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## **Toward a New Security Order in Pacific Asia**

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It has almost become a cliché to say that international relations among East Asian countries can be characterized as a balance-of-power system similar to nineteenth-century Europe (Friedberg 1993/1994, 5–33; Kissinger 2001, 25–26). East Asia has had no effective institutional mechanism to provide nation-states with norms, rules, or standards that regulate state behavior and stabilize international relations. In contrast, countries in Europe today enjoy stable international relations with the help of useful international institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

In the East Asian system of balance of power, states frequently face a so-called security dilemma. The lack of institutions makes a state suspicious about the intentions of other states. A state that acts to strengthen its defensive posture tends to be regarded as aggressive by other states, which in turn leads to an escalation in arms competition. Similarly, without an effective institutional mechanism, information flows are much less perfect, and the likelihood of one state overreacting to another increases the possibility of conflict. In East Asia, bilateral alliances balanced by the United States fill the vacuum left by the lack of institutional mechanisms, and these alliances work as the only tool to assure security among nations.

The level of danger associated with the security dilemma in East Asia has varied, reflecting changes in the international political situation in the past few decades. In the cold war, the existence of the common enemy, the

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This chapter reflects the author's personal opinion and has nothing to do with the official position of the South Korean government.

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Soviet Union, was reason for major actors in East Asia to be more cooperative. The end of the cold war, however, brought the security dilemma to the fore. With the threat of the Soviet Union gone, the major powers in the region grew less cooperative and more suspicious of one another. The September 11, 2001, terrorist incidents in the United States have had considerable implications for the level of the security dilemma in the region as well. However, while the attacks altered the landscape of international politics, they have not contributed much to stabilizing security relations among East Asian nations.

What can be done to make the region a more secure place in the twenty-first century? In addressing this question, the analysis here will focus on the conceptual framework of the security dilemma.

### THE IMPACT OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The collapse of the Soviet empire and the end of the cold war have affected the nature of the East Asian security order in various ways. First of all, the disappearance of the Soviet Union as the communist power in Asia has changed the nature of the U.S. military commitment in the region. Formerly, this commitment had been geared to the deterrence and containment of the Soviet threat in the region. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, the United States has focused more on its role as a stabilizer among East Asian nations.

Initially, there were internal debates within the United States as to whether the military commitment should be continued. Scholars like Chalmers Johnson argued for withdrawal; Japan had risen as an economic powerhouse and, in the absence of the Soviet Union, was capable of looking after its own security (Johnson and Keehn 1995).

Other points of view were also voiced. Joseph Nye, himself a policy maker at the time, argued for a continued commitment. The region's major powers, Japan and China, were experiencing rapid changes of power, and as a result, there was an increase in instability. The role of the United States in East Asia would be best served, therefore, as that of a stabilizer, or balancer, of international relations. According to Nye, it was a role most East Asian nations welcomed (1995, 90–102). The Nye initiative became the official policy of the United States, reflecting the change of the basis of U.S. commitment in East Asia from deterrence to stabilization (U.S. Department of Defense 1995).

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Secondly, the disappearance of the Soviet threat has reduced the incentive for the United States and China to cooperate closely (Campbell 2001, 371–385; Shambaugh 2001, 50–64). Until the 9-11 incident, neither country could find a rationale for strategic cooperation. The inconsistency between the Bill Clinton administration and that of George W. Bush over how to define China from a strategic perspective was itself a reflection of this impasse. While the Clinton administration saw China as a strategic partner, the Bush administration viewed it as a strategic competitor—at least until the 9-11 attacks.

Thirdly, it is now conventional wisdom that, since the end of the cold war, Japan has sought a more responsible role in East Asian security. The Japan specialist Michael Green (1995) has elaborated on the long process of Japan's trying to redefine U.S.-Japan security relations in pursuit of more autonomy, even as it has maintained strong security ties with the United States. On April 17, 1996, a few months after the Taiwan Strait crisis, Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro, in a joint communiqué, announced a revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance to guarantee security over a wider geographical scope of Asia Pacific than had been the case before. Japan promised to increase logistics, strengthen rear-area support, and cooperate in the study of a ballistic missile defense system.

In September 1997, the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were revised to include the provision of “operational cooperation” for Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) at times of regional conflict in the form of surveillance, intelligence gathering, etc. It is noteworthy that the Chinese government was very much concerned about the new defense guidelines, President Jiang Zemin going so far as to say that China was on “high alert” (Christensen 1999, 63).

