

IN THE FLIGHT PATH OF THE TITI

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The central theme of this lecture is that since the first European settlers landed in New Zealand there have been extraordinary changes in economic, political and military power around the entire rim of the Pacific Basin; and that there is every reason to believe that changes equally dramatic can be expected in the century ahead. In spite of its isolation this land of ours is near enough to culture clash, economic rivalry and military competition as to be very close to potential battle lines.

But first a few comments on some matters which are perhaps only marginally relevant to my main theme but close enough to serve as an introduction.

First a word about the Pacific Basin on whose south-western rim New Zealand is situated. Our hemisphere is different from the other half of the world. It contains the Pacific Ocean. This ocean and the coasts of the surrounding lands are the Pacific Basin. The ocean is immense. It is more than half the water covered part of the globe and its area is greater than that of the entire land surface of the earth. It is well to bear these facts in mind because in these days of rapid air travel the world is made to appear so small whereas it is in fact very large. Let me illustrate.

It is 6,590 miles from Auckland to Panama. A ship travelling 370 miles a day takes two and a half weeks to reach the Canal. Distance is a central fact of our economy, our commerce and our defence and must be ever remembered.

This immense expanse of ocean separates the most ancient civilisations from the most recent and lands of Asiatic culture from those of European culture. Asia is on the western shore and opposite it is the New World of the Americas.

Some people still speak of China and Japan, in the language of our fathers, as being in the Far East. Our far east is Chile-California. We are slow to adapt even our language to realities.

My second commentary of an introductory kind concerns the "Circum-Pacific Mobile Belt".

The Pacific Ocean is ringed by a zone of violence and fire, a zone of earthquakes and volcanoes. Geophysicists tell us that it is due to the vast Pacific tectonic plate of the earth's crust

grinding relentlessly on its neighbours. This belt of instability extends from Graham Land, south of Cape Horn, to Mt Erebus in Antarctica. From its beginning it follows the western coast of South America, the United States and Canada to Bering Strait. Thence it goes through Kamchatka, Japan, China, Indo-China, Thailand, the Philippines and through the islands between to New Zealand. It extends through the entire length of New Zealand to Antarctica.

Since European settlement we have experienced many severe earthquakes but the only disastrous volcanic eruption has been that of Mount Tarawera in 1886.

The Circum-Pacific Mobile Belt is a basic determinant of our building codes, engineering standards, planning ordinances and civil defence. Civil emergency in New Zealand practically equates with earthquake and every adolescent citizen should be trained in civil defence so as to be able to respond positively when disaster strikes.

You may have wondered why I have headed this lecture "In the flight path of the titi". The answer contains my third introductory comment.

First something about the titi. This is the Maori name of the sooty shearwater (*Puffinus Griseus*). It is also popularly, and quite inappropriately, called the mutton bird. This bird comes to land solely for breeding purposes and this it does mainly on the small islands off the coasts of Stewart Island. It is a migratory sea bird. When the fledglings are strong enough, in early May of each year, great flights head north from their birth place. They patrol the rim of the Pacific Basin to the coast of Asia and follow it to Bering Strait. Thence they follow the Alaskan and Canadian shore south. Finally they turn south west towards Hawaii and begin the long run home. They travel in all, each season, some twenty thousand miles. They have cousins in the islands of Bass Strait which make the same journey. Over many years these have been studied by banding and observation. Not infrequently the same bird has entered the same nesting burrow on the same date in successive years.

There is no doubt that the titi has had an influence on our country's history. The remote ancestors of the Maori received a clear message from them, and other migrants, which told them that there was a land to the south which fed and nurtured these immense numbers of birds each year. Men began to wonder just how near or far away was that empty land. Finally it was

seen like a long white cloud on the horizon from the platform of a double canoe.

I want to take you on a similar journey and give you a bird's eye view of some of the changes, involving the human family on this politically mobile belt, which have occurred since our forebears landed on Petone beach or the shores of the Waitemata one hundred and forty years ago.

I cannot attempt anything like a history, however brief. That would require books. I will refer to only a few isolated major events in a drama of history which is still unfolding and in which we are caught up.

In 1840 there were Kings in Cambodia and Siam and emperors in China and Japan. Both the latter nations, after a long period of contact with European traders and Jesuit missionaries had reacted strongly against the alien cultural influences these represented. They had sealed their borders, closed their ports and isolated themselves utterly from external foreign contacts.

