

to the editors of *Worldview*. The following came in early response.

Philip Prichard  
*Seattle, Wash.*

"I am glad you sent me that interesting article on Mexico by Robert Drysdale that was in the November issue of *Worldview*. Drysdale's comments about "The Legacy of Echeverría" are mainly true and show that the writer was knowledgeable about his subject. When reading the article I was impressed by its truth, for that is the feeling here even today about our former President Echeverría. Definitely his administration did some good things, and yet there were some things done that were ill-advised for Mexico.

"The *Worldview* article on Mexico touches on several aspects of our present situation and condition both truthfully and with considerable perceptiveness. I would say it is one of the all too rare United States reports on my country which really explores and tries to explain something of our reality.

"As I think Robert Drysdale would understand, here in Mexico we now have great hope and confidence in President Portillo and his administration. I hope that your discerning United States writer whose article on Mexico was in that November *Worldview* magazine will continue to write of my country so that the United States and Mexico will come to have a much increased understanding of each other. So thanks again for sending the Drysdale report, for it is not only interesting and informative to me but to all those of my countrymen with whom I find opportunity to discuss it. It has been good to read and reflect on that clear and discerning outside viewpoint on Mexico."

José Luis

*Guadalajara, Mexico*

## Defense of Taiwan

To the Editors: Sentiments expressed in Richard John Neuhaus's "Excursus" on the U.S. commitment to Taiwan ("American Pragmatism on Panama and China," October, 1977) represent the only honorable course that the U.S. can follow in the event other considerations do not override them. The United States, in its Defense Treaty, has solemnly pledged to defend Taiwan in the event of attack and to preserve its

free choice as to its own form of government. This pledge, when given, was solemn and binding and cannot be lightly dismissed.

Like Mr. Neuhaus, I consider pledges to carry a deep-seated meaning. However, a number of factors in the situation in the Far East have given me pause. Unfortunately these factors have not, to my knowledge, been widely discussed in the normalization debate.

The first factor is Japan. Defense of Taiwan cannot be the sole responsibility of the U.S. Japan's wishes must be considered.

Taiwan's defense directly affects Japan. Should the Japanese decide that a free Taiwan is essential to its security, then Japan must contribute to Taiwan's defense—in alliance with the U.S. or on its own. Japan's Self-Defense Force has the naval and air capability to bolster vastly the Taiwanese army and to control the straits. Its industrial strength and weapons' capability plus its large merchant marine give Japan the strength it needs to back up its forces.

Second, from Japan's point of view, Taiwan's defense and South Korea's defense are linked. The golden triangle of trade in Northeast Asia integrates both countries into Japan's economy. Taiwan and Korea are essential to Japan's inner defense lines. And the loss of one weakens the defense of the other. Therefore Japan's interests are paramount.

But this also means that the combined strength of the Japan-Taiwan-South Korea triangle is available to defend Taiwan. Already close links between Korea and Taiwan are in place. Japan's cementing link to this triangle gives the forces of this area the muscle they need to fend off any intervention short of nuclear war.

Because of this alliance there is little need for U.S. support, except through the provision of strategic nuclear support to serve as an umbrella. The U.S. has already pledged this support to Japan through its 1961 treaty. Moreover, U.S. nuclear support to Japan is triggered, not only by a treaty, but because Japan is strategically important to the defense of the U.S. By contrast, Taiwan and South Korea have importance to the U.S. only because of their relation to Japan's defenses. Individually or in combination, the fall of Taiwan and/or South Korea would not directly threaten the U.S.

Given these facts, the defense of Taiwan is an issue that, strictly speaking, is in the province of Japan. This becomes readily apparent when it is realized that the U.S. would hesitate to defend Taiwan were Japan to object. Japan's importance to our defense gives that country a strong veto power over our own actions. Indeed, Taiwan could not be defended in the face of Japanese hostility. Japan's views must be taken into account.

In light of this very real situation one wonders what the mutual defense treaty with Taiwan means. On the one hand Japan's security—not ours—is at stake, and Japan has the means and the need to play a major role. On the other hand Japan has veto power over our own desires.

Therefore Japan is the pivotal power in the region and has the responsibility for Taiwan. The emergence of Japan has changed the underlying conditions upon which the U.S. mutual defense treaty with Taiwan was based.

Thus it is critical to ascertain Japan's intentions relative to Taiwan. So far Japan has played China's game but has kept "trade" relations with Taiwan. What Japan's reaction to a Communist invasion of Taiwan would be are unknown. But it is certain that the communization of Taiwan would be a disaster to Japan. Observers have not been able to ascertain Japan's intentions because of the U.S. treaty that masks the need for more explicit statements. In this sense the situation is analogous to South Korea, where U.S. troop pullouts bring the day closer for Japanese assumption of support for the South Koreans.

The second factor is U.S. troop pullouts. Defense of Asia, whether in Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, or the Philippines, is passing into the hands of Asians, except for nuclear support. This transition means less need for a U.S. frontline role against China and greater need for a strategic role to offset growing Soviet strength via its naval buildup in the Pacific and along the Chinese border. This new role does not require U.S. commitments to send ground forces to Taiwan or anywhere else because this is an Asian job. Nor does it require U.S. pledges to local powers, except strategically.