Finally, the end of the cold war has significantly changed the nature of the North Korea problem. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the transformation of other socialist countries abruptly decreased the inflow of foreign economic aid to North Korea, especially energy, and this dealt a severe blow to the country's economy. In the mid-1990s, the economy had been reduced by half; the country experienced famine on a massive scale. This dire situation forced North Korean policy makers to gradually open up their economy, while surreptitiously developing nuclear weapons, the cause of great international concern.

The international crisis caused by suspicions surrounding North Korea's nuclear development was first resolved by the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework. In the agreement, North Korea promised to freeze its nuclear

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development, for which the United States agreed to provide two nuclear light-water reactors through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) project. North Korea also promised that it would allow an inspection team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) before the delivery of key parts of the light-water reactors. The timing of the inspection had been the sticking point of the U.S.–North Korea confrontation—until the second crisis broke out in October 2002, when North Korean authorities admitted to continued development of nuclear weapons through a uranium-enrichment program.

On October 3–5, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly was in Pyongyang for the resumption of the dialogue between the two countries. When Kelly confronted officials with evidence that North Korea had a clandestine nuclear weapons program, Kang Sok-ju, the first vice minister of foreign affairs, replied angrily to the effect that: “Your president called us a member of the axis of evil. . . . Your troops are deployed on the Korean peninsula. . . . Of course, we have a nuclear program” (Karon 2002).

Before talks broke down, North Korea urged the United States to assure its security and to conclude a nonaggression pact, in reply to which the United States demanded that North Korea dismantle its nuclear development program (Struck 2002). Each side insisted on its conditions being met first. Resolution of the security dilemma on the Korean peninsula continues to be critical.

Overall, the end of the cold war in 1991 has intensified the security dilemma among the East Asian states. While the three major powers, the United States, Japan, and China, managed to cooperate with each other in order to deter the Soviet threat, their relations have since become more complex and less secure, especially U.S.-China and Japan-China relations. The fact that Japan and China have been undergoing rapid changes in their relative power has added to the difficulty and uncertainty of East Asian security relations.

## THE IMPACT OF THE 9-11 INCIDENTS

U.S. foreign policy has experienced significant changes since the 9-11 attacks. They, together with the fear of more to come, have provided the United States with a strong motive for international activism. Policy makers and ordinary citizens in the United States had thought themselves safe from events going on in the rest of the world. Indeed, the United States is

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geographically protected from other regions by oceans on both sides, and even in the age of nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), the country thought that it was safe because of the success of its nuclear deterrence. In the age of terrorist attacks, however, these assumptions prove to be no longer valid.

In 1997, Richard Haass, a U.S. security specialist, referred to the United States as “the reluctant sheriff.” Today he sees the United States as becoming “the resolute sheriff” (Haass 2002). With its primacy in power, the United States is now willing to exercise its influence more freely in making rules, in intervening in world affairs, and in punishing its enemies with or without the approval/consent of other nations/its allies.

The opposition of formidable powers such as China and Russia functioned as a constraint on U.S. attempts to exercise leadership in international relations. The 9-11 incidents saw an important change in this regard. The United States was able to mobilize the support of China and Russia in its antiterrorism campaign, and, consequently, Washington’s bilateral relationships with both countries improved significantly. In the case of China, the tensions that had existed over Taiwan, human rights, weapons proliferation, and other issues appear to have been smoothed over. For instance, immediately after 9-11, the Chinese government strongly condemned the terrorist acts, shared intelligence about Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network, and cooperated with other Asia Pacific nations in furthering the antiterrorist cause at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Shanghai in October 2001. In return, the Bush administration dropped references to China as a “strategic competitor” (Shorrock 2001). It is uncertain, however, how long this cooperative relationship between the two countries will continue. It is true that in the United States not a few still view China as a rising power and a future threat to U.S. interests, particularly in East Asia.

Post-9-11, Japan, as a traditional ally of the United States, may have been even more cooperative than China. The Japanese government, through the political initiative of Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichiro, passed a law that circumvented Article 9 of the Constitution and enabled the dispatch of the Maritime Self-Defense Force overseas. It is evident that real political constraints continue to work domestically against Japan’s pursuit of “remilitarization,” even as Japan’s neighbors tended to view the dispatch of SDF personnel abroad with concern.

