



Prospects for Security in the Asia-Pacific Region 2000 - 2010

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Overview

There has been a great deal of discussion since the advent of the Asian financial crisis in 1997 about managing change in the strategic landscape of the Asia-Pacific region. One of the fundamental factors in both the financial meltdown and the challenge to traditional security practices has been globalization. The engine that has generated globalization has been the information technology (IT) revolution that has marked the post-Cold War decade of the 1990s and has reached a new zenith entering the 21st century. Curiously, while this brave new world of IT has crashed upon us like a tsunami, it has resulted in better international communications and reduced the likelihood of traditional warfare between nations and all but eliminated classic set piece battles of corps and divisions, ocean battle fleets and air armadas. What has happened at the other end of the spectrum due to this same globalized information technology revolution, however, has been the stripping away of the veneer of civil behavior and reconciliation from tribal, ethnic, and religious enmities

resulting in communal killing from the Balkans to Africa to South Asia. This is a new “ring of fire” (having nothing to do with seismic activity and tectonic plates) across the southern tier of Asia. Hate, distrust, and terrorism have been manifest from Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean down the Indonesian archipelago through Mindanao and the Solomon Islands to Fiji. In fact, according to the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies, 100,000 people have died in armed conflicts in the past year. Small wars and civil unrest have resulted in brutal killings throughout the world. In South Asia, along the line of Control in Kashmir, indiscriminate artillery exchanges have caused the death of more than 5,000 civilians with the toll rising weekly. The flip side of that coin in terms of human misery is found in the usage of modern technology to further transnational criminal activity on a grand scale that no one nation on its own can hope to defeat or even blunt. It is an all too familiar laundry list of the violation of human security and perpetual degradation of our neighbors both subregionally and worldwide.

Threat

The “threat” of today carries a myriad of names, but all are a challenge to comprehensive security that goes beyond defending the territorial integrity of our respective homelands and the protection of our people, normally defined as external and internal security. Arms trafficking, terrorism, illegal migration, organized crime with money laundering, and drug trafficking contribute significantly to the need for crisis management that eludes civil law enforcement agencies. These circumstances, coupled with the ravages of nature by volcano, typhoon, flood, and earthquake, create a formidable challenge to human security globally and regionally. My remarks are concerned with a sub-regional approach to dealing with these causes of conflict that comprise essentially a non-war-fighting security threat, but does not preclude low-intensity conflict. It is here, I believe, that the prospects for a common agenda and a defusing of major war outbreaks combine for the common interest of the nations of Asia.

View of the U.S.

The United States is inescapably an Asia-Pacific nation because it is a maritime nation. It has engaged in three wars in Asia in the last century in order to allow a peaceful, stable Asia-Pacific region to emerge from oppression and totalitarianism. The United States, despite this payment in blood, continues to suffer from a poor image among many Asians. Arrogance is the term most often used. There is also a streak of isolationism in the American makeup that emerges briefly from time to time, and, in my opinion, is misread beyond U.S. shores. The truth is that America is a “reluctant” superpower faced with realities that mandate a new approach to security matters. Certainly forward-based U.S. Forces in Japan and the Republic of Korea are facing political and public attitudinal challenges at a new fundamental level.

Globalization

The central theme of discussion, that has dominated all the deliberations of the Fellows at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies has been the friction between globalization and nationalism. Is globalization a threat to sovereignty? It is useful to identify the consensus core characteristics of globalization as a common frame of reference:

- Unprecedented economic interdependence driven by cross-border capital movements, rapid technology transfer, and “real time” communication and information flows.
- Rise of new actors that challenge state authority, particularly non-governmental organizations and civic groups, global firms and production networks, and even financial markets.
- Growing pressure of states to conform to new international standards of governance, particularly in the areas of transparency and accountability.

- The emergence of an increasingly Western-dominated international culture, a trend which in many countries has raised concern about the erosion of national identity and traditional values.
- The rise of severe transnational problems which require multilateral cooperation to resolve.

The security impact of these core elements of globalization are increasingly complex. On the one hand, there is a positive impact: Economic integration has reduced the potential for conflict, mainly in Southeast Asia. However, it has also given rise to new security concerns and aggravated existing tensions in both intra- and inter-state behavior. The relentless force of globalization grows against a backdrop of new transnational threats, a perception of weakening regional institutions (APEC, ASEAN), shifts in balance of power, and, most importantly, expanding military roles despite declining resources and recruitment shortfalls.

U.S. and Japan

While the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance cannot be overstated as a foundation stone of Asia's stability, the bilateral relationship has been subjected to heavy stress. Managing the U.S.-Japan relationship is crucial and impacts China policy for both countries. This conference is an example of determining how best to achieve a positive outcome. Factors that dominate the relationship in 2000 are:

- ***Bureaucratic pursuit of narrow interests*** — With the alliance's purpose unclear, even with the new guidelines, government agencies are free to pursue narrow goals. In both countries, several agencies are vying for control of policy. This results in an accumulation of "mini policies," often uncoordinated and also appearing in some cases as contradictory.
- ***Compartmentalization of issues*** — In an environment of policy parochialism, agencies with the "lead" on a given issue often closely guard control of decision making. Issues that necessitate a broad-

based inter-agency response, such as the Asian financial crisis, are addressed by only a single department or ministry.

