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*This Week in America*

REV. VINCENT KEARNEY, S.J.

DR. JOHN TSU

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## This Week in America

*Reverend Vincent Kearney, S.J., is the Editor of Asian Affairs for America. Dr. Tsu is a Professor of International Relations at Duquesne University.*

**Dr. Tsu:** Father Kearney, since I am Chinese I have naturally been interested in that aspect of AMERICA'S weekly coverage which concerns Asia and Asia's problems. But, before we get into that, may I put you a personal question.?

**Fr. Kearney:** That depends on how personal you mean to get Dr. Tsu. An interview in the security of one's study is not exactly the same as a performance for the benefit of a radio audience which numbers in the millions.

**Dr. Tsu:** I can appreciate that. All I mean to ask is how you first came to be interested in international politics as they affect the Asian scene.

**Fr. Kearney:** I suppose it was more a question of circumstances than anything else. In my younger days as a Jesuit I spent several years on the faculty of a French Jesuit College in Cairo, Egypt.

Egypt, of course, is not in Asia but the country is linked with the rest of that area of Asia commonly referred to as the Middle East. When I was assigned to the staff of the Catholic weekly AMERICA, in 1949, Asia suddenly captured the world news spotlight. Naturally I was asked to expand my interest so that it included the Far as well as the Middle East.

*Dr. Tsu:* From your experience I suppose, you know that there are certain political, economic and social problems which affect the continent as a whole.

*Fr. Kearney:* You, more than most people, Dr. Tsu, are aware of the post-war history of Asia. You have been out of your country for almost ten years now, I believe for a very obvious reason. China has been lost, let us hope not for long, to those who love freedom. Four or five years after World War II the immediate target of international communism suddenly shifted from Europe to Asia. The tragic fall of China, the outbreak of war in Korea, the nine-year long struggle in Indo-China, all were steps in a plan which had as its objective the eventual domination of an entire continent. That includes the Middle East as well as China. It includes India and the rich fertile lands of Southeast Asia.

The stand taken by the free world in Korea may have forced the Kremlin to change its tactics. But the objective still remains the same. Soviet Russia is attempting to achieve by diplomacy, economic penetrations and political infiltrations what it has thus far failed to accomplish by military means. The shift in tactics is pretty obvious in the Middle East where, taking advantage of the Arab-Israeli Quarrel, the Soviets have moved in where the Czars were unable to tread though they tried hard enough. Today Russia has become a factor in Middle East power politics.

The basic problem which affects all Asia, then is how to prevent the expansion of communism on the political economic and diplomatic fronts as well as on the military front.

In addition there are specific issues which complicate American relations with individual countries in Asia, particularly the so-called uncommitted nations. It is not always easy to come up with the answer but if AMERICA can keep its reading public aware that the problems exist and are susceptible to a Catholic interpretation, it considers that it is fulfilling its function as a Catholic weekly of opinion. It is pretty difficult to divorce international politics from principles of morality nowadays.

*Dr. Tsu:* One of those problems would be, I suppose, the problem of the uncommitted nations you mentioned, those which have adopted a policy most commonly described as "Cold-War" neutralism.

*Fr. Kearney:* Yes. There is no such complication in our dealings with your own Chinese Nationalist Government on Taiwan. We feel alike on the danger posed by a militant, heavily armed Red China. The United States has made it plain that we intend to stand by our commitments to Nationalist China, a policy which, it goes with out saying AMERICA has been urging in its editorial columns.

The problem arises with those nations who believe they can pursue a policy of non-alignment or non-involvement between two blocs, one of which has never relinquished its declared aim of world domination.

*Dr. Tsu:* That brings to mind a question which, if I understand the function of a Catholic weekly of opinion correctly, AMERICA should be particularly interested in. One aspect of neutrality has become a hot issue in recent weeks. Is it immoral? Is there a Catholic doctrine on the morality of neutrality? How would AMERICA handle this problem of

neutrality?

**Fr. Kearney:** The issue of neutrality in international affairs is not new to Catholic moral theologians. International law, as we know it, owes much to such Catholic moralists as Francisco de Vitoria and Francisco Suarez, who, along with the Protestant Hugo Grotius, who has, at one time or another, been called by jurists The "Father of international Law". It was precisely as a result of their teachings that, up to the 19th century, there was no place in the international conscience for what in the language of the jurist was termed neutrality *de jure* — i.e., neutrality exercised as a right. The principle was pretty generally accepted that no powerful nation could remain aloof in a war between an aggressor nation and one seeking justice. Neither could it remain aloof in a war in which civilization was at stake. Nations, however, could remain *de facto* neutral, if they were unable to ascertain where justice really lay or if they saw their participation in a war would be ineffectual. But to the moralists this did not mean that they could claim neutrality as a right.