While the U.S.-Japan alliance remains solid and the U.S.-China relationship has strengthened in the wake of 9-11, the bilateral relationship between

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Japan and China, in terms of security, is still very difficult. Japanese policy makers are concerned about China's rapidly rising economic capability, its military budget in recent years, and the implications of all this for the security of Japan. At the same time, Chinese policy makers tend to view the Japanese search for an expanded security role in the region as a threat. As a result, any dialogue in the realm of security issues between the two countries has been very limited. In other words, 9-11 has done nothing to resolve the security dilemma between the two major Asian powers.

In fact, 9-11 might even have had a slightly negative impact on intra-East Asian relations. First of all, as U.S. policy makers focus single-mindedly on the war against terrorism, they have much less time to mull over key issues in Asia. According to Kurt Campbell of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, speaking at a forum organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, this should be a matter of concern for U.S. allies in Asia (Shorrocks 2001). Secondly, 9-11 might have distracted the attention of most East Asian policy makers from their own regional security agendas. Thus, should any of these regional issues explode, policy makers would be less prepared to resolve them. Even as regards terrorist activities in Southeast Asia, overcoming differences of policies and positions remains a difficult task.

### MAJOR AREAS OF CONFLICT IN EAST ASIA

#### **The Korean Peninsula**

In the past several decades, North Korea has been regarded mainly as a security problem. However, it is no longer merely a security problem but simultaneously an economic, humanitarian, and international political problem. All these factors are intermingled. North Koreans view weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as the last card with which they can emerge from economic disaster, international isolation, and an insecurity complex as a nation.

The complicated nature of the North Korea problem requires a comprehensive approach through which both sides take action. In other words, once North Korea gives up development of WMD, countries such as the United States, South Korea, and Japan will have to provide economic aid, diplomatic normalization, and security assurance to North Korea. If they are willing to do that, the involved parties will benefit from the peaceful

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resolution of the North Korea problem in terms of security improvement, economic prosperity, and refugee issues. A version of the Marshall Plan for North Korea would thus be called for.

Regarding North Korea policy, South Korea, the United States, and Japan have worked closely together through the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). However, once these countries come to a final agreement and a Korean version of the Marshall Plan is initiated, it is critical that a multilateral forum be established for dialogue among the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia. Even at a time when the North Korean refugee issue has attracted international attention, the affected countries have had no forum for dialogue on this matter at all. The United States and North Korea, unable to overcome their mutual suspicions, had no diplomatic contact for almost two years—until the unsuccessful attempt at dialogue in October 2002. A similar deadlock existed between Japan and North Korea until the September 2002 summit talks in Pyongyang.

## The Taiwan Strait

China is steadily growing more impatient with the status of Taiwan; the past several years have seen a rapid increase in the Chinese military buildup focused on Taiwan. The number of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan has risen from forty or fifty in 1995–1996 to over three hundred. Taiwan, for its part, has been experiencing great democratization in recent years, and a growing percentage of the population identifies itself more as Taiwanese than Chinese, leading to a stronger voice for Taiwanese independence. The United States, while supporting China's one-China policy, has made it clear that the policy should be achieved through diplomacy, not by force. The strong will of the United States on this matter was revealed when, in the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation, it dispatched two aircraft carriers to the area. One issue, however, is that the United States lacks a clear concept about what it would do in a military crisis. The U.S. government calls its position “strategic ambiguity.”

From China's point of view, the renewed alliance between the United States and Japan and their cooperation in missile defense have important implications for the Taiwan issue. In particular, China worries that, should Taiwan be included in the Asian theater missile defense (TMD) system, Taiwan would be more resistant to China's demand for unification. TMD

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would strengthen Taiwan's defensive posture and lessen its vulnerability to China. With these stakes, suspicions run high among the major powers and "[p]erhaps nowhere else on the globe is the situation so seemingly intractable and the prospect of a major war involving the United States so real" (Campbell and Mitchell 2001, 15). Even as the policy makers of these countries are paying attention to the war against terrorism, the Taiwan issue remains volatile and dangerous.

### **Terrorism in Southeast Asia**

Currently, the most urgent security issue in Southeast Asia is terrorism. In Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, several terrorist networks, such as *Jamaah Islamiah* (JI) and *Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia* (KMM, or the Malaysian Mujahideen Group), are believed to have ties with Al Qaeda and to have committed terrorist acts in recent years. However, the Indonesian government has been reluctant to act resolutely against these networks for fear of a Muslim backlash. It interrogated Abu Bakar Baashir, the leader of JI, but soon released him claiming no substantial evidence—despite allegations from Singapore and Malaysia.

