U.S. Asia Policy:
Does an Alliance-Based Strategy Still Make Sense?

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Executive Summary

Does an alliance-based policy in the Asia Pacific region still make sense for the United States in the post-Cold War era? In a word, "yes." But sustaining these alliances will not be easy. The strategic rationale for the two most vital U.S. East Asian alliances – with Japan and the Republic of Korea – needs to be further developed, especially as (and if) the North Korean threat fades, even as the Bush administration struggles to avoid the temptation of substituting a "China threat" for the threat posed previously by the former Soviet Union and currently by North Korea.

It is important that America's Asian alliances not be seen as trying to prevent China from assuming a more prominent, positive role in the region and in the world, even as they serve as a hedge against the emergence of a less cooperative or even openly confrontational China. Likewise, the alliance structure must serve to discourage North Korea from straying from its current, albeit tentative, path of enhanced cooperation with the South and the world in general, without appearing so threatening as to scare the hermit kingdom back into its shell.

This paper lays out some of the future challenges and paths that should be taken to reinforce the positive aspects of America's key bilateral alliances in Asia, while helping to ensure their future relevance as a force for continued peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. The prospects of a "virtual" alliance among the U.S., Japan, and Korea (both prior to and after Korean reunification) are also discussed, along with the possibility of a broader "coalition among the willing" involving Australia and other regional U.S. allies, such as Thailand and the Philippines.

U.S.-Japan Alliance. With the coming to power of George W. Bush in the U.S. and Koizumi Junichiro in Japan came the expectation that Washington and Tokyo would become more attentive to the maintenance and enhanced revitalization of the alliance.

Prime Minister Koizumi appears ready to expand the U.S.-Japan relationship while also supporting a greater role for Japan in regional security affairs, views that dovetail nicely with calls for a more equal relationship coming from Washington. This should not be read as a U.S. desire to "deputize" Japan to carry out current U.S. security responsibilities. This is not likely to be acceptable to either side. But Japan has earned the right and appears increasingly ready to accept the responsibility to participate more fully in regional security affairs, even if this requires constitutional reinterpretation or revision. While the Bush administration is strongly supportive of an increased Japanese security role, it has been careful not to directly call for a constitutional amendment. This is a domestic Japanese decision.

But what exactly does the United States expect from Japan and how much is Japan willing or able to contribute? Washington has a responsibility to make it clear what it expects and desires from Tokyo in terms of greater security cooperation. It is then Tokyo's responsibility to determine where it wants to go and where and how its desires overlap with Washington's. The two sides then need to reach some common understanding about revised roles and missions to ensure that their actions continue to be complementary. Once Japan has determined what it is willing to do, it must further determine if reinterpretations or amendments to current laws or even the constitution itself are required in order to travel down this chosen path.

This is not to imply that the U.S.-Japan alliance is seriously troubled today. The current state of the relationship is as good or better than at any time since the historic 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Declaration set the Defense Guidelines revision process in motion . . . and so is the opportunity for improvement. Considerable effort is required on both sides to sustain the momentum, however, in order to take advantage of the opportunity to further expand and reinvigorate the alliance.

U.S.-ROK Alliance. U.S. security policy since the end of the Korean War has been one of promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, first and foremost by maintaining a credible deterrent against possible North Korean aggression. The continued basing of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea under the U.S.-ROK Mutual Security Treaty makes this deterrent both possible and credible. This policy has remained constant during periods of increased tension and during those rare instances of increased cooperation as well. Both sides have also indicated that a continued U.S.-Korea security relationship would be beneficial even after reunification or some form of North-South confederation or federation.

But it is also clear that the current North-South thaw, however tentative, provides unprecedented demands and opportunities for lasting change both in security policies and in the overall prospects for long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula. The ability to adjust to changing circumstances appear critical in the aftermath of the June 2000 North-South summit and the subsequent on again, off again thaw in U.S.-DPRK relations. Sustaining a deterrence policy in the face of North Korea's "smile diplomacy" will be one of the major challenges confronting the Bush administration, as will be the development of new policies, in close coordination with the ROK and Japan, that will allow the alliance to adjust to emerging new realities.

As difficult as dealing with a mercurial North Korea is for the U.S. and the ROK today, an even more challenging task will be preparing for a future Asia in which the North Korean threat has receded significantly or perhaps even disappeared. This will require a new rationale for the alliance that stresses regional stability rather than deterrence. While developing that rationale should begin now, as long as the DPRK exists as a separate entity, some form of deterrence will be required and this means the

continued presence of U.S. military forces in the ROK and a continuation of a unified

military command structure.

