

## LETTER

The editors have allowed me two final pages to respond to James Gregor on the subject of trading-off US military bases in the Philippines for Soviet bases in Vietnam. (Originally promised that I would be permitted to respond to Gregor at any length, I wrote a full analysis of Gregor's errors of fact and logic; readers who would like a copy of this fuller response may write to me c/o Dept. of Political Science, William Paterson College, Wayne, NJ 07470.)

The heart of the matter is this: is international peace and security better served by a situation where both superpowers maintain military bases in Southeast Asia, or where the region is declared a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality and all foreign military bases removed? We know what the first of these options entails: both superpowers continually adding to their military assets in the area, nuclear and conventional; both superpowers using economic and other leverage to intervene in the internal affairs of regional nations so as to secure basing rights; nuclear-armed navies carrying out provocative exercises (the US's PACEX exercise this fall, off the Soviet coast, will apparently be the largest Asian-Pacific war game ever); and both superpowers using their Southeast Asian bases to provide the logistical support for their interventions elsewhere. A bases trade-off, on the other hand, offers the prospect of reversing the arms race and reducing the likelihood of military confrontation.

Will US or Philippine security be endangered if all foreign bases are removed from Southeast Asia? In my original article in *Pilipinas* no. 10, I analyzed the potential threat: from invasion of the Philippines to all-out war. In each case I tried to show that security would be enhanced, rather than diminished, by a bases trade-off. The only case that Gregor chose to dispute was that of conventional world war, in which situation, he argued, without the Philippine bases the US or Japan would be vulnerable to a Soviet campaign of strangulation by submarine. But from where would these Soviet submarines come and from where would they be supplied? Without a base in Vietnam, the nearest Soviet facility is Vladivostok, which is hemmed in by narrow straits dominated by the United States and Japan. It is possible, though highly unlikely, that the Soviet Union could defeat the US and Japanese air and naval forces blocking its access to the open seas, but if so then Philippine bases would be irrelevant to the security of Japan's sealanes. This was the argument I made in my original article; nothing Gregor has written has refuted this basic analysis and recent developments in Soviet foreign policy have strengthened the point.

But though the Philippine bases do not further the genuine security interests of the US or the Philippines, they are not militarily useless. They are indeed essential to any US policy of interventionism in Southeast or Southwest Asia. If one supported the Vietnam War, then one will think the Philippine bases important. If one supports the US right to unilaterally intervene in the Persian Gulf whenever it chooses, then too one will think the Philippine bases important. And the bases' importance will likely be deemed to outweigh their tremendous social costs and their infringements on Philippine sovereignty. But for those who reject foreign interventionism, whether in Vietnam or Afghanistan, then the elimination of all foreign military bases from Southeast Asia is an idea worth pursuing.

Stephen Roskamm Shalom

Editor's Note: A. James Gregor's reply to Stephen Roskamm Shalom's fuller response, also not printed, can be obtained by writing to him c/o Dept. of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.