new steel plant, some other items have also been added and some of the allocations have been reshuffled. It is not very clear what these are: but it has been emphasised in the press reports that, by and large, these adjustments do not make any significant difference to the size of the Plan. Apparently, the more clamant elements have succeeded in obtaining marginal increments in their share of the total outlay. With 17 million tons of PL 480 grain in his bag, the Food Minister has probably had no difficulty in trading a portion of the former allocation to some of the agricultural schemes for a much larger programme for food storage and ware-housing.

This would inevitably warrant consequential adjustments in the provision of port and transport facilities, and in the accounting of inventories in the Plan statements. Like the Food Minister, the Health and Education Ministers, the Atomic Energy Department and indeed anybody else who had reasonable blue prints

and a measure of persistence have obtained a supplemental allotment or the promise of one. The Planning Commission, having taken the precaution of setting apart a sizable sum for inventories in the public sector, must have found all this more interesting than troublesome.

Apart from the Bokaro Steel Plant, to which we return later, these additions to, and subtractions from, sector totals have little effect on the broad pattern of investment outlay in the Third Plan. If they indicate anything at all, it is that in respect of its real content, the Plan has not yet been cast in firm lines and will remain so for some time to come. This is further underlined by the tentative agreement of the Planning Commission to incorporate new schemes involving an aggregate outlay of over Rs 500 crores — in the Plan should additional resources be forthcoming. Whether this indicates growing confidence in, the possibility of mobilising more resources or is merely a convenient eye wash, nobody can judge. Perhaps, it is a combination of both, and the Planning Commission may feel that nothing is lost by agreeing to enlarge the Plan if things turn out better than expected. This is indeed as it should be. But the danger is that schemes accepted on such a contingent basis are likely to remain items in an appendix rather than carefully worked-out projects, with consequential difficulties of phasing them properly. At least in the formulation of adequate blue prints, the conditional approval of schemes should not constitute an argument for vagueness or laxity.

This is a point worth making because it is not certain that all the