



The October issue of Pacific Forum's *Comparative Connections* is now available on the web at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/ccejournal.html>. A summary of this quarter's articles follows:

Regional Overview: Multilateralism Sputters Along, as North Korea Continues to Grab the Spotlight

by Ralph A. Cossa

Multilateral gatherings during the past quarter – the ASEAN Regional Forum, G-8 Summit, and UN Millennium Summit – served more to showcase key bilateral relationships and North Korea's continuing coming out than to promote multilateralism. In fact, North Korea managed to grab a portion of the spotlight at the summits without even attending. Meanwhile, preoccupation with Mid-East events limited U.S. participation in the Asian meetings and raised doubts about U.S. interest in multilateralism. North-South Korea rapprochement continues, with the emphasis still more on show than substance, while ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China, and South Korea) took on a new dimension; its first foreign ministers meeting may portend a shift to a broader agenda.

U.S.-Japan Relations: Small but Important Steps

by Michael Jonathan Green

Tokyo and Washington made some small but important breakthroughs on defense planning, financial support for U.S. bases, and Okinawa. President Clinton's decision to step out of Middle East negotiations to attend the G-8 Summit helped, as did the first bilateral defense and foreign ministers' meeting in two years. The success on the security side was somewhat offset by confrontations over whaling, telecommunications, and steel. These smaller issues continue to tug at the alliance. In anticipation of a new administration, a growing number of U.S. policy analysts are beginning to focus on strategic goals for the alliance. The question remains whether Tokyo can do the same.

U.S.-China Relations: Clinton and Jiang Hail PNTR Passage, but Agree on Little Else

by Bonnie S. Glaser

The practice of annually reviewing China's trade status ended with the Senate's passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations, paving the way for China's entry into the World Trade Organization and boosting Sino-U.S. economic ties. Presidents Clinton and Jiang met at the UN Summit and, as usual, were at odds on many issues, including human rights, religious freedom in China, Taiwan, and U.S. missile defense programs. U.S.-Chinese defense ties advanced with Defense Secretary Cohen's visit to China, where he engaged in strategic dialogue with senior leaders. Sino-U.S. talks on arms control and non-proliferation resumed after a 14 month hiatus, but the two sides failed to narrow their differences.

U.S.-Korea Relations: Military Ties Remain Vital despite North-South Thaw

by Stephen Noerper

Following the June summit between ROK President Kim Dae-jung and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, both Seoul and Pyongyang sought to solidify international support for gradual integration. The U.S. offered early and frequent support for inter-Korean rapprochement, but the rapid progress in talks between the two Koreas left some U.S. strategists seeking to catch up to Seoul's advances. The quarter had bookends of Defense Secretary Cohen underscoring the importance of a continued U.S. troop presence and calling for added vigilance against DPRK military activity. U.S. and ROK strategists called for a renewed and improved alliance that takes into account the thaw on the Peninsula.

U.S.-Russia Relations: The Perils of Putin

by Toby Trister Gati

The U.S.-Russia relationship is essentially in limbo. Russia is waiting for the clock to run out on the Clinton administration and is positioning itself for whatever U.S. administration follows. U.S. policymakers, burned by the failure of reforms and reluctant to make any moves during an election, are busy deflecting domestic criticism in the partisan Cox Commission Report of Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore's handling of the Russia portfolio. At the same time, Russia is pursuing an active foreign policy strategy of its own, reinvigorating old relationships with former clients such as Iraq and North Korea, and reaffirming "strategic partnerships" with nations such as China and India to counter the U.S.-dominated one superpower world.

U.S.-ASEAN Relations: Tragedy and Uncertainty for Some, Potential Benefits for Others

by Samantha F. Ravich

Violence continued to wrack Indonesia, especially in West Timor where angry mobs led by exiled pro-Indonesian militias burned down UN offices and murdered three staff workers. Defense Secretary Cohen visited the region, shoring up U.S. partnerships and alliances while reiterating that Indonesia must bring the UN murderers to justice and disarm the militias or risk international sanction. U.S. military exercises were held in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Singapore. A U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement, concluded after five years in negotiations, will liberalize the Vietnamese market, increase transparency, and provide legal protections to U.S. businesses.

China-ASEAN Relations: China's "New Security Concept" and ASEAN

by Carlyle A. Thayer

China's Vice President made state visits to Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia this quarter. In Jakarta, he enunciated a "new concept of security." China also hosted the leaders of Laos and Vietnam. China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan

attended the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) before visiting Singapore. There was increased activity regarding China's military relations with regional states. In September, China hosted an ARF meeting of heads of defense colleges where its Defense Minister also advocated China's "new concept of security." Talks with ASEAN on a South China Sea Code of Conduct continued but made little progress.

