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POLICY**

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OUR SOUTHERN RECONSTRUCTION POLICY

By CHIHIRO TSUTSUI

THE reconstruction of the southern region is making significant headway mainly due to the fact that our local military administrations are endeavouring their best to shape the growth of common prosperity life by permitting the southern peoples to contribute their legitimate shares. It may be noted that, following the outbreak of the current Pacific war, Japan immediately adopted an epochal policy of collaboration with the southern neighbours for mutual advantage and security. And as soon as the southern military campaign was concluded in its favour, it gave effect to this policy. In consequence, the southern peoples there and then recognized our good intention and naturally offered their co-operation. The early emergence of such a reciprocal feeling enabled Japan to undertake the responsibility of reorganizing the entire southern area on a firmer footing. This is the fundamental reason why the southern reconstruction, an unprecedented project, is now progressing in clockwork precision.

During my recent four-month trip to the south, I was astonished to note the rapid materialization of mutual collaboration as a means to rebuild greater East Asia. It is also a healthy sign that the local Japanese military administrations in their relations with the southern peoples are pursuing three basic principles. They are the maintenance of internal peace and order, increased output of materials needed for war purposes and quartering of Japanese garrisons on a self-sufficiency scale. As these principles do not in any way clash with the national rights of the southern countries, but help them switch to wartime preparedness, they are willingly assisting Japan to carry

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on with the task of southern defence on the one hand and stabilizing regional harmony on the other.

Because these three principles form the framework of our military administration in the south, it has been found unnecessary to initiate radical alterations in the civil administrative machinery functioning in each country. The Japanese military authorities have decided to retain almost intact the former administrative offices, with a view to facilitating the normal flow of local administrative functions. Hence, all the city offices, police stations, taxation offices and other administrative organs in each southern country have been permitted to discharge their duties as before, though the key posts are now being held by Japanese officials to meet the requirements of military exigencies. The adherence to this policy has been motivated by two obvious reasons : first, during wartime it is not a wise proposition to introduce a drastic administrative reform, especially when the required number of efficient Japanese officials cannot be spared at this stage ; and second, the British, American and Dutch administrative institutions which have been functioning for a long time cannot be uprooted all at once, as such a step bound to impair the efficiency of the long-standing local setups. This means

that Japan is desirous of introducing its new system of mutual prosperity administration in gradual stages in conformity with the steady growth of settled conditions.

In regard to joint defence, the local military authorities have enforced a material mobilization plan in each southern country for the smooth distribution of those materials considered vital to the defence requirements of the Japanese Army and Navy. But this plan has been so worked out that it does not disturb the movement of normal and legitimate local commodity transactions. For the purpose of effecting co-ordination among the plans of each region, a central material mobilization scheme has been put into motion, which is acting as a supervising agency in the distribution of strategic materials to the various Army and Navy commands in terms of their actual needs. Similarly, the currency policy adopted by Japan toward the

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southern countries is featured by the retention of the existing currencies which have long been in circulation. Moreover, an elaborate plan has been mapped out in connection with the administration of railways and foreign trade and the control of foreign exchanges and harbour facilities.

Owing to the fact that each southern country has its own peculiar conditions and characteristics, Japan has been obliged to apply the afore-mentioned basic principles on a varied scale. And this has eliminated confusions in the execution of wartime measures now in operation in the south. For instance, Malaya, which was until recently a British colony, has already adjusted itself to wartime life under our military administration. In the past, Britain administered Malaya by pursuing a policy of capitalist-imperialism. At present, Japan is administering the same area by strictly adhering to the principle of joint defence and joint prosperity, with the result that the Malay people are no longer feeling that they are being dominated by an outside Power. On the other hand, they have come to understand that Japan has restored to them their local rights and authorities relative to the administration of their country.

It cannot be denied that Britain's policy of exploitation considerably curtailed the rightful advance of Malaya. Being apprehensive of losing this profitable money-box, the London Government patterned a colonial rule which systematically suppressed all the just aspirations of the Malaysians. Not only that, it implemented measures to obstruct the natural increase in population and formulated an opium policy which yielded additional monetary gains to it at the cost of the economic life of the sons of the soil. A survey of the population in Malaya in the past ten years discloses that the increase registered was only thirty per cent., of which twenty-four per cent. was accounted for by emigration from foreign countries. There-fore, the actual increase in the indigenous population during the ten-year period was only six per cent. From this figure, it is clear that Britain did not relish the idea of a population

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increase in Malaya, for it feared that such an increase would react adversely on its imperialistic colonial fabric which was maintained by keeping a local balance of power between the immigrants and the indigenous populace.

