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Regional Overview: Global Posture Review: Is Washington Marching Out? by Ralph A. Cossa

The quarter began on a high note with a meeting between Secretary of State Colin Powell and DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) ministerial, but an "agreement in principle" to talk deteriorated into name calling amid revelations about earlier ROK nuclear experiments, providing Pyongyang with yet another excuse to boycott the six-party talks. President Bush revealed that, worldwide, some 60-70,000 U.S. forces based overseas would be brought home over the next decade as part of the Global Posture Review, 12,500 from Korea. Elsewhere in Asia, democracy marched on, especially in Indonesia where Gen. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won that nation's first direct democratic presidential election. Meanwhile, ARF ministers confirmed their intent to further institutionalize the ARF process, while repeating pledges to fight terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

U.S.-Japan: Calm amidst a 'C' of Troubles
by Brad Glosserman

It has been another relatively calm quarter for U.S.-Japan relations. There was one potential calamity (the crash of a U.S. helicopter in Okinawa) and a few controversies, but, in the main, the alliance was on cruise control. The issues of note had Japanese domestic political consequences: the Upper House election, comments from U.S. officials about the Japanese constitution and the Bush-Koizumi meeting at the United Nations that addressed, among other things, Tokyo's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. In short, the alliance is functioning well and absorbing rather smoothly whatever complications arise.

U.S.-China: Rice Visits Beijing, but Disappoints Her Hosts
by Bonnie S. Glaser

NSA Condoleezza Rice unexpectedly decided to visit Beijing as well as Tokyo and Seoul. Chinese leaders failed to extract a commitment to reduce U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and intensify pressure on Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to refrain from taking provocative steps toward the establishment of a legally independent state. The third visit to China by chief of the U.S. Pacific Command Adm. Thomas Fargo was also dominated by discussions about the Taiwan Strait. The U.S. and China also faced off over how to respond to the escalating violence in Sudan. China's foreign minister complained about the alleged beating of a Chinese citizen by the U.S. border patrol in late July. Finally, Beijing awaits the U.S. presidential elections with trepidation and ambivalence.

U.S.-Korea: A Holding Pattern for the Six-Party Talks

by Donald G. Gross

The six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program remained in a holding pattern. Although Bush administration officials stressed the benefits North Korea would receive from accepting the current U.S. proposal, Pyongyang was uncooperative and denounced the "hostile policy" of the United States. The U.S. and South Korea reached agreement on the relocation of the U.S. command headquarters from Yongsan base in central Seoul to the Pyongtaek region. But they were unable to resolve the issue of how many troops the U.S. would withdraw from the South by the end of 2005 as part of the planned global realignment of U.S. forces. The U.S. and South Korea conducted discussions on the export of dual-use high technologies to the Kaesong industrial complex in North Korea.

U.S.-Russia: A Tragic Summer by Joseph Ferguson

The events of the past few months in both the United States and Russia highlight just how deeply embroiled each nation is in their respective national struggles against terrorism and against "insurgents" in Iraq and in Chechnya. Whereas the terror attacks in Russia garnered tremendous international attention, the quiet passing of a milestone in the U.S. campaign in Iraq drew much less notice: just this past month, the 1,000th U.S. soldier died in Iraq. Whether the tragedies of the summer months will steel the strategic partnership or sow discord will be played out over the next several months. Great change is unlikely, barring a series of catastrophic events. The bet here is that the status quo will maintain an ambiguous partnership united more by hatred of terrorism than by domestic concerns.

U.S.-Southeast Asia: Philippines Withdraws from Iraq and JI Strikes Again by Sheldon W. Simon

The early withdrawal of the Philippines' small armed forces contingent from Iraq in response to a militant group's threat to murder a Filipino hostage disappointed the U.S. but has not damaged Washington-Manila counterterror cooperation. U.S. forces continue to train Philippine soldiers in counter-insurgency. The September Jakarta truck bomb attack on the Australian Embassy reinforced U.S. and Australian police and intelligence collaboration with their Indonesian counterparts. Washington hopes the election of S.B. Yudhoyono as Indonesia's next president will strengthen joint efforts against *Jemaah Islamiyah*. Washington is also offering technical assistance to Southeast Asian navies patrolling the Malacca Strait just as China proposes to raise its maritime profile in the region.

China-Southeast Asia: Find New Friends, Reward Old Ones, but Keep Them All in Line by Ronald Montaperto

Contacts with the region through ASEAN followed a positive trajectory, as did China's relations with individual Southeast Asian nations. Beijing made progress in its self-defined role as bridge between Asia and Europe at the Asia-Europe Meeting. And the Chinese announced a plan for integrating ties among political parties into the overall strategy for developing relations with the sub-region. Two events contrasted with this pattern: Beijing's harsh reaction to the unofficial visit to Taiwan by Singapore's then Deputy Prime Minister (now Prime Minister) Lee Hsien Loong and Jiang Zemin's retirement as chairman of the Central Military Commission and the assumption of those duties by Hu Jintao. Events illustrated Beijing's ongoing effort to consolidate and expand its economic and political gains while discovering and improving ties with what might be termed new found, or previously overlooked, friends and associates.