Even in the event of more genuine North-South cooperation, or even a loose Korean confederation, a continued ROK-U.S. security alliance presents the best insurance policy as a hedge against a sudden change in intent by the North. As a result, Washington and Seoul must continue to make it clear to Pyongyang that the continued presence of U.S. troops in the ROK is not a bargaining chip but an essential stabilizing force that makes U.S.-DPRK and South-North dialogue possible.

This does not preclude reductions in U.S. force levels, pragmatic restructuring and relocation, or modifications to existing command arrangements. If tensions are significantly reduced, the U.S. – in close consultation with the Republic of Korea – could conduct some limited troop withdrawals. (Likewise, renewed provocations could justify a measured build-up of U.S. forces.) Rather than become the victim of potential fast-moving future events or of Pyongyang's political maneuvering, the U.S. and the ROK should be examining possible force and command structure modifications now. Washington and Seoul should jointly and publicly establish clearly-defined milestones, based on significant, verifiable North Korean actions, for implementing future changes in the nature or structure of the alliance and American force presence.

A word of caution, however. The desire and ability of both sides to continue a close security alliance after unification cannot and should not be presumed. If U.S. and ROK officials and strategic planners are convinced that a continued U.S. military presence is necessary or desirable even after North-South reconciliation or reunification, they must begin serious discussions now in order to develop the strategic rationale. They must then begin making convincing arguments to potentially skeptical legislatures and publics in both nations, lest they be overtaken by events should reunification or some other form of genuine reconciliation or rapprochement come quicker than expected.

The Need for a Trilateral "Virtual Alliance." Close security cooperation among Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo has already paid rich dividends. The challenge is to determine how best to bring the three sides even closer together in a way that serves all three nation's national security interests, while also taking into account the concerns of others (especially China and Russia).

A formal, official trilateral security alliance does not appear to be a serious option either today or in a post-Korean reunification era. Absent a clear and present threat, a formal three-party alliance is neither necessary nor advisable. The challenges involved in creating – and in gaining both public support for and legislative approval of – a formal treaty would be daunting and, for Japan, would raise serious constitutional issues as well. Regardless of its actual motives, a formal treaty would also be seen by Beijing (and perhaps by Moscow and others) as an attempt to encircle or contain China and would thus complicate China's relations with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. It could also serve to drive Russia and China together in ways that would run contrary to U.S. or allied national security interests.

This is why I would call instead for the creation of a "virtual alliance," achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-ROK security relationship post-unification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul. Such a virtual alliance is not only achievable, but also provides the best hope for long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole. Future trilateral cooperation also hinges on the ability of Japan and South Korea to overcome past suspicions and focus constructively on the future.

U.S.-Australia Alliance. The U.S.-Australia alliance is in many respects the strongest and most secure of America's security relationships and the one least affected by the end of the Cold War. The alliance draws its strength from common values and objectives and closely shared interests. It also includes a special intelligence partnership that is as relevant today as it was in the Cold War and could become potentially more critical as Washington pursues ballistic missile defense initiatives. And, lest we forget, the Australian flag still flies in front of the United Nations Command Headquarters in Seoul, underscoring Canberra's continued commitment to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

One could further argue that Australia is also a silent partner in the emerging U.S.-Japan-Korea virtual alliance, given Canberra's military commitment in Korea, its active participation in KEDO, and its support for initiatives such as the Four-Party Talks and TCOG process. Few attempts have been made to strengthen or deepen four-way cooperation among these key U.S. alliance partners, however, although they could form the core for a future "coalition of the willing" in East Asia.

Finally, it should be noted that the U.S.-Australia alliance can also serve as a useful model for what America's Northeast Asia alliance relationships might look like once the threat from North Korea has receded. Few doubt the solidity of the U.S.-Australian alliance, given the number of times Americans and Aussies have fought shoulder to shoulder in the century just passed. Yet, on a day-to-day basis, there are few U.S. military forces based on Australian soil, beyond those manning the joint intelligence facilities. The U.S.-Australia model demonstrates convincingly that alliance relationships do not necessarily or always require large forward detachments of American troops to be credible.

Multilateral "Coalitions of the Willing." From time to time there have been suggestions about the need for a broader NATO-like multilateral security arrangement in the Asia Pacific region but, absent a clear and present (and broadly acknowledged) danger, the prospects of such a formalized multilateral security mechanism evolving in a time of relative peace seems remote.

No attempt has been made to try to further institutionalize multilateral military cooperation among the U.S., Japan, ROK, and Australia, much less with America's two Southeast Asian allies (Thailand and the Philippines) . . . and none should be attempted.

The logic that argues against a formal U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral alliance applies here as well. But the degree of interoperability established by frequent contact between the U.S. and its Asia Pacific allies, both bilaterally and in broader settings, can allow them to form the core of cooperative coalitions among the willing in the event of future crisis, whether they be caused by opposing military forces or Mother Nature. Australia's own multilateral cooperative effort with New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the UK – the Five Power Defense Arrangement – also serves to provide an informal linkage between American forces and those of several other Southeast Asia states, as does concerted efforts by several ASEAN states (Singapore in particular) to increase military cooperation with the United States. For example, Singapore has provided facilities for a modest U.S. logistics presence in that city-state since the time of the U.S. base closures in the Philippines and has recently developed a new deep water pier to facilitate visits by American aircraft carriers.