Opium trade has been one of the main covert instruments of Britain's colonial policy. Instituting an opium monopoly in Malaya, it used to obtain from ten to twenty-three per cent. of annual revenue each year in the past. Although Britain as an important member of the League of Nations recognized the demoralizing effect of the opium habit, it took no positive step to eradicate this evil from Malaya. On the contrary, it indirectly encouraged the opium habit and monopolized the sale of the drug through the Government Monopoly Bureau. Outwardly, it informed the world that it was trying its level best to restrict the opium habit, and thus, it managed to give the impression that it was against the spread of the opium scourge. How weak-hinged was Britain's assertion can be seen from the fact that the sale of opium constituted an important source of revenue in Malaya. Had Britain manifested any strong intention to cur-tail the sale of opium, it could have done so without any difficulty. Since it did not pursue a prohibitive policy, it means that it used opium as an invisible weapon to keep Malaya in a perpetual state of national degradation.

There is a difference between the colonial policy of the Netherlands and that of Britain. While the former in administering the East Indies allowed the local chiefs to retain their administrative authorities, the latter made the local chiefs thoroughly subservient to its colonial authority. This is the reason why the Dutch rule in the East Indies appeared not so imperialistic on the surface. In reality, however, the Dutch rule was as imperialistic as the British administration in Malaya. It allowed the local chiefs the right to exercise administrative authorities on the distinct understanding that they must carry out its policies, economic and political, to the fullest extent. In this manner, it made the local chiefs the necessary figureheads. For instance, the policy pursued by the Dutch administration in connection with

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the rubber plantation. A Dutch owner of a rubber estate always employed the services of local magnates to look after the production and upkeep of his property. He never directly administered his estate, but compelled the local magnates to undertake the responsibility of the administration under his supreme control ; that is, the local potent were forced to keep his estate going in a profitable business-like way whether they liked it or not. This indicates how a Dutch owner of a rubber estate exploited the local people for his own benefit only.

There is a province called Ache in northern Sumatra with a population of 1,000,000. In the early days of the Dutch rule, when the Aches rose in rebellion, the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies immediately sent a punitive expedition to the province with reinforcements brought from Holland. The punitive expedition was maintained for some thirty years and still the Aches refused to submit to the Dutch rule, with the consequence that the expedition was called off. But when their leader passed away, they lost their fighting morale and ceased to offer resistance against the Dutch administration. Even then, it has to be admitted that the Aches were never fully pacified during the long colonial administration of the Netherlands.

When I visited Ache Province, I was amazed to witness the eagerness of the people of that locality to collaborate with Japan. Their representatives, on being received by our chief military administrator, intimated that they desired to be governed by an administrative system which followed the *samurai* code of Japan. They made this request because they claimed that they had the same ancestors as the

Japanese. It is, indeed, curious to note that there exists a likeness between the people of Ache Province and the old *samurai* of Japan. Their manner of wearing swords resembles the *samurai* style of feudal Japan. Certain quarters are of the opinion that when the Toyotomi troops were defeated by the Tokugawa forces in the Sekigahara battle in 1600, the remnants of the former fled to Sumatra, and so they suggest that the Aches are the descendants of those *samurai*. Although it is impossible to prove such a racial affinity, the fact

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remains that the Aches are extremely friendly toward the Japanese. Prior to the Japanese landing on Sumatra, the Aches organized volunteer corps and raided Dutch garrisons. And when the Japanese forces advanced into Sumatra, they offered their co-operation. This illustrates their friendliness toward the Japanese. Now that the Japanese military authorities on the spot are paying special attention to maintain cordial relations with them, there has grown up a perfect mutual understanding.

The successful execution of Japan's policy of co-existence and co-prosperity in greater East Asia is dependent on the solution of the question of overseas Chinese. The Chinese people there undoubtedly constitute a formidable racial and economic force. No one should think that Singapore was a Western metropolis. It was and is essentially a Chinese city. In almost all important centres in the south the Chinese settlers have their own quarters from which places they exercise reckonable economic control over their widespread zones of operations. The economic strength of the overseas Chinese is so compact and well established that no constructive work can be accomplished without their aid and co-operation. From this, it follows that the prerequisite for the solution of the question of overseas Chinese is the implementation of a step directed toward securing their collaboration. They should not be coerced into submission ; they should be made to feel through conciliatory measures that by offering their support to Japan they will not only obtain benefit for them-selves, but also for greater East Asia.

