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New Challenges, New Approaches: Regional Security Cooperation in East Asia

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The global security environment has experienced dramatic changes since the end of the Cold War. We have witnessed the demise of a period when, in the words of John Lewis Gaddis, "The international system… appeared to be one of bipolarity in which, like iron filings attracted by magnets, all power gravitated to Moscow and Washington."[1] In other words, the era in which the world was divided into East and West, where nations belonging to the opposing camp were perceived as a threat, where armaments were built up during peacetime, and where support was given to political entities that belonged to the same camp has come to an end.

In some respects, one could say that this peace between nations came early to Southeast Asia. The formation in 1967 and subsequent expansion and development of ASEAN have effectively prevented intra-ASEAN military conflict, thus, in principle, allowing each member nation to focus on stabilizing its own security interests. On the other hand, some important vestiges of the Cold War remain in Northeast Asia, as the sources of political and military tensions on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Straits have not disappeared. In the 1990s, despite the end of the Cold War on a global level, Northeast Asia experienced a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula and a crisis in the Taiwan Straits, prompting the United States and its allies in East Asia to reaffirm their solidarity against instability in the region.[2]

However, the terrorist attacks that occurred in September 2001 marked the emergence—in an extremely explicit way—of a new context for the post–Cold War international order and security environment. Nonstate actors came to be seen as a potentially destabilizing force, as represented by international terrorism. This prompted the United States to once again assert its military-strategic functions and roles, developing such military initiatives as "Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and placing efforts to fight terrorism and stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) at the core of its security strategy. Accordingly, America's expectations of its allies and its forward-deployed forces have been raised.[3] Japan, South Korea, and Australia are actively participating in the so-called "global war on terror," each according to its own internal restraints, and dozens of countries around the world have lent their militaries and self-defense forces to the Coalition of the Willing. The Philippines and Thailand have also been cooperating in the region, participating in operations targeting international terrorist networks in Southeast Asia.

We have also seen the development of international partnerships to fight terrorism and proliferation between and among nations that are not connected by an alliance, most notably in the important role that China plays in international efforts to deal with North Korea and Iran, including its involvement in the Six-Party Talks and its role on the UN Security Council. The challenges raised by terrorism and proliferation are in that sense helping create a partnership among nations that are seeking to maintain the existing order, the result of which is a coalition that would have seemed unthinkable during the Cold War.

At the same time, the dividing line between military and nonmilitary has become increasingly blurred, and those "grey areas" where it is difficult to differentiate between times of conflict and times of peace are expanding. The traditional objectives of security—to fulfill national ambitions and increase national power—have receded to some extent, as new challenges that do not fit nicely into those objectives have emerged. Today's major challenges, such as terrorism; trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people; environmental and healthcare crises; and natural disasters, are not the result of one country's actions against another. But they still pose serious threats to states and to the people living within the states' borders, and new frameworks for cooperation to deal with them effectively are urgently needed.

Needs-based functional frameworks have already been set up to deal with some of these new challenges as individual events occur. The most striking example was the response to the devastation caused by the earthquake that

struck off the coast of Sumatra in December 2004 and the resulting tsunami. The initial relief efforts were led by a core group that consisted of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. Later, as the international relief efforts were centered at the U-Tapao airbase in Thailand, the United States played an undeniably central role in supplementing the global frameworks of the UN and others.[4] But countries in East Asia are still struggling to find sustainable frameworks for dealing with these new challenges more systematically. Doing so will require broadening the way we think about security and looking at these new security challenges from a wider range of perspectives. It will also require taking into consideration the role of new sets of actors, both as instigators and as potential agents in addressing these new challenges. The chapters in this book attempt to begin that process by introducing four specific areas—snapshots if you will—of the current security environment in East Asia, examining the complexities of each, and assessing the capacity of East Asia to deal with the challenges the region is increasingly facing.[5]

This book is the result of a policy research project conducted in 2008–2009 by the Asia Pacific Agenda Project (APAP). For more than a decade, APAP has published numerous studies on community building in East Asia, examining the current status and future direction of cooperation in this region. During this time, there have been many Track 1 and Track 2 meetings in Asia Pacific on similar themes. In particular, since the 1990s there has been an undeniable shift in the approach to policy research in the region in response to the very real changes in the environment, and the analytical frameworks have thus moved away from the Cold War structure and bilateral relations to focus more on regional frameworks and regional cooperation.[6]

Why, then, did we decide to publish a new book on East Asia community building? There were several reasons for our decision. First, although our previous publications have focused on understanding the real progress being made in regional cooperation, we felt that we needed to analyze the limits of those processes by examining them from the viewpoint of several specific challenges that are not being addressed adequately by existing regional frameworks.