**Dr. Tsu:** But how would this apply to the current-day scene? It seems to me that

the moralists are here talking about a case for actual warfare. Today we seem to be in a war and not in a war.

**Fr. Kearney:** It is true that the moralists explored the question of neutrality against the background of actual warfare. Does their doctrine apply to a cold war such as we had in Korea or Indo-China? I wonder whether there has ever been any situation in history comparable to the present state of tensions in the world.

Pius XII seemed to extend to doctrine the present day situation. In his Christmas message of 1948 he stated that a people threatened with an unjust aggression may not remain passively indifferent. The solidarity of a nation, he went on, "forbids others to remain as mere spectators in an attitude of apathetic neutrality".

**Dr. Tsu:** Can any case be made out for these uncommitted nations of Asia and their stand on non-alignment in the cold war?

**Fr. Kearney:** Well, a case might be made out for what we have called *de facto* neutrality as regards certain of the uncommitted nations of Asia. They are all militarily weak. They may feel that to



line up with the non-communist bloc in military alliance will only invite trouble for themselves. They fear being sucked into a war which they do not want, no more than we.

None of these countries have what might be called stable economics. They may feel therefore that economic stability rather than the build-up of military strength should be their most pressing concern.

But to maintain an attitude of complete passivity, to act and talk as though there were no question of right and wrong involved when civilization itself is at stake, threatened by the most vicious tyranny the world has ever known, is indefensible. On the other hand we must not forget that most of the nations of Asia have had first hand experience with what cannot be called the best in Western culture and civilization. They have experienced an imperialism and an exploitation which has left an almost ineradicable taste in their mouths. They have not all had the same experience of communism that your own country has had. They are easily duped by Communist promises. They are tempted to see in communism a quick answer to their economic problems. The fact that it is a ruthless answer does not seem to make much of an impression. In a word

the uncommitted nations and often times their leaders are, more than anything else confused.

*Dr. Tsu:* Yes, I think one of the principle reasons why communism is able to make such headway as an ideology is because it knows how to take advantage of Asian resentment against the West. How has AMERICA treated this issue of colonialism from the moral standpoint?

*Fr. Kearney:* That question brings to mind a statement made by Bishop Chappoulie of Angers made at the height of the tensions in North Africa last November. As you know all France is agog over North Africa. The Bishop spoke with these tensions in mind. He pointed out that colonialism cannot remain the permanent status of any nation or people. It is only morally justifiable as long as its purpose is to be of service to the people colonized to help them advance politically, economically and intellectually. The Church, the Bishop went on, cannot range herself along side those whose only concern as a colonizing nation is their own prestige and material wellbeing or who seek to justify colonialism on a false basis of racial superiority.

Here the Bishop put his finger on one

of the root causes of Asian animosity toward the whiteman. The editorial pages of AMERICA have often raised the question whether or not the people of the United States realize that every instance of racial discrimination and injustice here in America is flashed around Asia. In this respect, if we are losing out in Asia in what has been called "The contest for the minds of men", we have proved our own worst enemy. To sound off on the morality of neutralism while remaining impassive in the face of racial injustice here casts us in a somewhat hypocritical light as far as the colored Asian is concerned.

The when and the how of the liquidation of colonialism is, of course, a temporal matter which must be worked out by the nations concerned and in the interests of all the peoples concerned. Nevertheless, the principles remain. As the present Holy Father remarked in his Christmas eve address of last year, in our efforts toward peace we should not only be concerned with measures to restrict the possibility of another war, we must also try to prevent, eliminate and lessen the quarrels between nations which could lead to war. Among these quarrels is the friction between Europeans and non-Europeans who aspire to full political independence. In

an eloquent plea Pius XII asked that these peoples be not denied a "fair and progressive political freedom".

*Dr. Tsu:* Of course the United States is not a colonial power even though the Communists try to make her out as one. What can the United States do to help keep the uncommitted nations of Asia free?

*Fr. Kearney:* I think the United States and certainly the people of America, should keep in mind that for all the recriminations over neutrality in the cold war, these newly independent nations of Asia have the same basic aims and objectives that we have. They desire to maintain their independence. They have in all instances elected for the democratic way of life though the refinements of democracy as practised here may be lacking chiefly because of their economic instability. We owe it to them as well as to ourselves to help them achieve their aims and objectives.

*Dr. Tsu:* I seem to detect an argument for continued foreign aid. But can foreign aid be effective if given on a self-interest basis? To me this smacks of buying people off.