- **American neglect and Japanese obsession** — With the purpose of the alliance requiring clarity in the absence of a Cold War threat, Washington has sometimes neglected relations with Japan. Tokyo, concerned with the same requirement for a new rationale, fears weakening of American resolve to remain committed. Security independence by Japan and U.S. abandonment of the alliance equate to some of the worst fears of other Asian nations.
- **Divergent interests and perspectives** — The Cold War, to a degree, was a unifier of common interest in the alliance and on major international issues. That model has changed and the interplay of diplomacy, economics, and regional security demands a new approach if the alliance is to remain viable.

China

China is modernizing the People's Liberation Army to the extent its defense budget will allow as indicated by the PRC White Paper on National Defense in 2000. U.S. national missile defense and theater missile defense have been major concerns of China and factors in renewed ties with Russia and India. However, China's internal problems are also challenges to stability. The difficulties facing China's leadership today include:

- State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) divestiture
- Rising unemployment in rural and urban areas
- Massive internal migration
- Shrinking foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Corruption
- Shifting of power from the center to the provinces

- Poor regulation of the banking and financial system
- Bad debt currently held by State-Owned Enterprises
- Growing political dissent
- A host of environmental challenges
- Ethnic tensions, including Muslim separatism

China's assessment of the security situation in the "White Paper" is startling in its parallel with a variety of U.S. assessments from both government and private "think tank" analyses. "Peace and development" do remain as the major themes in the world of 2000. There is a trend toward multi-polarity and, of course, economic globalization with efforts at relaxation in the international security situation at least in the macro sense generally, and in the Asian major flash points of the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Strait, and South Asia specifically. They see no major war and expect the forces of peace to prevail. China does, however, recognize that there has been no significant "peace dividend" following the end of the Cold War and the paper enumerates the negative factors, which I am certain given the design and nature of this conference, will be discussed in detail.

Views of the U.S. from Asia

The United States, in developing a new model for its Asian security policy, must be more acutely aware of perceptions of America by Asians. U.S. actions in the Balkans, while carried out with the best of motivations, have nonetheless left serious concerns among Asian nations about U.S. objectives and policies. Kosovo has left the impression that (1) the United States will intervene unilaterally anywhere, anytime without benefit of international approval and (2) will always employ "hi-tech" warfare in the interest of force protection. The circumstances in Kosovo were unique and not likely to be repeated. However, the accidental bombing on the Chinese

Embassy in Belgrade does not convince many that the most powerful, technically capable nation in the world could make a mistake. The Chinese “man in the street” comes to one conclusion: the attack was deliberate. These actions have fueled the Asian views we at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies have heard from our Fellows and in the travels of our faculty and researchers throughout the region this past year. Allow me to share some of those views.

Korea's Perceptions of the U.S.

- According to contemporary Korean thought driven by a neo-Confucian view of the world, the United States positions itself as a senior partner but does not show the benevolence, understanding, tolerance, or genuine caring attitude that is the “older brother” responsibility. This makes the United States undeserving of respect.
- Koreans’ view of the United States is affected by the memory of negative events attributed to the United States. They range from the Kwangju incident to the current No Gun Ri alleged massacre, the economic crisis, and the occasional crime committed by military personnel.
- Americans are overly proud and arrogant. They do not listen and do not return equal respect.
- Americans are naïve and gullible. They are poor bargainers who often cannot see things at true value.
- America is decadent and does not retain or pass on good manners. Americanization and Westernization are considered the same and are a cultural compromise and bad influence on Korea.

While all Koreans see some good to relations with the United States, they see negative impacts that are weighty to a people who cherish sovereignty and self-determination and have traditionally looked unfavorably on intrusive internationalism.

China's Perceptions of the U.S.

- Many Chinese view the United States as hegemonic, domineering, and arrogant with the intent of preventing the “rise of China.” There is a view that the true U.S. goal is to re-impose some form of colonialism on China and gain access to cheap labor and mass markets.
- The PLA leadership respects U.S. technological and military prowess but is not afraid of it either. Many Chinese believe the United States will run at the first sign of blood; a view reinforced by the force protection approach employed by the United States in Kosovo.
- The U.S. focus on human rights is (1) primarily a political strategy designed to aid in the suppression of China or (2) an arrogant, intolerant interpretation of what human rights are that results in flagrant interference in Chinese affairs. The United States is insensitive to the progress China has made in this arena and to the grave dangers posed to Chinese society by the potential loss of control resulting in chaos.
- The American people, however, are seen in a generally favorable light. It is the government that is the problem. The view is that most Americans see good relations with China (preferably a weak China) as in the U.S. interest.

Japan's Perceptions of the U.S.

- Most Japanese still support the U.S.-Japan security treaty, but that support is somewhat soft and often contradictory. For example, a record number of Japanese want to see the alliance maintained, but solid majorities also would like to see U.S. forces reduced and consolidated. They also would like to pay less to host U.S. bases.
- At the same time, there is considerable fear in Japan of an American turn inward. Many Japanese see the United States as increasingly inclined to relax on its wealth and less interested in events overseas.