The third factor is the Soviet buildup, which threatens all of Asia from the Indian Ocean to the Sea of Japan and

along the Chinese border. To counter this threat effectively the cooperation of China is essential. And to achieve this cooperation a *modus vivendi* between Japan and China over Taiwan is the crucial issue, not a *modus vivendi* between the U.S. and China. The U.S. will of necessity have to agree to what Japan agrees or threaten the basic links we now have with Japan.

The last factor is that both China and the U.S. have a need for trade. China's oil resources, on the mainland and in the Senkaku Islands, its huge market for industrial and defense goods, and China's own desperate need for technology suggest a natural alliance.

To effect this alliance it is essential that Taiwan be seen not as an American problem but as an Asian problem to be worked out among Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. The U.S. should solidify rapidly its strategic position by normalizing its relations with China proper and thereby contribute an overall strategic normalization for all of Asia. The greater good outweighs the lesser evil of abrogation of a treaty made in different strategic circumstances years ago. The worst policy would be to hold on to commitments we honestly do not have the means to keep. By facing up to this now we can avoid heartache later.

For the people of Northeast Asia, including the Taiwanese, it is essential that the new realities, in the form of the Soviet buildup, be recognized and that new relationships be forged. Strategically, Japan is the pivotal power relative to China, and Japan must assume the burden of creating the ground rules for this new relationship with China.

Jeremiah Novak

*The Asia Mail*  
State College, Pa.

## Jewish-Christian Relations

To the Editors: As a founder of an interreligious group, the Delaware Association of Christians and Jews, I have come to realize that Jewish-Christian dialogue usually falters upon the issues of a Middle East settlement. Many of the theological questions of interfaith pale in comparison to such problems as Israeli acceptance of a Palestinian state. I have learned that the churches are quick to criticize Israel and quick to defend the Palestinian against an Israel

characterized by horrible comparisons to the Nazis.

I make these observations in commenting upon the essay by the Reverend Charles Angell, "Difficult Days Ahead for Jewish-Christian Relations" (Excursus, *Worldview*, December), which is a reasoned prognosis of what is likely to happen should the Begin government continue its current policy. Indeed, Judeo-Christian relations may suffer because Father Angell wants his way, which insists that the American Jew must understand Christian compassion for the "disinherited Palestinian." Already Father Angell reduces the Holocaust in scope and meaning as he describes the Christian response as "inadequate." Father Angell dismisses those who sincerely comprehend Christian complicity in that nightmare as "guilt-ridden mouthpieces" who are functionaries of the Israeli information service. From my experience in dialogue, Father Angell's attitude is precisely the most painful example of the crisis in Judeo-Christian understanding.

The essential point in the Arab-Israeli conflict is that up until now the Arabs refused to recognize the legitimacy of Israel, the Arab states threatened a war of annihilation while the PLO carried out terror and murder raids on Jewish civilians (never did the PLO strike at bases of the Israel Defense Forces!). The position of American Jewry is justifiably one of cooperation and support vis-à-vis the Israeli Government. Is this so difficult to comprehend and to sympathize with? I am afraid that for many Christians the answer is Yes. For two thousand years the Jews suffered at the hand of the Christian and few voices were heard in defense of the Jew. For thirty years the Jews have demonstrated their ability to defend themselves and even go over to the offensive, if necessary; and this new reality disturbs Christian conscience. I suggest that the real problem is not that of "Palestinian Zionism," as some would like to phrase it. The real dilemma for the Church is Jewish potency and viability.

Begin is not acting in any sort of illegitimate or amoral way. The original League of Nations Mandate granted the entire territory of Palestine to the Jews. The 1948 and 1967 wars were Arab-initiated (not to mention 1973). History is replete with the sad circumstances of peoples being evicted because of inter-

national conflicts. No one is demanding the legitimate rights of the Latvians or the Slovaks. Population exchanges were historically acceptable. All Begin is saying (indeed, Begin does not have to say it) is that the 1947 Partition dividing Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state resulted in the rape of the Palestinian Arabs by their Arab brothers. Yet, according to Father Angell, it is incumbent upon Israel to rectify this tragedy. In a way Father Angell hands Israel and Jewry a backhanded compliment. Perhaps he is implying that it is fitting that Israel go out of its way to correct the wrongs that were committed. Perhaps he sees in Israel the same quality of perfection he sees in Jesus of Nazareth, also a "biblical irridentist," according to some Christians. Whatever he perceives, I am afraid, it is dissonant with Jewish perceptions and needs.

Throughout my years as a participant in Jewish-Christian dialogue I have tried to make it clear that the one transcendent Jewish concern is the establishment of a secure and independent Israel so that the welfare of the Jewish people need never again be contingent upon the tolerance of others, no matter how benevolent they may appear. Any resolution to the Palestinian issue must first demonstrate the incontrovertibility of the foregoing assumption.

Norman Saul Goldman

*Delaware Association  
of Christians & Jews  
Dover, Del.*

## A Correction

The November issue stated that the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) had been instrumental in putting together a national Association for Voluntary Sterilization that held a meeting of church and civil rights groups in Washington, D.C. IFCO informs us that it is "totally separate from" and has "a purpose and philosophy quite different from" the sterilization group in question, although the group did have a representative at the Washington meeting called by IFCO. Also, IFCO wants it known that the conference did address pressures brought upon women, especially poor and Third World women, to have sterilizations. We are glad to print this additional and clarifying information.