In 1840 England went to war with China to open her ports to European trade. Professor Condliffe in his classic work *on our economic history wrote this fifty years ago:

"It is more than a co-incidence that the same year which saw the first arrival of colonists in New Zealand was the year in which Britain fought a war which first opened the ports of China to European commerce. . . . The economic history of New Zealand is an episode in the creation of a new world in which the Pacific Ocean is destined to play an increasingly important part."

Japan

The reaction against European cultural and religious penetration in Japan was even more violent than it had been in China. All foreigners were expelled from her shores. Native Christians were ruthlessly exterminated. The ports were closed. All intercourse with foreigners ceased. She became once again a rigid, static, feudal society ruled by a ruthless military oligarchy under the nominal control of a near-divine Emperor.

In 1853 the United States of America sent Commodore Matthew Perry with four ships to Japan to seek the opening of diplomatic and commercial relations. This episode marks the beginning of the enormous changes in the Japanese economy and society which in a miraculously short time finally produced

* "New Zealand in the Making" J. B. Condliffe D.Sc. Allen and Unwin, 1930.

modern Japan. The Commodore demonstrated a model telegraph and a model train which delighted and amazed the Japanese who observed them. After a period of social upheaval Japan set out on the road to becoming a modern industrial nation. There is no parallel in all history to the speed with which this was accomplished. I will recount a few of the milestones on her journey to a position of equality with the great powers of Europe.

In 1894 she was at war with China and as a result the independence of Korea was established under Japanese suzerainty and China ceded the island of Formosa (Taiwan) to the conqueror.

The Trans-Siberian Railway was completed early in the 20th century and the Russians were building a near ice-free port at Vladivostok on the Bay of Peter the Great. They were also intruding into the Chinese province of Manchuria and with questionable authority, supported by many thousands of Cossacks, they were completing the short cut to the coast across Chinese territory by building the Chinese Eastern Railway. This was a threat to the new Japan.

In 1904 Japan went to war with the Russians and crushingly defeated them on land and sea using with skill and efficiency every military weapon which the most modern technology had devised. The final act in the drama was the destruction of the great Russian fleet. The story is worth telling.

The main Russian fleet sailed from the Baltic in October 1904. It journeyed via the Cape of Good Hope. A smaller fleet of older vessels sailed later via the Mediterranean Sea. The fleets were coaled at sea every thousand miles or so by German colliers. The labour, the tedium, the isolation and the heat on the long voyage was destructive of discipline and morale. Red with rust, grimed with coal, caked with salt, the ships' sides thick with marine growth, the cumbersome armada wallowed its way across the seas for seven weary months. Naval exercises and the practice of skills were impossible. Every man's strength was expended in merely keeping the ships moving forward.

The main fleet anchored in Cam-Ranh bay in what is now Vietnam and there awaited the smaller flotilla. Who could have foretold that in this very harbour some sixty years later the Americans would construct a major naval facility and that the Russians would subsequently succeed to its use.

The combined fleet resumed its journey north. Its goal was

Vladivostok. Six hundred miles short of this objective in Tsushima Strait, between Japan and Korea, they met the Japanese fleet.

For months the Japanese, their morale heightened by victories over the Russian Pacific fleet, had anxiously awaited the event. Time was passed in gunnery practice, naval exercises, manoeuvres and endless briefings. On the day of battle each man washed his body and put on clean underclothing to lessen wound infection.

The Russians were crushingly defeated. They lost 4,830 men killed and 5,917 captured by the enemy. Thirty-four out of the forty-six Russian ships were sunk. The Japanese lost three torpedo-boats and 110 men killed. It was the greatest maritime disaster since the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the Straits of Dover in 1588.

This was one of the decisive battles of history. Its outcome created a tremendous impression in the West. No one had appreciated the strength and efficiency of the new Japan in spite of some remarkable achievements earlier in the year.

This was not so long ago. The battle was fought on May 28th 1905. Four days later I had my first birthday. Today there is no Japanese fleet but a very large modern Russian fleet patrols the coasts of Asia.

Following the war with Russia, Japan became the strongest and most dynamic force on the Pacific scene. It may be worthwhile following her fortunes further to illustrate the violence and volatility of recent Pacific history.

In 1914 Japan joined with the Allies in World War I. She occupied most of the German island colonies in the Pacific and her warships escorted troops from New Zealand to the Middle East. When peace came in 1918 she received a mandate from the League of Nations over all the German Pacific islands except Samoa where the mandate was given to New Zealand. These islands were the Marianas, the Marshall and Caroline Islands, Pelew and the Gilberts. Her territories now reached to the equator in the south. To the north she occupied the southern half of the Russian island of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands.

In 1931 Japan invaded and conquered Manchuria. She put a member of the Chinese imperial family on the throne as the "Emperor of Manchukuo".