Prior to the start of the current war in greater East Asia, the overseas Chinese in the south had been mostly hostile to this country. The Overseas Chinese Association with its headquarters at Singapore had a total membership of 7,600,000, Malaya contributing no less than 2,200,000 members. This organization had established such a powerful control that all the overseas Chinese were made to abide by its decision framed to assist General Chiang Kai-shek in the prosecutions of his resistance against Japan. With the establishment of Japanese control over Malaya, it was found imperative that suitable steps

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should be taken to reorganize the Overseas Chinese Association in the light of our policy of creating a co-prosperity sphere in greater East Asia. That is why when chief military administrator Watanabe assumed his new duties at Singapore under Lieutenant-General Tomoyuki Yamashita, commander-in-chief of Japanese forces in Malaya, a proclamation was issued that, as Malaya from now on would be administered as a territory of Japan, any Chinese found to have committed a hostile act against Japan or against the Japanese administration in Malaya would be properly dealt with. Simultaneously, actions were taken to isolate the overseas Chinese from the influence of Chungking and point out to

them the need of co-operating with the new Japanese administration for their own benefit and security. In this way, while the protection of the legitimate rights of the overseas Chinese was firmly upheld, they were at one stroke debarred from manifesting any sign of pro-Chungking proclivity.

The overseas Chinese are now co-operating with Japan, for they have realized that this country has no intention of interfering in the flow of their life and living in the south. They are being allowed to conduct their trading operations under certain altered conditions which have arisen due to the prevalence of wartime emergency. In appreciation of Japan's just policy, the Chinese residents of Singapore at a ceremony held on June 20 last contributed ¥50,000,000 to the Japanese armed forces of their own accord, and this timely offer helped our military authorities to check the threatened inflation and organize a sound wartime economy. As the overseas Chinese have sworn allegiance to Japan for the purpose of constructing a greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere, there is no reason to doubt that Sino-Japanese collaboration in the south will become more and more intensified.

It may be mentioned that Britain in the past utilized the overseas Chinese to promote its own economic interests in Malaya. It offered them facilities to conduct trading operations and engage in economic enterprises mainly because a substantial

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portion of the profit earned by the Chinese merchants, financiers and factory owners was regularly received by it. In addition, whenever cash was needed by Britain to replenish the coffer of its colonial administration, it requested the Chinese residents to furnish it. The same policy of exploitation was practised by Britain in Burma to a minor extent in its dealings with the Chinese residents of that country. In the East Indies, the Dutch administration exacted profits from the earnings of the Chinese. The overseas Chinese had to put up with this kind of exploitation, because all their economic activities were at the mercy of the British and Dutch officials. Japan in its present relations with the overseas Chinese has not imposed any domineering policy to curtail their legitimate economic operations. Having appraised their economic efficiency, it is giving all possible assistance to make them contribute their share in the construction of a mutual prosperity economic fabric in greater East Asia.

It is generally said that the Malaysians are an ease-loving people. The truth is that before the British occupation of Malaya they were not so averse to labour as now. Britain purposely encouraged sluggishness on their part to make them as much demoralized as possible, and imported foreign labour to operate all key economic enterprises. It is, therefore, natural that the Malaysians gradually became an easy-going people. But in earlier times, they were so energetic and virile that they once dominated almost the whole of the southern area. Hence, it cannot be said that they are not endowed with energy and vigour. Still, it has to be acknowledged that difficulty is being experienced in making the Malaysians revive their long-lost energy and vigour.

Our military authorities are now persuading the Malay people to forsake their dependence on imported foodstuffs and try to be self-sufficient in commodities which are needed to maintain daily life. Consequently, stress is being laid on increasing the production of rice and vegetables, so that Malaya can become self-sufficient in food supplies. It is unfortunate

that the Malay people are not showing satisfactory enthusiasm to take to extensive cultivation. Some of them remark that cereals grown in their country are not as nutritious as those ported from abroad. If one asks them why that is so, they at once reply : We do not know. We have been told so by the British people. In other, words, this antipathy to grow foodstuffs has been ingrained in them by the past British colonial administration, which earned huge profits by levying taxes on imported foodstuffs. As the taxes were indirect in nature, the Malaysians did not object to them ; in fact, they applauded Britain for its generosity in not levying direct taxes on them. They did not for a moment think that Britain by discouraging the habit of economic self-supply and self-sufficiency and imposing highly lucrative indirect taxes was sapping the strength of their national economy. This shows to what extent Britain exploited the Malaysians economically.

