

WORLDVIEW is published monthly [except for a combined July-August issue] by the Council on Religion and International Affairs. Subscription \$4.00 for one year; \$7.00 for two years; \$9.00 for three years.

Address: 170 East 64th Street, New York, New York 10021. TE 8-4120

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THE BODY POLITIC AND VARIOUS ALLERGIES

"United States officials and foreign diplomatic sources have disclosed that for years a secret agreement with the Japanese Government has permitted the United States to move nuclear weapons temporarily into Japan."

On Sunday, April 25, the same day that the *New York Times* reported the massive anti-war march on Washington, this was the opening paragraph of a front-page story. Interesting in the initial information it provided, the story became yet more interesting, for the very next paragraph said that: "Both the State Department and the Japanese Embassy here [in Washington] denied the existence of any such agreement."

The significance of this story? The first is, of course, the policy itself. Under the Mutual Security Treaty of 1960, the United States may not place nuclear weapons on Japanese territory without permission of the Japanese government. But the Japanese people are said to be suffering from a "nuclear allergy," the result of the atomic bombing of two major cities in 1945, and would not look happily upon such an agreement. Rumors about the placement or storage of nuclear weapons in Japan have occasionally swept through the country. In response, U.S. officials have declined to comment and Japanese officials have pointed to Japan's declared policy of excluding nuclear weapons from her territory.

President Nixon, however, has stressed that the Nixon Doctrine does not mean the United States will withdraw its nuclear shield in Asia. That will remain, and Japan, for example, can depend on it. This policy is of immense importance in itself. It reveals immediately (1) the responsibilities the United States has assumed in Asia and (2) the extent to which it relies on nuclear-weapons systems to make other countries feel the strength of that assumption.

Apart from that policy—which deserves prolonged and informed discussion—is the manner in which the policy is implemented. The transit agreement between Japan and the United States returns us to basic questions concerning the development of foreign policy. How public should the determination of such policies be? Should the interested public be involved? Must citizens at times be left uninformed? And sometimes actually misinformed, that is, lied to? If so, under what conditions, and how often can such deception take place before people come to feel that they are living under a system that is of the government, by the government and, rather dubiously, for the people?

Policies and politicians who engender growing uneasiness and distrust among large segments of the body politic cannot be all good. At the least they will lead to a number of citizen allergies, the only cure for which may well be the removal of the specific cause. J.F.