In 1937 Japan embarked on an undeclared war on China and

subdued the greater part of it, which she occupied until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. The Japanese were substantially assisted by the division of the Chinese nation into a communist section under Mao Tse-tung and a less radical revolutionary reformist section under General Chiang Kai-Shek. In 1949 the communists triumphed and established a People's Republic of China. General Chiang Kai-Shek and a great number of his followers withdrew to the island of Taiwan where they set up an independent state which they called the Republic of China.

In 1939 World War II broke out and Japan allied herself diplomatically at least with the Germans and Italians thus forming the so called Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

In 1941 she took the plunge and became a belligerent. In December of that year when the fortunes of the allies were at their lowest ebb she launched a surprise attack on the American fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbour at Hawaii. This of course immediately brought the United States into the war.

In rapid succession the Japanese conquered Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indo-China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Burma was attacked to cut the Burma Road which carried supplies to China. Repeated air attacks were made on Darwin and even the harbour of Sydney was entered by mini-submarines. Her southward thrust towards Australia and New Zealand was halted only by a naval defeat by American forces in the Coral Sea between the Solomon Islands and the Queensland coast in May 1942. This event we should ever remember with feelings of immense gratitude to the American republic.

By 1945 the Japanese were utterly defeated and their homeland was occupied by American and allied forces. Her dream of what she had called a "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere" was over. Since those years like her ally Germany she has been disarmed and relieved of the necessity of squandering her wealth on armaments and armies. As a consequence both these nations, largely at their conquerors' expense, have over the past thirty years enjoyed unparalleled prosperity. Some simple souls have termed this an "economic miracle".

Today Japan is as defenceless as New Zealand. Her huge, industrialised, prosperous and apparently strong economy depends utterly on imported oil from the Middle East. Never in the long history of mankind has the destiny of 112 million people hung on so slender a thread.

Russia

Russia made her first thrust into the Pacific in the 18th century when Captain Vitus Bering, a Dane in the service of Tsar Peter the Great, discovered the strait between Alaska and Asia.

In 1776 the Russian-American Fur Company received a charter from Tsar Paul. The same year the Spanish king established and garrisoned a fortress at the entrance to the Golden Gate to guard and protect the Mission of San Francisco. The company was comparable to the Hudson Bay Company or the East India Company. The company's business was furs. Their trading posts extended as far south as Fort Ross on Russian River a few miles north of modern San Francisco. A Russian Orthodox church still stands there to this day.

The Russian Crown took over the control of Russian-America, as Alaska was then called, in 1801. A sea frontier on Bering Strait was preferred to an indefensible land frontier with British territory in Canada. Britain was then the world superpower. Accordingly six years later Russia sold her interest in North America to the United States for \$7,200,000 and Alaska became first a Territory and then a state of the United States of America.

Although she had withdrawn from the American continent Russia's dream of empire was still in the east. She wanted an ice-free Pacific port, rail connection with the Asian coast and a share, with other European powers, in the spoliation of the decadent Manchu empire of China.

Her boundary with China was ill-defined but there was a treaty signed as far back as 1689 at Nerchinsk near Lake Baikal. It was the first treaty China had ever signed with a European nation. It made the Amur Province in the north to be Chinese territory and the great Amur River a largely Chinese river. This treaty was revised in 1858 and the Amur River and its tributary the Ussuri became the boundary — Chinese on the south bank, Russian on the north. It is still the boundary today and is heavily guarded by many Russian divisions.

When the Trans-Siberian Railway was first built it cut right across Manchuria from China to Vladivostok. Wisely the Russians decided to surrender their interests in Manchuria and they constructed that portion of the railway anew completely on Russian territory to the north of the Amur River. This added some three hundred miles to the distance but it did give them a clearly defined and defensible frontier. Today they regard this

line as being too close to the Chinese frontier even though there is a mighty river between, and they are, at enormous cost and against tremendous engineering difficulties, building a new railway to the sea some hundreds of miles north of the present line so it may be safer from interruption in time of war.

In 1945, about a week before the Japanese surrender, Russia declared war on Japan to secure her share in the spoils of war. Thus she regained the southern half of Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands which she had lost to Japan in 1905. A strait — at one time called La Perouse Strait — separates Sakhalin from the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido. The southernmost Russian occupied island is only five miles from the Japanese coast. Sakhalin is heavily militarized. In addition every inch of Japanese territory is within easy missile range of the Russian mainland.