For example, it is often noted that the area in which cooperation in Southeast Asia on nontraditional security issues has made the greatest progress is maritime safety. When one considers the economic implications of Asia's sea lines of communication, including the Straits of Malacca, it is indeed commendable that regional cooperation is progressing in Southeast Asia and that the instances of piracy have dramatically decreased.[7] The

obstacles usually pointed to as potentially impeding further progress on cooperation are the insistence of governments in the region on national sovereignty or the distrust of the United States as a player from outside the region. However, J. N. Mak argues in this volume that unless one focuses not only on the governments of the littoral states but also on the actors in the local coastal communities, solutions to maritime issues will be inadequate. In contrast with the existing body of research that analyzes government-centric efforts, Mak's chapter treats nonstate actors not just as a source of the problem but as part of the solution as well, thereby expanding the circle of actors who need to be engaged in regional negotiations on maritime security. Mak analyzes the coastal society in great detail through extensive field-based observation and interviews with multiple stakeholders, allowing him to paint a vivid picture of the complex web of relationships affecting the security of sea lanes.

The chapter by Yuji Uesugi advocates for regional cooperation in the area of peacebuilding. ASEAN-centered security frameworks have placed priority on confidence building and preventive diplomacy among member countries and on efforts to create an environment conducive to peace within the region. Peacebuilding itself—building and sustaining the institutions and norms within countries that are needed to reduce the likelihood of domestic conflict and to promote peaceful engagement with neighboring countries—has rarely been on the agenda. One area of peacebuilding that is often left out is the crucial role of the individual actors who are responsible for building those institutions and disseminating those norms. Uesugi thus focuses specifically on the development of human resources for peacebuilding as well as on the role that joint training for peacebuilding operations can play in improving regional community building through human interactions.

One issue that this book aims to address is an important set of questions that came to the fore particularly in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States: the degree to which regional cooperation in East Asia could contribute to addressing transregional and global challenges, how efforts on a regional level interact with and complement global efforts, and what reciprocal impact collaborative efforts to address global challenges have on regional community-building processes. Research on this issue is clearly needed, but such a perspective has been lacking in previous studies.[8]

Even in an era of globalization, fields such as maritime security and peacebuilding are still considered regional issues because, despite also having global implications, they primarily impact countries that physically

border the trouble spot in question. It is for that reason that global efforts to address these challenges—such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) or counterpiracy measures—start by strengthening capacity and authority at the regional level. Other challenges, notably terrorism and the proliferation of WMD, have proven to have serious global impacts. Still, there is a strong argument to be made that responses to these global challenges need to start with regional cooperation rather than relying on the more unwieldy global cooperation as a starting point. In this way, existing patterns of cooperation and integration are leveraged and built upon to achieve more effective collaboration at the global level.

The chapters by Mier and Wu show a strong recognition of this relationship between the global agenda and regional cooperation. International cooperation to fight terrorism has grown exponentially since 9/11, as seen in the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1624—both of which seek to create barriers against terrorist activities—and in the cooperation among the leading industrialized nations through the G8 process. Statements issued by the APEC and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) chairmen have also emphasized regional cooperation on terrorism. There are those who argue that APEC should shift its focus to security. In fact, many regional functional frameworks are already carrying out such efforts through measures to address money laundering (as a way of blocking the flow of funds to terrorists) and to promote counterterrorist training (capacity building), information sharing, judicial cooperation, and other concrete measures. What is particularly noteworthy is that the PSI is expected to play a significant role in creating the necessary environment in the region for implementing UN Security Council resolution 1540 regarding the proliferation of WMD and Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874, adopted after North Korea twice launched missiles. Given that the PSI membership does not include big countries such as China or Indonesia, it is not a framework that incorporates the entire region but is rather a global framework that runs parallel to APEC and the ARF. However, as a framework, it is deliberately tailored to each region and is substantively advancing counterproliferation efforts in the region. These two chapters, addressing the issues of global terrorism and nuclear terrorism, offer deep insight into the regional responses to these types of global issues.