In the past two years, Malaysia too experienced terrorism, where tourists on the island of Sipadan, off the coast of Sabah, were abducted by the Abu Sayyaf Group. In contrast to the inaction of Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the response by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad was firm and decisive. Immediately after 9-11, Mahathir condemned the terrorist attacks, and Malaysian police forces moved to detain more than sixty alleged terrorists under the country's Internal Security Act (Balfour 2002). These steps earned him the gratitude of U.S. President Bush for his "stirring response in the global campaign against terror" (U.S. Department of State 2002). Mahathir, however, has strongly opposed direct military intervention by the United States, calling instead for a more prominent role for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in cracking down on terrorism.

The government of the Philippines has been the most aggressive in Southeast Asia in its actions against terrorism, inviting the direct involvement of the U.S. military. In the southern Philippines, Abu Sayyaf, which was founded by one of bin Laden's top associates, has kidnapped tourists and held them for ransom. There are other terrorist groups active as well.



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In June 2002, an attempt to rescue the hostages by the Philippine military, with the assistance of U.S. forces, ended with the death of several of the terrorist captors as well as two of the three captives. Manila's call for a coalition with Malaysia and Indonesia for counterterrorist cooperation has resulted in a trilateral agreement to counter terrorism and transnational crime (San Juan 2002).

The United States has deep concerns about terrorist networks and activities in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian governments, however, are not the Taliban and have been opposed to terrorist groups for a long time. Instead of seeking to take charge of the antiterrorist campaign in Southeast Asia, the United States might find it prudent to let regional governments take the antiterrorist initiative themselves. The more direct the military intervention the United States may attempt, the stronger the backlash of the Muslim population in the region will be, and the more complicated the domestic and international political situation will become.

Thus, it is important to strengthen collaborative regional efforts to that end. At the ASEAN summit in Brunei in November 2001, member countries adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism. The major test will be the coordination of the various governments' antiterrorism policies, which vary greatly, as can be seen from the aforementioned situation in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. After the terrorist bombing of a nightclub in Bali in October 2002, the Indonesian government was pressured to take decisive antiterrorist action (Dillon 2002). Indonesia, however, as Southeast Asia's largest country and the world's most populous Muslim nation, must tread carefully within its own borders. Moreover, if there is to be any regional coordination, getting Indonesia's cooperation is indispensable, as it retains veto power over any measure that ASEAN proposes.

Once ASEAN countries succeed in overcoming these difficulties and producing an effective common policy on terrorism, ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) will be able to function as meaningful institutional mechanisms for security cooperation from a medium- and long-term perspective.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE EAST ASIAN SECURITY ORDER

The main characteristic of the East Asian security order, as noted, is that it is based on a bilateral alliance centered on the United States. Like the

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nineteenth-century European system, where the balance of power was achieved through alliances, the current situation is ridden with security dilemmas. International relations are unstable, and states are suspicious about the deeper intentions of other states. Without an effective institutional mechanism that can provide principles, norms, or standards, it is difficult to regulate the behavior of the states.

In this kind of security arrangement where the United States is the hub and East Asian states are the spokes, the United States has taken on the role of stabilizer, as the relationship between the United States and its allies tends to be stable. However, the relationship between countries other than the United States, such as Japan and China, tends to be underdeveloped and in many cases rather volatile. One way to overcome the drawbacks of this hub-and-spoke security arrangement would be to foster a multilateral institutional mechanism.

A multilateral institution would complement the bilateral security system in East Asia today. In the past five decades, decision-making procedures among East Asian states regarding security issues have been heavily skewed toward the United States, and this orientation has become a source of anti-U.S. feeling especially since the end of the cold war. By establishing a multilateral security institution in addition to the existing bilateral alliances, the decision-making procedures will become more democratized, and, as such, anti-U.S. sentiment might be lessened substantially.

There is another reason that a multilateral security institution would be beneficial. In East Asia, changes in a country's power relative to other countries' occur very rapidly. South Korea, China, Taiwan, and other countries have experienced rapid economic growth, and as a result, the changes in their power vis-à-vis their neighbors has had significant implications for international security. The gap between a nation experiencing such growth and its international role is sometimes wide, and in turn instability tends to increase. A security system based only on a bilateral alliance will not be able to adjust smoothly to this structurally caused instability. With a multilateral system, states will be able to adjust the gap between their relative power and the role of rising states more easily (Doran 1991). New norms, principles, and rules will make the adjustment process smoother, and the increased information flow will help to reduce suspicion and tension among states.