*Fr. Kearney:* If buying people off were the only motive. That is why I was careful to add that we owe it to them to help them.

*Dr. Tsu:* You mean there is a moral obligation involved?

*Fr. Kearney:* Yes. AMERICA has always insisted that there is when discussing this question of foreign aid. We have realized, of course, that a foreign-aid program could never be pushed through a calculating Congress solely on the basis of the moral arguments for such aid. We have to play up the self-interest angle. Nevertheless we should not be oblivious of our moral obligations. I think, for example, that we have lost sight of the original purposes of Point Four. In initiating the Point Four program President Truman called for a bold, new concept of aid and shared technological progress. President Eisenhower had frequently spoken of pledging the free world's resources to combat, disease, want and hunger.

*Dr. Tsu:* Is there any basis in Catholic social teaching for foreign aid?

*Fr. Kearney:* There is certainly a clear Catholic doctrine on the use of material

wealth. Man has a natural right to private property. Yet, it is also true that the material goods of this world were created for all mankind. The use of material wealth therefore, should be sufficiently common so that the original purpose of the Creator is realized. From the viewpoint of Catholic social teaching on the question of private property there is something fundamentally wrong when a nation such as the United States should have a surplus-disposal problem while half the world's population is living at starvation level. The present Pope has applied the doctrine to the international community on numerous occasions. In his 1946 Christmas Eve message he said, "nothing is so well suited to create the indispensable spiritual requirements of peace as help given liberally by state to state... so that nations may learn from their own fortune to understand, tolerate and help one another." He spoke in the same vein to a group of United States Congressmen in 1948 when he praised the foreign-aid program of the United States. In 1953, while speaking to the Association of Italian Catholic Jurists, he condemned the notion that the nation-state is without natural law obligations to the international community.

*Dr. Tsu:* What about the extent of foreign

aid? How should a nation go in giving of its superabundance to less fortunate peoples?

*Fr. Kearney:* Oddly enough it has very often been the aid least costly to the American taxpayer which has paid off in terms of winning friends in Asia. I am thinking particularly of the experiences of Dr. Thomas A. Dooley who was in charge of a U.S. Navy Medical unit in Haiphong in north Indo-China during the evacuation two years ago of Vietnamese refugees from Communist held North Vietnam. This medical unit processed some 600,000 refugees before they embarked on American ships to be ferried along a thousand miles of coast southward to Saigon. When operation "Passage to Freedom", as it was called, was completed, we could count on 600,000 Asians who were friendly and deeply grateful to the United States. The cost? Medical supplies sent as gifts by leading American drug companies in response to an appeal by Dr. Dooley and the innate kindness of 14,000 American naval officers and sailors who practically mothered thousands of Vietnamese children during their flight from terror. What counts is the spirit that motivates our help in whatever shape or form it is given. Once it appears we are trying to buy these people, we may as well stay home.



*Dr. Tsu:* Most of these refugees were Vietnamese Catholics, weren't they?

*Fr. Kearney:* That is true. It was precisely because of their religion that these refugees took to flight. They refused to remain in the Communist north where they were being denied a basic freedom—the freedom to worship God as they saw fit. But this is no new story to you Dr. Tsu. Recent developments in Red China have demonstrated that the arrest and imprisonment of missionaries has been part and parcel of the communist attack on religion, not merely an opposition to what the communists have chosen to call foreign influence in China.

*Dr. Tsu:* Yes, our time seems to be running out but I would like to mention the heroic resistance of the Chinese Catholics of Shanghai. You know, of course, of the arrest and jailing of Bishop Kung and thousands of his flock last September. That was proof that for all the constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion in Red China, the Communists are really out to wipe out the Church.

*Fr. Kearney:* Don't you see in that fact an implication for the Governments of the free world in their dealings with Communist China? Despite so-called guarantees, there is no freedom of religion in Red



China. In Vietnam despite the Geneva Agreement, the Communists sought by all means, including the torture of children, to prevent the free passage of non Communists to the south. Before we talk about admitting Red China to the UN or sitting down to work out a solution to the problem of the two Chinas, Communist insincerity is something to keep in mind.

*Dr. Tsu:* In other words it is pretty difficult to coexist with a country which will settle for nothing but coexistence on its own terms. How then do you break the deadlock in the world?

*Fr. Kearney:* If we know the ultimate answer to that question the work of the Asian desk at AMERICA would be vastly simplified these days. Whatever the ultimate answer, it is essential that we continue not only to proclaim but also to practice our principles about communism, freedom and the dignity of man. Week by week AMERICA tries to interpret the Asian scene in the light of these principles.



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