The four chapters compiled in this volume, written by a team of young researchers, present a new approach to analyzing the current state of regional cooperation in East Asia. As noted in these chapters, while regional institutions in East Asia have made enormous progress over the past 20 years, they still do not have much of a track record for implementing

effective policies in the region or addressing some of the most serious challenges facing countries in the region. Rather, these institutions coexist with cooperative frameworks centered on the United States, Japan, and Australia that have proven to be more effective at taking action when needed, as shown in the case of cooperation and capacity-building mechanisms for maritime security, money laundering, and other nontraditional issues. The role of cooperation in Asia Pacific, centered on ASEAN but covering East Asia as a whole, is still weak. Following the end of the Cold War, the ASEAN nations established the ARF in 1994 in order to mitigate the negative impacts of changes in the regional environment—America's waning involvement in Asia and China's growth. For Japan, which was involved in the ARF from the conceptual stage, the idea was also to win the trust of Asian nations at a time when it was using its Self-Defense Forces to contribute more actively to the international community.[9] The confidence-building and preventive diplomacy functions that are the objective of the ARF have not yet been fully achieved; in addition, efforts to address nontraditional security issues remain inadequate.[10] In East Asia, many new forums for security debates have arisen, including ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit, but while they have increased the number of opportunities for dialogue, policy coordination is still in its preliminary stages. This is not to say that ASEAN-centered regional cooperation has not made some progress. Indeed, the ARF conducted disaster-relief exercises in 2008, and more recently it conducted training exercises for controlling infectious diseases. However, these initiatives are still in their germination stage. As Mely Caballero-Anthony has pointed out, those frameworks that have ASEAN at their core remain in their infancy.[11]

For that reason, the ongoing debate on the Asia Pacific regional security architecture, which has been surging in recent years, should address the fact that the shape of the American-centered alliance structure is changing in response to these types of new security issues. Moreover, more attention needs to be paid to the unilateral contributions of countries such as the United States, Japan, and Australia to addressing these challenges.

Certainly, there were few attempts at multilateralism in Asia during the Cold War, primarily because of the American hub-and-spoke alliance structure. Japan as well, having successfully recovered after the war and achieved economic growth, had no intention of taking on America's strategic burden in Asia beyond providing economic support, and there was little desire among Asian nations for Japan to play a major leadership role in the area of traditional security.

Currently, however, diverse relationships—clearly moving beyond the traditional hub-and-spoke structure—are emerging to deal with specific security interests. The United States and Asian countries are working together to address traditional threats as well as new security threats. They are developing capacity for that purpose and appear to be seeking to deepen the dialogue as well. American military presence still plays an important role both at the preventive stage and in cases in which crises actually occur, but the United States is also forming coalitions with its friends and allies in specific fields in order to deal with challenges that transcend national borders, such as international terrorism, acts of piracy, human trafficking, and drug trafficking, as well as peacebuilding. For example, Japan, Australia, India, and South Korea have in various combinations made bilateral joint security declarations, such as the signing in May 2010 of the Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, and trilateral cooperation that includes the United States is being strengthened as well within the Japan-US-Australia and Japan-US-India relationships. Also, the regularly scheduled US-Thailand military exercise known as Cobra Gold has seen the number of participating nations expand greatly, and it has also begun conducting exercises to address nontraditional security issues. There is also the US-led Pacific Partnership to provide medical and other humanitarian and civil assistance, which Japan joined this year. Another well-known example is Japan's efforts to promote capacity building for Southeast Asian countries in fields such as maritime security and in building the regional architecture, as illustrated by its contributions to the process of formulating the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia.