China-Taiwan Relations: Relaxed, but not Re-linked

by David Brown

The good news is that tensions have eased, the situation has stabilized, and both sides want to resume dialogue. The bad news is that there has been no breakthrough on resuming dialogue and the prospects for resumption soon are not bright. While PRC Vice Premier Qian has expounded some new ideas, Beijing remains focused on exploiting differences within Taiwan to pressure President Chen to accept its one-China principle and Chen has said he can go no further in accommodating Beijing. Meanwhile, problems at home are demanding more of Chen's attention. While there has been no diplomatic breakthrough, cross-Strait economic ties continue to expand, with both preparing for eventual World Trade Organization membership.

China-Korea Relations: The Insatiable Economic Relationship: Too Much for Seoul to Swallow?

by Scott Snyder

Seoul is getting a nasty taste of Beijing's inflexibility on several issues that may become even more serious. Although the garlic dispute was settled, a potentially more damaging dispute over lead fragments found in seafood from China has sparked indignation in Korea. Complaints are balanced by Korean interest in developing China's information technology sector, China's possible inclusion in a future Asian free trade area, and the initiation of trilateral financial consultation with China and Japan. Chinese pressure to block the visit of the Dalai Lama, renewal of direct economic links between the ROK and Taiwan, and China's continued detention of ethnic Korean Chinese citizens are among prickly issues being suppressed or postponed in anticipation of PRC Premier Zhu's upcoming visit to Seoul.

Japan-China Relations: Waiting for Zhu ...

by James J. Przystup

Tokyo and Beijing worked to smooth the increasingly sharp political edges of their relationship in advance of PRC Premier Zhu Rongji's October visit to Japan. Of particular concern were Chinese maritime research ships within Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone as well as Chinese navy ships in international waters off Japan. This produced a backlash against the proposed special yen loan package for China, resulting in a postponement of final consideration until after the Foreign Minister's August visit to China. History also remained very much alive. Although Beijing attributed the cancellation of Transport Minister Morita's China visit to scheduling difficulties, voices within Japan attributed it to the Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine to Japan's war dead.

Japan-Korea Relations: What's Behind the Smile?

by Victor D. Cha

At his September summit in Japan with Japanese Prime Minister Mori, ROK President Kim continued as *de facto*

interlocutor between Japan and North Korea, even as Seoul and Tokyo continue building up good will. Meanwhile, the roadblocks to Japan-DPRK normalization remained immovable, although there were some promising signs. Looking down the road, even *best case* scenarios appear unsettling from a Japanese perspective. For Tokyo, the future greatly hinges on the extent to which DPRK intentions have changed fundamentally from revisionist and aggressive ones to a more cooperative and moderated outlook. Both skeptics and optimists would agree that the recent spate of DPRK "smile" diplomacy reflects a change in tactics largely for the purpose of regime survival.

Japan-Russia Relations: Back to the Drawing Board?

by Joseph Ferguson

Russian President Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Mori met twice this summer in Japan. Not much was expected at the G-8 Summit on Okinawa and results bore out the predictions. At the second meeting, an official summit in Tokyo in September, the atmospherics were perfect. Putin dined with the Emperor, lunched at the *Keidanren*, and even had time to tumble on the judo mat. Unfortunately, the results of his talks with Mori were mediocre at best and a spy scandal threatened to damage relations even more. Although the Japanese assessed the summit and overall Russo-Japanese relations positively, it is difficult to escape the feeling that relations have only moved backward since early 1998.

China-Russia Relations: Putin's Ostpolitik and Sino-Russian Relations

by Yu Bin

In contrast to the lack of contact between Russian and Chinese top leaders for the first half of the year, the newly inaugurated Russian President Vladimir Putin began the third quarter in a whirl of presidential diplomacy which took him to Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Beijing, Pyongyang, Okinawa, and Tokyo. The three summit meetings between top Russian and Chinese leaders in less than two months, on both bilateral and multilateral occasions, were part of Putin's "eastern-phase" diplomacy.

India-East Asia Relations: India's Latest Asian Incarnation

by Satu P. Limaye

India is in its third incarnation as an Asian player. Whether the expanded India-Asia interaction in 2000 is sustainable or short-lived remains to be seen. One certainty, however, is that post-nuclear test ties between India and the region have nearly normalized. Strong economic growth in India, a stable Indian government and focused diplomatic efforts buttress this trend. And yet, on both India's and Asia's side, it is not clear that the current activism can be maintained. On India's part, a sustainable Asian engagement will depend upon governmental continuity, political stability, enhanced economic attractiveness, and a focused diplomacy. On Asia's part, similar factors as well as a stronger perception of India's usefulness will have to develop.

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