Europe has absorbed the structural impacts of the end of the cold war through such incidents as the unification of Germany, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the political upheavals in the Balkans. However, in East Asia, there has been no comparable structural

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adjustment. It seems likely that the region will have to undergo this process in the coming decade on the Korean peninsula or even in China. Addressing these challenges peacefully will be of utmost importance. This is another reason that an effective institutional mechanism for security cooperation in the region must be established.

The only multilateral security institution in East Asia is the ARF, which was created in July 1994. East Asian nations, in the new international environment after the end of the cold war, recognized the need for some kind of forum to deal with regional conflicts, to address security concerns such as environmental problems, drug dealing, and terrorism, and also to build mutual confidence among nations. In a response that contrasts with that of the earlier Bush administration, the U.S. State Department under the Clinton administration expressed the view that a multilateral institution comparable to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) be formed. The ARF was the result.

The ARF has accomplished its goals, providing an important forum for security issues and contributing to confidence building among member states. It has been able to induce China, which had been rather skeptical about multilateral security cooperation, to join the forum. And it was China's participation in the ARF that opened up the possibility of multilateral discussions on such complicated issues as the dispute over the Spratly Islands. In 2000, North Korea joined the ARF, affording the foreign ministers of the United States and North Korea a fifteen-minute dialogue for the first in July 2002.

These positive results notwithstanding, the ARF has its weaknesses. Instead of influencing and regulating the behaviors of member states in a meaningful way, the ARF has been nothing more than a forum for dialogue. It did not, for instance, contribute to the resolution of the East Timor conflict in any substantial manner.

### SEARCHING FOR A NEW SECURITY ORDER FOR ASIA PACIFIC IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A security specialist once identified four important tasks for Asia Pacific nations to build peace in the region: establishing a democratic domestic political system, enhancing economic interdependence among nations, strengthening international institutional mechanisms, and adopting sound balance-of-power policies (Segal 1997). The first two tasks, establishing a

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democratic political system and enhancing economic interdependence, however, are not targets that policy makers can pursue in the short term. Even so, as witnessed from the experience of World War I, it is dangerous to depend totally on balance of power.

The task of strengthening international institutions thus takes on greater urgency. In this regard, there are two suggestions: The first is to expand the role of APEC in the field of security. In 2001, the United States actually utilized APEC as a forum to mobilize cooperation and public opinion against terrorism. Even China, which had avoided discussion of political security issues in a multilateral setting, signed on to the communiqué promoting cooperation against terrorism.

Establishing an entirely new multilateral institution will take a great deal of energy, time, and political capital. It might be easier and less costly to broaden the role of APEC gradually and to develop it into something akin to the OSCE in addition to its economic function. Now would seem the right time to formulate ideas for such an institution since the United States, eager to mobilize countries for its war on terrorism, has greater incentive to cooperate.

More than major powers, middle powers—such as Australia and New Zealand, which have close security ties with the United States through the Australia–New Zealand–United States (ANZUS) treaty—may now be in a position to mediate or facilitate a broader role for APEC. Moreover, in Australia's efforts to solidify its economic relationship with Northeast Asia and to improve political relations with the ASEAN countries, APEC has been a valuable instrument. With its display of diplomatic leadership in East Timor in 1999, Australia would seem well suited to mediate APEC's larger role.

The second suggestion is to set up a multilateral forum to deal with Northeast Asian security issues. The ARF could then concern itself with Southeast Asian security issues and leave such matters as the North Korea problem to a new institutional mechanism concerned specifically with Northeast Asian security cooperation. This multilateral body might be composed of the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia. While it would make sense for South Korea, the United States, and Japan to take the initiative in the North Korea problem, other important security issues, such as refugees and an international guarantee for peace on the Korean peninsula, require the participation of all neighboring countries. This institution could also address other Northeast Asian security issues such as measures for military confidence building, arms control, and so on.

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Both the ARF and this proposed Northeast Asian security forum could function as major sub-regional multilateral institutions in addition to APEC, as a newly fortified international economic and security organization. Certainly, it will not be an easy task to broaden the role of APEC into a security forum, or to create a six-power institution for Northeast Asian security. However, without strengthened international institutional mechanisms, East Asia will not be able to resolve the security dilemmas that are rampant in the region's international relations. Unless preparations are made for the inevitable political changes of the twenty-first century, the cost to the region may be very dear.

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