These new efforts do not view any specific country as a threat, and in initiatives such as the PSI, for example, representatives from many countries that are not tied by alliances work together to achieve common goals. Relationships are being formed in response to necessity depending on the functional area, and experts from the governmental and nongovernmental sectors participate according to the specific issue—e.g., nonproliferation, terrorism, human trafficking, or natural disaster response and prevention. Unmistakably, it is the United States and its allies—Japan and Australia—that are playing a central role in such efforts. The emergence of new challenges has made countries with weak governance more vulnerable to instability, and thus support from major countries is critical for strengthening their governance capacity in order to respond to these nontraditional issues. The United States and other major countries in the region are starting to see these examples of cooperation as effective security

measures. Under the current circumstances, these countries are providing capacity-building support, helping each country's economic and political development in order to enable them to better handle challenges in the region on their own.

Progress that has been made in policy coordination and capacity building in East Asia needs to be leveraged to further strengthen the frameworks that have developed around ASEAN. Looking at the region from both a strategic and a humanitarian perspective leads one to the conclusion that comprehensive regional frameworks urgently need to be developed so that new security challenges threatening countries in the region can be addressed effectively and expediently. For precisely that reason, in the medium to long term all countries in the region need to come up with a regional framework for Asia Pacific that is highly effective, highly inclusive, and underpinned by a consistent design.

Considering the many emerging opportunities for China to contribute internationally, China needs to be an active partner in any new approach to security in the region. Also, the addition of the United States, along with Russia, to the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus should be seen as an extremely significant event when one considers the contribution to regional peace and prosperity that is made by the US presence and by existing cooperation among the United States, Japan, and other nations in the region.

The chapters in this volume offer a new perspective on some of the security issues facing Asia Pacific today. These analyses clearly show that while the new security issues have global implications, there are many cases in which the responses need to be driven by regional cooperation. However, despite the need for policy initiatives and debates to be appropriate to the region, they must not be inward looking; rather, they should ultimately feed into global initiatives and debates. Considering the complex webs of relationships that fuel these new challenges, a wide range of stakeholders need to be engaged in problem analysis and in any responses. This must go beyond governmental actors to include civil society and the private sector and should also extend to communities that have been left out of these processes in the past. We hope that these chapters will stimulate debate not just on the individual themes of each chapter—maritime security, peacebuilding, international terrorism, and nuclear terrorism—but also on the future direction of regional cooperation.

Notes

1. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 120.
2. Yoichi Funabashi, *Alliance Adrift* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999).
3. Kurt Campbell, "The End of Alliances? Not So Fast," *Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2004): 135–50.
4. James Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism: Improving U.S.-Japan-Korea Cooperation to Manage Complex Contingencies* (Boston: Institute For Foreign Policy Analysis, 2005).
5. For a detailed discussion on the relationship between functional cooperation frameworks and regionwide mechanisms, please see Ryo Sahashi, "Conceptualizing Three-Tier Approach to Analyze Security Arrangements in Asia-Pacific," Security and Defense Studies Center (Australian National University) Working Paper no. 415 (December 2009).
6. See Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), *Dialogue and Research Monitor 2008* (Tokyo: JCIE, 2010).
7. Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Information Sharing Center, *ReCAAP Quarterly Report: 1 January 2009–30 September 2009* (Singapore, 2009).
8. This perspective is raised for example by Karl Kaiser in "Cooperation in Global Governance among East Asia, North America, and Europe: A European Perspective," in *East Asia at a Crossroads*, ed. Tadashi Yamamoto and Jusuf Wanandi (Tokyo: JCIE, 2008).
9. Paul Midford, "Japan's Leadership Role in East Asia Security Multilateralism: Nakayama Proposal and the Logic of Reassurance," *Pacific Review* 13, no. 3 (2000): 367–97.
10. Takeshi Yuzawa, *Japan's Security Policy and the ASEAN Regional Forum: The Search for Multilateral Security in the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2007).
11. Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Nontraditional Security and Multilateralism in Asia: Reshaping the Contours of Regional Security Architecture," in *Asia's New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition, and the Search for Community*, ed. Bates Gill and Michael J. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 306–28.