China-Taiwan: Unproductive Military Posturing by David Brown

While some saw an increase in military tension across the Strait this quarter, it is more accurate to say that both sides were using military exercises to signal the political resolve behind their policies. One real issue – whether Taiwan will invest more in its own defense – was hotly debated in Taipei, but the Legislative Yuan (LY) took no action. There was considerable speculation about policy differences between Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, including over Taiwan. Although Jiang completed his retirement, it remains to be seen whether Hu will make significant adjustments in Taiwan policy. In Taipei, the LY passed proposed constitutional amendments including provisions to use referendums to ratify future amendments and Beijing reacted calmly. With December LY elections in the offing, the standard dichotomy between rapidly expanding cross-Strait economic ties and deadlocked political dialogue continued to hold true this quarter.

North Korea-South Korea: Mostly Off, Again by Aidan Foster-Carter

Pyongyang reverted to its old bad habit of boycotting most major formal channels of North-South dialogue. It acted, as ever, out of anger. This hiatus, along with North Korea's virtual refusal to allow the six-party talks on the nuclear issue to reconvene, made this a summer during which the Korean question mostly marked time. Pyongyang may wait until 2005 before deciding on its overall strategy toward its various foes under the new U.S. president – or the same old one with a new administration. South Korea might wish to reconsider the pros and cons of the "axis of carrot" stance that it shares with China and Russia. The trouble with "Sunshine" is that, by forswearing any conditionality and never even threatening to punish Northern malfeasance, it gives Seoul zero leverage.

China-Korea: A Turning Point for China-Korea Relations? by Scott Snyder

The debate over the history of the relationship between Korea and China took center stage this quarter as part of an escalating dispute between Seoul and Beijing over the Goguryeo kingdom (37 B.C. to 668 A.D.). The first major political dispute to arise between Seoul and Beijing since the decision to normalize in 1992 led to a number of high-level

exchanges designed to calm the situation while continuing to coordinate efforts to keep alive six-party talks. There are increasing worries in Seoul on the economic front: twelve years of dramatic double-digit growth in trade and investment between the two countries has resulted in increasing South Korean dependence on exports to China. However, Chinese firms are rapidly closing the technological gap with South Korea not only in low-end manufacturing but also in sectors that represent the core of South Korea's export trade earnings.

Japan-China: Not the Best of Times by James J. Przystup

Both Tokyo and Beijing looked for ways to advance cooperation. The ASEAN Plus Three framework provided one venue. North Korea provided another. Commercial and economic relations provided a third: two-way trade in the first six months of 2004, for the fifth consecutive year, hit a new high. But a series of events – resource exploration in disputed areas in the East China Sea, Chinese maritime research activities in Japan's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone, and significant anniversaries, combined with Japan's 3-1 victory over China in the China-hosted Asia Cup soccer tournament – helped to keep nationalist emotions high in both countries. Other issues of history, munitions abandoned by the Imperial Army in China, court decisions on compensation claims for wartime forced labor, and Taiwan also played into the relationship. It was not the best of times.

Japan-Korea: Nuclear Sea of Fire by Victor Cha

Tokyo joined the ranks of cities bestowed with the dubious distinction of being threatened with being turned into a nuclear sea of fire by the DPRK. This rhetoric, often chalked up to harmless bluster, reflected real tension this quarter over a possible DPRK missile test and continued stalemates on the abductee dispute. Tokyo's relations with Seoul were capped this quarter by a summit. Good relations at the highest levels, however, still could not overcome history issues and potentially tectonic shifts in the character of relations. It is difficult to imagine that with foreign policy experience and a rational calculation of South Korean interests along the axes of political values, security needs, and economic transparency, that ROK lawmakers will not assign Japan a higher priority. Nevertheless, there is no denying that democratic consolidation has introduced a new dynamic in bilateral relations between Seoul and Tokyo.

China-Russia: Lubricate the Partnership, but with What? by Yu Bin

The third quarter produced a mixed record for China-Russia relations: military relations moved ahead, high-level exchanges were busy as usual, while economics continued to cloud China's "pipeline dream." The 10 years of talk of an oil pipeline from Russia's Siberia to northeastern China came close to an end in this quarter as Russia was finalizing a multibillion-dollar deal with Japan. Even an official visit to Russia by China's Premier Wen Jiabao in late September failed to reverse the tide. Internal dynamics affected both nations, though in different ways. In Russia, terrorist attacks shocked the nation. In China, Jiang Zemin finally released his hold on the 2.5-million person People's Liberation Army. Relations now await President Putin's scheduled visit to China. He will be greeted as a hero, a weathered but not withered statesman, albeit a tragic one.