



America's Role in Asia: Task Force Recommendations

The Asia Foundation commissioned a Task Force on America's Role in Asia to develop policy recommendations for the new Bush administration and other Washington policymakers. Two Task Forces were convened, one consisting of American scholars, security analysts and former and current officials (the latter in their private capacities) and the other of Asians, originally broken down into three groups -- Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia -- but ultimately combined to develop a parallel series of recommendations about U.S. Asia policy.

Below are the overall recommendations of the American Task Force and the Asian Task Force. Copies of the entire Task Force Report may be ordered on line from the [Brookings Institution](http://www.brookings.edu).

American Task Force Recommendations

1. Retain a stable forward deployment in Northeast and Southeast Asia, with greater flexibility and in more dispersed locations.
2. Maintain the one-China principle and strategic ambiguity about U.S. actions, but take any opportunity to promote reconciliation across the Taiwan Straits.
3. Work with Northeast Asian powers to support South Korean reconciliation with the North and continue the momentum of U.S. rapprochement with North Korea, but keep regional dynamics in mind.
4. Schedule early and regular dialogue with Japan and China.
5. Support the Indonesian government in its attempts to restore national unity.
6. Encourage the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to find institutional balance.
7. Build upon the recent expansion of relations with India through regular dialogue.
8. Give greater attention to the danger of nuclear conflict in South Asia, and nuclear proliferation originating from that region.
9. Take a more active role in helping to resolve the Kashmir and Afghan disputes.
10. Work to strengthen Asian trends toward functioning open markets, by preparing for a new World Trade Organization (WTO) round and exploring broad trade-liberalizing agreements with members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

11. Consult closely with new subregional economic organizations about their legitimate concerns and encourage compatibility between regional and global economic institutions.

12. Encourage continued movement toward openness in the remaining Asian authoritarian states with the aim of eventual democratization.

13. Urge Asian governments to bring human rights abusers and corrupt officials to account.

Asian Task Force Recommendations

1. In formulating and implementing key areas of its Asia policy, the United States should utilize bilateral consultations more extensively and, where possible, take a multilateral approach.

2. The United States should acknowledge and support regional institution-building efforts across Asia. It should encourage even those regional proposals that exclude a formal role for the U.S., but that support shared goals of reducing tensions, promoting free trade, and adhering to the rule of law.

3. The United States should downplay pressure for Asian countries to build Western-style democracies and emphasize the need for governments to be more responsive and accountable.

4. The United States should recognize the rise and development of civil society organizations in a range of Asian countries, and strengthen linkages between American civil society organizations and their Asian counterparts.

5. American universities should be encouraged to strengthen Asian studies programs, to provide a broader base of educators in Asian affairs.

6. The United States should maintain its current structure of bilateral security alliances and agreements in the Asia-Pacific region, and its forward deployments of military forces in the region.

7. The new U.S. administration should join with Asian nations in pursuing a fresh round of trade talks in the World Trade Organization.

8. The United States should increase its development assistance to Asia, where needed, to alleviate poverty and address basic human needs.

9. The United States should give greater attention in its Asia policy to nontraditional security threats which can exacerbate internal and cross-border tensions.

10. The United States should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.