In short, America's Asia Pacific bilateral alliances and the extended military-to-military contacts both with U.S. military forces directly and with the forces of America's allies, has created enhanced ability as well as a growing inclination to cooperate in the military arena, especially for operations other than war. While it is doubtful that this expanded cooperation will result in a more formalized military structure in the Asia Pacific region similar to the ever-expanding NATO in Europe, it has increased habits of cooperation and the ability of those nations so inclined to form coalitions of the willing as they individually and collectively deem appropriate in the future.

Sino-U.S. Relations. PRC government officials and leading scholars seem genuinely puzzled and concerned about the future direction of Sino-U.S. relations. Few are ready to conclude that Washington is embarked on a course of confrontation and containment, but many see this as the prevailing trend.

Their confusion is understandable. The Bush administration has taken great pains to define what China is and is not. China is a "competitor for influence" and a "potential regional rival" but also a "trading partner" and a "potential partner willing to cooperate in areas where our strategic interests overlap." China is all these things, "but China is not an enemy and our challenge is to keep it that way." But beyond general statements that Washington "is not in a confrontational mode" or that the U.S. seeks a "cooperative relationship," little effort has been made to articulate Washington's vision for a future Sino-U.S. relationship. Those who see an administration bent on confrontation and containment claim lots of evidence. Nonetheless, senior Chinese officials recognize the importance of good Sino-U.S. relations and want to see the relationship get back on track. Beijing wants Washington to pay due respect to China's core concerns, especially as regards Taiwan and missile defense. But Beijing must be willing, in return, to abandon its own incessant rhetoric accusing Washington of seeking "absolute security" or "global hegemony in a unipolar world" in favor of a constructive strategic dialogue with Washington that recognizes the legitimate security concerns of both sides.

Looking Down the Road. The U.S. bilateral alliance structure that served well the

cause of regional peace and stability during the Cold War can similarly help promote future peace and stability if properly maintained and focused, once the North Korean threat subsides, on regional stability rather than deterrence or containment.

The U.S.-Japan alliance remains the linchpin. Washington and Tokyo must work together closely to permit more equal participation, even if this requires a reinterpretation or revision to Japan's constitution. Special care must be given, however, to accomplish this transition in a manner that remains non-threatening to Japan's neighbors. Conversely, Japan's neighbors must realize that today's leaders, several generations removed from those responsible for World War II and earlier atrocities, are a new breed, justifiably proud of Japan's post-war accomplishments and eager to see Japan play a more active, responsible role in the international community.

On the Korean Peninsula, deterrence remains the order of the day as long as North Korea remains a separate entity with a separate military. But the U.S. and ROK, in close cooperation with Japan, should begin now to develop the rationale and lay the groundwork for future U.S.-Korea security cooperation post-reunification. While a formal trilateral alliance appears unnecessary and could even prove counterproductive, the U.S., Japan, and Korea should work toward the development of a virtual alliance, achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-Korea security relationship post-reunification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul.

Likewise, a more structured multilateral military alliance system involving Australia and other U.S. Asia Pacific allies or like-minded friends makes little sense in the post-Cold War era. However, the habits of cooperation and enhanced interoperability provided by Ame rica's bilateral alliances and increased military-to-military contacts between U.S. and regional military forces provides a solid foundation for the creation of ad hoc coalitions of the willing as circumstances may dictate or demand in the future.

U.S. Asia Policy:
Does an Alliance-Based Policy Still Make Sense?

by Ralph A. Cossa*

U.S. Asia Pacific security strategy has been, and remains, alliance-based. This has been true over many past administrations and U.S. President George W. Bush's evolving East Asia policy to date shows a great deal of continuity with the past, despite some changes in emphasis and approach. U.S. alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and, to a lesser extent the Philippines and Thailand, under-gird the security structure in the Asia Pacific. This includes about 100,000 forward-deployed U.S. military forces.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, in his January 2001 confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate, described America's relationships with its Asia Pacific allies and friends, and particularly with Japan, as the "bedrock" of U.S. East Asia policy. "Weaken those relationships and we weaken ourselves," Powell testified, "All else in the Pacific and East Asia flows from those strong relationships."

Secretary Powell's comments were quickly and repeatedly endorsed by President Bush and other senior administration spokesmen and were further underscored during Powell's July 2001 initial visit to Asia. However, they are not significantly different from the pronouncements about the "centrality" of America's Asian alliance network to U.S. security strategy in Asia contained either in the series of East Asia Strategy Reports (EASR) produced by the Clinton administration or in the East Asia Strategy Initiative reports by the previous Bush (senior) administration.