Some Japanese see U.S. pursuit of NMD as indicative of this lingering “isolationist” sentiment, and worry about a “decoupling” of the United States from Asia.

- Perhaps in apparent contradiction, many Japanese are also very concerned about the future of U.S.-China relations. As has been the case for much of the post-war period, many Japanese are afraid of being entangled in America’s wars; worry that Sino-U.S. relations might spiral into confrontation is the latest manifestation of this fear. Tokyo would be very concerned if U.S.-China relations went into serious decline.
- Finally, Japan wants to find more diplomatic “space” for itself in international affairs. It is tired of perpetually being under the American wing. The Asian Monetary Fund proposal was one example of this, as is Japan’s ineffective attempt to be a mediator in the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. Japan wants to be more of a leader, particularly in Asia, but continues to struggle with how to become a leader.

In the interests of time, suffice it to say other nations such as Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and India perceive an arrogant, highhanded, and meddling U.S. approach to them as these nations struggle with resolving grave issues internally and with their neighbors. Our concentration is of necessity on Northeast Asia. It is in this context that I will conclude with some thoughts on multilateral approaches to security in the region.

Prospects for Multilateral Regional Security Enhancement

A wide variety of individuals and organizations in recent days have advocated a multilateral approach to security in Asia with no intention of creating a NATO-like organization. Rather, the emphasis has been on “enriching” bilateral relations to expand to a comprehensive security approach encompassing the areas of common interest identified at the start of my remarks as non-war-fighting; humanitarian assistance, disaster relief,

peacemaking and peacekeeping as principal areas of multilateral operations. At the Chiefs of Defense Conference held at the beginning of this month in Honolulu, seventeen nations of the region agreed to proceed on developing tactics, techniques and procedures (TT&P) essential to working together. Also agreed to were continuing workshops in the refinement of the Multilateral Planning and Assistance Team (MPAT) as the catalyst for forming a joint combined staff for response to crisis in the region. These coalitions would be brought together by mutual agreement. East Timor is but one example of such coalitions, but it is only one model; not *the* model.

Multilateral efforts are in and of themselves' confidence-building measures in the region. Japan and the United States are in the unique position of being the building blocks for a Northeast Asia dialogue effort resulting in a sub-regional multinational response capability. Dr. James Auer of Vanderbilt University, in his recent analysis for the U.S. National Defense University sees the U.S.-Japanese partnership as essential to a multilateral approach in the region. The paper itself, written by a team led by Mr. Richard Armitage and Dr. Joseph Nye (well known to you here), clearly spells out the need for "full Japanese participation in peace keeping and humanitarian missions and removal of self imposed restraints that would otherwise burden other peace keeping nations." It also states a plea for "development of a U.S.-Japan force structure characterized by mobility, flexibility, diversity and survivability to reflect the regional security environment."

The seeds of a multilateral approach can be found in the PRC White Paper on National Defense 2000. The section on "Regional Security Cooperation" specifically lauds the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) as the only pan-Asia-Pacific official multilateral security dialogue and cooperation forum at present. It goes on to speak of the necessity to "focus on confidence building measures, explore new security concepts and methods and discuss the question of preventive diplomacy."

Dr. Wu Xinbo, a Professor of International Politics at Fudan University in Shanghai, in an article for Pacific Forum/CSIS states: "The establishment of an Asia-Pacific security community is possible because states in the region have shared interests in a peaceful and stable security

environment, because they increasingly benefit from growing economic interactions. This nascent mechanism for regional security will evolve over time into a more effective means for promoting regional cooperation on security issues. In this context, the United States will play a significant role, not as a hegemon, but as a key player.”

Professor Mike Mochizuki of George Washington University’s Elliot School of International Affairs, in a September 2000 article, calls for multi-lateralizing the U.S. alliance network because of the need to end the Cold War era. He says “the United States should try to create an inclusive regional security community based on the concept of cooperative security. If military forces work together on joint missions, it increases transparency and trust. Even if there are major conflicts of interest, there is enough trust that these crises can be managed without the use of military means.” He then proposes a formalized North Pacific security dialogue to deal with common transnational problems. The proposal would include as members, the US, Japan, China, Russia, both Koreas, Canada, and Mongolia in a complementary organization to the ASEAN Regional Forum.

There are many more similar commentaries I could cite. However, I believe the multilateral approach in a time of strategic change is the key to non-threatening enhanced regional cooperation in the first decade of the 21st century. Finally, one certainty is that the role of military power has changed significantly over the span of history since the nation-state first appropriated it. Cooperation and integration of capabilities among states has become the norm. Other dimensions of national power have become increasingly important in the development of national security strategies. Yet, the threat of force inherent in the traditional roles of the military (i.e. deterrence, compellence and defense) remains as a foundation for interaction within the international system. As we move into this new decade, military power can be most effective in helping maintain stability through enhancing transparency and strengthening cooperative approaches that seek to include and accommodate the concerns and interests of others in the region rather than emphasizing narrowly conceived unilateral interests.