Under Japanese administration, Malaya is fast undergoing a radical transformation, politically and economically. Our military authorities have made it plain to the owners of paddy-fields that if they do not grow rice they would forfeit their title to the arable patches. This policy is not intended to coerce the Malaysians into submission, but to make them realize the need of becoming self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Unlike Britain, Japan sincerely wishes that Malaya should attain internal prosperity, and as such, it is justified in introducing measures to revamp its economic structure. It has no inclination to follow the British policy of making the Malaysians economic and political pawns and puppets.

It has been often clarified that Japan's southern reconstruction policy is based on the ideal of allowing each southern nation to have its proper place in the projected greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere. It is duty bound to reorganize the economic and political life of Malaya and of other partner-nations to achieve this objective. Plainly speaking, all the present efforts of Japan are directed toward making Malaya, the East Indies, the Philippines and Burma consciousness of their

respective responsibilities in the construction of the envisaged co-prosperity sphere and contribute their required shares to that end, so that they can resume, with optimism, their proper places in the new regional harmony that is steadily emerging.

The southern region is rich in economic resources. In the past, Britain, America and the Netherlands exploited these resources for their respective capitalistic benefits. Japan is planning that the entire economic resources of the south would be utilized for the common prosperity of all the nations of greater East Asia, and that the available surplus would be distributed among foreign countries. This economic aspiration cannot be characterized as imperialistic ambition, particularly when it is not contemplated to be of advantage only to Japan, but also to the Philippines, Malaya, the East Indies and Burma, as well as the world at large. Though the exploitation of material resources have made a remarkable development in the south, it is nonetheless apparent that the construction of a greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere cannot be accomplished without developing the material resources which still remain untapped. It can be said that if the resources of Sumatra alone are fully exploited, they would be enough to meet certain items of requirements of Japan. In order to stabilize the foundation of

economic interdependence, our military administrations in the southern countries are laying emphasis on economic reconstruction and rehabilitation.

For the purpose of sound economic reconstruction, the local military authorities are making a comprehensive study to find out the actual volume of materials available in the south and the actual amount of materials needed for organizing an enduring greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere. Already, it has been ascertained that certain categories of materials obtainable are more than enough to cover the total demand of greater East Asia. At the same time, it has been found that the existing production of some key materials is inadequate, requiring further expansion to make greater East Asia a self-sufficient economic unit. For example, the rubber output in

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the south is more than sufficient, while outputs of oil, cotton and tin are not so. Therefore, it is obvious that, while the production of oil, cotton and tin has to be adequately stimulated, it would be of no undue disadvantage to restrict the annual yield of rubber to a certain limit.

Perhaps the most pressing problem confronting Japan in carrying out its southern reconstruction policy is the shipping problem. It is well aware that the proposed greater East Asia common prosperity sphere will not become a reality unless efficient communication and transportation facilities are maintained between each country of the sphere with Japan as the pivot. To that end, it is not only restoring the war-torn communication networks in the southern countries, but also is building new ones to make the inter-country links as efficient as possible. Moreover, it is improving the shipbuilding yards now available in the important southern ports, as well as expanding its own transport shipping capacity.

From all these facts, it will be observed that our southern reconstruction policy, which is designed to realize mutual prosperity in greater East Asia, is based on a judicious programme of political and economic regeneration of the south. During the period of wartime emergency, it is natural that Japan should implement a series of measures to reinforce the defence preparedness of greater East Asia. In order to organize greater East Asia into a total war footing, it is essential that Japanese military administrations should guide the course of new life in each occupied area. No one should think that our southern reconstruction policy aims at securing Japan's domination over greater East Asia. Its main purpose is to facilitate the speedy upsurge of a greater East Asia mutual prosperity order as a potential unit of the new world order now under construction, permitting at the same time each southern nation to play its due part animated by a common feeling of amity and reciprocity.