Russia now has a very powerful navy, a large part of which is deployed in the Pacific. The ships are of all classes from aircraft carriers to submarines; many of the latter are nuclear powered. Her principal naval base up till now has been Vladivostok but she now enjoys very friendly relations with the republic of Vietnam to whom she gave material support in the recent invasion of Vietnam by China.

It is not unlikely that she will be rewarded by the use of the facilities at the great naval base which the Americans built at Cam-Ranh during their recent war against North Vietnam. This base is only seven hundred and fifty miles west of a major American naval installation at Subic Bay near Manila.

The use of this Vietnamese harbour would give the Russians a dramatic naval advantage. They would dominate the South China Sea. Through it pass many of China's and Japan's vital shipping lanes, especially those from the Persian Gulf. On its shores are Taiwan, the Philippines, Borneo and Sarawak, Malaysia and Singapore.

Russia is pre-eminently the dominant military power in the Western Pacific as Japan was a few short years ago.

The Republic of the Philippines

This huge cluster of islands is by far the oldest European colony in the Pacific region. They were settled by Spaniards under Miguel de Legaspi from Mexico in 1565 and they remained under Spanish rule till 1898.

This was the year of the Spanish-American war. After the war

tions, cruise ships, commercial vessels and fishing fleets from Taiwan, Japan, Russia, Korea and the United States. Whales and seals brought the very first Europeans to settle in this land and once again the harvest of the sea is a factor in our lives of ever increasing importance.

Antarctica

Another focus of international attention in this region is the Antarctic continent. The United Socialist Soviet Republics have no less than nineteen research stations on the continent and the United States of America has seven. New Zealand and Australia are the nearest settled communities to that continent and New Zealand is marginally the closer. Stewart Island is about sixteen hundred miles from the shores of South Victoria Land. No doubt for this reason the American Antarctic Research Air Base is in Christchurch.

New Zealand claims sovereignty over the Ross Sea Dependency by virtue of an Imperial Order in Council of 1923 which declared the area to be British territory under the jurisdiction of the government of New Zealand. The Governor-General of New Zealand was declared to be the Governor of the Dependency. In exercise of this high office His Excellency by notice in a recent Gazette appointed three officers of the Government of the Dependency to exercise the functions of Justices of the Peace, Postmaster and Coroner.

International activities on the continent are regulated in some degree by the Antarctic Treaty aimed at keeping the continent as a zone of international co-operation and peace. The Treaty has thirteen signatories, six of which make no territorial claims in the continent and do not recognize the claims of the other seven who do. Neither the U.S.S.R. nor the U.S.A. recognize New Zealand's claim to the Ross Sea Dependency or those of Australia to the Australian Antarctic Territory to the south of that island continent.

Some evidence of natural gas has been found in the Ross Sea area but at present the Treaty, while permitting exploration, does not permit exploitation of the resources of Antarctica.

The air space over the continent may yet be used by commercial aircraft as is the corresponding region in the northern hemisphere. The shortest distance from New Zealand to southern and western Africa is across the continent. There is

much to be said for putting this great continent directly under the control of the United Nations or a "World Government" agency especially created for the purpose.

Pacific Ocean Quadrants

Look once again at a map of the Pacific and divide it into four quadrants by lines along the equator and down the 180th meridian of longitude near New Zealand's East Cape.

North-eastern Quadrant

In the centre is the fiftieth state of the Union— Hawaii. This area of the Pacific is American. Yet it was here the Japanese penetrated to attack the American fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbour at 1:20 p.m. on Sunday December 7th 1941.

South-eastern Quadrant

This quarter bounded to the north by the equator and to the east by the South American coasts contains a scatter of islands. These include the Tokelau and Cook Islands. Both groups are a long way from New Zealand but they are unique because we have a special relationship with them. Tokelau islands are a part of New Zealand and Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens. Also in this quadrant is the Kingdom of Tonga and the two Samoas, the eastern and the western. The latter is an independent state and the former an American colony. Most of the remaining islands in this quadrant are French possessions. They are a reminder of the rapidly fading past. These colonies have today little relevance to the needs, policies or power of the governing country. It is a little ironical that the only remaining "colonial powers" in the Pacific are the two oldest and most famous republics of the modern world, namely France and the United States of America.

South-western Quadrant

Herein lies Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, the Solomons and a cluster of other islands. This is our home territory and will be discussed more fully in my next lecture on national defence.

North-western Quadrant

Here the dominant Pacific power today is Russia. Who could have visualised such great changes in so short a time? Forty years ago Japan was the unchallenged and unchallengeable mistress of this area. Her territories included Korea, Taiwan, South Sakhalin island and the Kuriles. Manchuria was a tributary state and China was at her mercy. It is difficult to find any

historic parallel for such dramatic changes in military and political power. It is, however, beyond all question that changes just as great as these lie ahead of us. China, Vietnam and Thailand are all in a phase of transition and it is even possible that China is on the eve of changes comparable only with those made by Japan in the 19th century.

