



Aloha! The Pacific Forum CSIS has published four new monographs in our Issues & Insights series; all our available on our website (www.csis.org/pacfor/). We invite your thoughts and comments.

Issues and Insights No. 9-05 – August 2005 [The Emerging East Asian Community: Should Washington be Concerned?](#)

The formation of economic and political cooperation and dialogue mechanisms aimed at creating a sense of East Asian and broader Asia-Pacific community poses challenges for the United States. The big question is whether Washington should be included as a member, or at least an observer, in this evolving East Asia community. In this volume, three different perspectives are provided regarding the evolving East Asia community and its implications for the U.S.

Ralph Cossa examines Washington's evolving attitude toward multilateral cooperation and regionalism in East Asia and argues that it is difficult to discuss U.S. attitudes toward East Asia regionalism or the development of an East Asian community since an East Asian community has yet to be defined – much less credibly emerge – and regional governance has barely evolved.

Simon Tay provides an East Asian perspective. He examines the main factors that drive the current and still nascent sense of regionalism in East Asia. He argues that the U.S. should accept and understand its exclusion from the first East Asian Summit. All EAS states, and especially those that are allies and friends of the U.S., will ensure that the vital interests they share with the U.S. are sufficiently accounted for and protected.

Chung-min Lee provides a contrarian view, questioning the wisdom of, and need for, yet another regional mechanism. Lee argues that East Asia is going to become the testing ground for new governance principles and norms given the vast array of political, military, economic, social, and technological revolutions underway. Coming to terms with hybrid challenges with contending if not contrasting political institutions is likely to become a key factor that could inhibit any accelerated formation of an East Asian community.

Issues and Insights No. 10-05 – September 2005 [U.S.-Japan-China Relations Trilateral Cooperation in the 21st Century](#)

In August, experts and former officials from the U.S., China, and Japan met in Hawaii for the ninth round of annual discussions that has explored the prospects for and the problems in relations among the three countries. As in the past, optimists highlighted the possibilities of good trilateral relations, pragmatists argued the need for good trilateral relations, and realists reminded us of the very real obstacles to good trilateral relations.

In one sense, trilateral relations are the sum of the various bilateral relationships. Those vary. The China-U.S. relationship is good, but potentially fragile: there is much cooperation, but distrust shapes thinking in both capitals. Japanese, like Americans, do not oppose China's rise and seek to benefit from it. Rising nationalism in both countries is a real obstacle to their relations, however. Chinese believe the problem is more one-sided, blaming Tokyo for the deterioration of that relationship. The two countries are locked in an ugly downward spiral and breaking the dynamic is difficult since both countries see themselves as merely responding to the other. U.S.-Japan relations continue to be "the best ever," but strains are emerging. Chinese worry this alliance is ultimately aimed at containing them.

Realizing the promise inherent in trilateral relations requires work by all three parties, both individually and together. China should accept Tokyo's quest for normal nation status, and shake off the notion that a strong Japan will be a threat to it. The U.S. and China should work on "easier" bilateral irritants – trade and human rights problems – and then move to harder challenges. Washington and Tokyo should make their alliance more transparent to allay Chinese concerns. Beijing should do more to explain its strategic ambitions. Bilateral dialogues should be expanded to trilateral ones; all participants should consider turning the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis into a regional security mechanism. People to people contacts should be expanded at all levels. Politicians should be discouraged from playing the history card for their own purposes.

Issues and Insights No. 11-05 – September 2005 [U.S.-China Workshop: Searching for a New Vision](#)

The U.S.-China relationship continues to evolve. Both countries are debating the nature of relations with the other, but no firm conclusions are possible as they try to assess and manage highly dynamic and potentially unstable change, both internally and externally.

The dominant view in the U.S. is that China is rising and the U.S. must work with that country. At the same time, however, there is unease about the economic impact of that rise, Beijing's economic policies, and a military modernization program that seems disproportionate to threats; these fears are exacerbated by a lack of transparency regarding Chinese capabilities and intentions. President Bush is trying to contain these pressures and work with Beijing to build a positive and constructive relationship. Significantly, there's a growing sense that the U.S.-China relationship is the most important bilateral relationship for the U.S.

From a Chinese perspective, the relationship is stable, but complicated. Chinese insist the core issue is how the U.S. will

view China's rise. They argue that China's U.S. policy will be determined by the U.S. debate. They insist Washington should accommodate a rising China, but China must learn to become a responsible state and fulfill its international obligations.

In this environment, trust is paramount. Despite the positive rhetoric, distrust is high and mutual confidence is a precious commodity. China and the U.S. are struggling to define their relationship as China undergoes an unprecedented transition. The U.S. is prepared to accept China's rise – it has no choice – but it seeks to ensure that the China that emerges will be a good global citizen, will not challenge the existing order, and will work with the U.S. to ensure that both nations' interests – and those of the entire world – are protected and advanced. Both nations are uncertain about how they will relate to each other as their relationship intensifies and becomes more complex.

Issues and Insights No. 12-05 – September 2005 [Building a Stable Northeast Asia: Views from the Next Generation](#)

The third volume of papers from Pacific Forum's Young Leaders provide their thinking on the U.S.-China-Japan trilateral relationship and U.S.-China relations. The Young Leaders understood the value of good relations among the countries. Having spent considerable time (living, traveling, studying, and/or working) in one or both of the "others," they appreciated the complexities of each society and were ready to see events from the perspective of another country. Most of them are realists, however, and were quick to acknowledge the considerable differences among the three.

They wondered whether there were sufficient commonalities for long-term cooperation and were concerned that democracy could fan the flames of discontent.

Several Young Leaders admitted that generational change may not necessarily make it easier to realize good trilateral relations. Several Chinese noted that their elders are more open-minded toward Japan than their peers. One credited the perspective that comes with age. All agreed that increasing exchanges, more exposure at the grassroots level, and better education would help smooth out some of the wrinkles in the various relationships.

One wrinkle may not get smoothed: Taiwan was as formidable an obstacle for Young Leaders as it was for their "seniors." They were divided – and not by nation – on the right of governments to use force against their own people. While all hoped that China would launch no more than a "charm offensive," several Young Leaders – and not all of them Chinese – argued that Beijing had the right under international law to use force.

Several Young Leaders also argued that the U.S. should play a more aggressive role to promote reconciliation in the region: between Beijing and Taipei, and between China and Japan. Others were skeptical, and even suggested that the U.S. was one of the reasons for friction between various governments. Plainly, some misunderstandings survive generations.

Increased exposure to other countries helps shape not only perceptions, but expectations. Knowing more about the "other" helps us appreciate what they can and cannot do – and why. By seeing both strengths and weaknesses, our Young Leaders better understand the fundamental nature of relations between their countries. Stripping away illusions, prejudices, and misperceptions permits them to build a foundation for the cooperation they all agree is needed.