Within the past few months (in this year 1979) these changes have occurred. China has signed a peace treaty with Japan. The Russians have signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Vietnam. Communist China has established normal diplomatic relations with the United States. The Chinese prime minister has paid an official visit to that country and to the Western European countries as well. The American Taiwanese treaty has been allowed to lapse. China terminated her thirty year old treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union.

The central fact in the Pacific today is the tension and antagonism between the two communist giants China and Soviet Russia.

Russia v. China

The tensions between Russia and China are not ideological, indeed there is some degree of ideological harmony at least between the intellectuals and the social theorists of the two countries.

The facts of national and international life as the Russians see them would appear to be the same today as they were in the days of the Tsars and they are dictating policies in no way different from those pursued in former times.

Russian foreign policies appear to be dominated by a permanent and persistent fear of invasion. Thus impelled she has sought to surround herself as far as possible by a great number of buffer states such as Mongolia, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany. Others such as Lithuania, Esthonia and Latvia she has simply annexed.

Where does this attitude of mind have its origin? Russia in Europe has few natural barriers and from the east have come successive waves of conquest. The Tartar hordes in the 13th century swept right to the Baltic. For some hundreds of years there was a Tartar Khanate at her very centre. Today it is the "Tartar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" whose western border is only about five hundred miles east of Moscow. The

population of this republic is still fifty per cent Tartar although in 1770 a large part of the then population made a famous mid-winter migration back to China.

This fear of invasion rooted deep in history must have been much increased by her more modern historical experience. It must have been multiplied and multiplied again by the suffering and destruction of the German invasion of World War II.

However, the very extent of Russian territories, while adding greatly to the difficulties of defence at the same time present an almost impossible obstacle to any potential invasion—with one exception. That exception is a Chinese thrust from the east into the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan.

This state extends from China to the Caspian Sea. It is the largest and most northern state of central Asia. It is two thousand miles from east to west and one thousand miles from north to south. It is about one-third the size of Australia—deserts and all—and has about the same population. Since 1945 a policy of settling Slavonic Russians on these 'virgin lands' has vigorously pursued and today they make up forty per cent of the population.

The climate is temperate. The soil is fertile and the country is immensely rich in minerals. Since time immemorial this land has been successively occupied by migrant hordes of Sythians, Mongols, Tartars and Turks, swarming to the west into Europe and the Levant. It is separated from China by an immense mountain wall penetrated only by a few ancient caravan roads. On the eastern side of that mountain wall China is, in Russian eyes, like an enormous hive prepared to swarm.

There is yet another factor which must add to Russian fears. Although her territories cover one-sixth of the land surface of the globe her population is only 260 millions—perhaps ten per cent more than the United States of America. Of these 120 millions are non-Slav peoples and of these 43 millions are Moslems. It has been said that non-Slavs make up some twenty per cent of the armed forces and that the Asiatic component of the population is increasing faster than the European.

Such a situation probably intensifies the fear of invasion which I have mentioned as a major determinant of Russian policy.

How different is the situation of the Chinese peoples. The population is somewhere near the billion mark and it is hemmed into a comparatively small and, in a large part,

inhospitable territory, of which only ten percent can be cultivated. In the west great mountain chains sweep up from the Himalayas right to Manchuria. There is the enormous buffer state of Mongolia which is a Russian satellite. These barriers are reinforced by the vast Gobi Desert and the harsh province of Sinkiang which covers about a sixth of the whole country and has six people to the square mile. Only in the north along the Amur River can the frontier be described as in any degree vulnerable and this region is heavily defended by many divisions of the Soviet armed forces.

The territories on the Russian side of the Amur are not attractive for an agricultural people. The province has eight months of winter, practically no spring and four months of summer but even in the hottest part of the year the ground is frozen two feet below the surface.

China is endeavouring to become a modern state. Every step on the way is slowed by the bog of poverty, the comparative paucity of natural resources and the pressure of population. If ever any nation needed more living space it is China. She might be regarded as a time bomb which must explode. It must burst towards the west into Russian territory or east into the Pacific; north and south offers no temptation. All that is needed either way is the opportunity.

The direction, scope and speed of future events will depend finally on power, population and hunger. The influences of treaties, pacts, international agencies and world opinion will not be decisive.

New Zealand's future as an independent state could be determined by events far removed from our shores. We should look to our defences.