While others, China foremost among them, have criticized the U.S. Asia alliance structure as a "Cold War vestige," from a bipartisan U.S. perspective, this alliance structure remains relevant into the 21st century. Sustaining these alliances in the post-Cold War era will not be easy, however. Maintaining the status quo does not mean doing nothing. The strategic rationale for the two most vital U.S. East Asian alliances – with Japan and the Republic of Korea – needs to be further developed, especially as (and if) the North Korean threat fades, even as the Bush administration struggles to avoid the temptation of substituting a "China threat" for the threat posed previously by the former Soviet Union and currently by North Korea. This will rely, however, at least as much on

Chinese behavior as upon the intentions of Washington and its alliance partners.

Fortunately, Sino-U.S. relations are gradually recovering from the tailspin generated by the EP-3 collision and Bush's comments about doing "whatever it took" to help Taiwan defend itself. Meanwhile, the completion of the administration's Korea policy review has resulted in a renewed U.S. commitment to support the ROK's "Sunshine Policy" and the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, plus a willingness to engage in serious discussions with Pyongyang on a broad agenda, including a resumption of missile talks. While Bush had been criticized for not being supportive enough toward an Asian ally during his March 7, 2001 Washington summit meeting with ROK President Kim Dae-jung, his June 30, 2001 Camp David "shirt-sleeve" summit with Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro was criticized for brushing too much under the rug as the two appeared to agree on just about everything. Despite Tokyo's lingering concerns about U.S. national missile defense (NMD) and Washington's rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, the stage appears set for deeper cooperation between Tokyo and Washington on strategic as well as on economic issues – although the pace at which this will move appears uncertain.

China's emergence as a major regional and significant global power seems inevitable and it is important that America's Asian alliances not be seen as trying to prevent China from assuming a more prominent, positive role in the region and in the world, even as they serve as a hedge against the emergence of a less cooperative or even openly confrontational China. Likewise, the alliance structure must serve to discourage North Korea from straying from its current, albeit tentative, path of enhanced cooperation with the South and the world in general, without appearing so threatening as to scare the hermit kingdom back into its shell.

This paper lays out some of the future challenges and paths that should be taken to reinforce the positive aspects of America's Asian alliances while helping to ensure their future relevance as a force for continued peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. After a few opening comments on the Bush administration's emerging Asia policy, I will begin with the U.S.-Japan alliance, given its role as the "linchpin" of American security strategy in Asia. But I will devote the greatest amount of attention to the U.S.-ROK alliance, since it faces the greatest prospect for change in the years immediately ahead. The prospects of either a formal or "virtual" alliance among the U.S., Japan, and Korea (both prior to and after Korean reunification) will also be briefly discussed, along with the possibility of a broader "coalition among the willing" involving Australia and other regional U.S. allies, such as Thailand and the Philippines. I will close by addressing

evolving U.S.-China relations, including the impact of missile defense programs.

The Bush Administration's Emerging Asia Policy

The administration's first detailed description of its Asia policy was provided by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly in testimony before the House Committee on International Relations' East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee on June 12, 2001. Kelly identified China's emergence as a regional and global power, Indonesia's ongoing efforts at democratic transformation, Japan's struggle with economic reform, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula as areas where the U.S. was "working hard to encourage the most positive outcomes," even while cautioning that "our ability to influence events in these four areas varies widely."

Kelly described the Asia Pacific region as one of "enormous economic opportunity" but also cautioned that many unresolved economic problems remained in the wake of the devastating 1997-98 Asia financial crisis. The administration would be working to promote further economic reform and reduce or eliminate unfair obstacles to exports to the U.S., while also pursuing free trade agreements with willing partners such as Singapore. He also noted that "regional consciousness – a collective sense of identification and common cause – remains relatively undeveloped" but noted positive developments in this area, brought about by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Not surprisingly, Kelly also underscored the administration's alliance-based approach to regional security, noting the Bush administration's commitment "to nurture our key bilateral relationships in the region and make them even better." He further cited the U.S. military and diplomatic presence as "a crucial element of stability in a region undergoing such profound and dynamic change." While maintaining alliance relationships was central to U.S. East Asia strategy, Kelly further pointed out that the U.S. also seeks "a constructive relationship with China that contributes to the promotion of our shared interests in peace, stability, and prosperity in the region."

There has also been considerable speculation in the early months of the Bush administration, largely based on press leaks and "informed analysis" rather than on government pronouncements, of an impending "strategic shift" in the Pentagon from its traditional Euro-centric approach to one focused more on Asia. Such reports appear, at

best, to be premature. While a few independent studies (among over a dozen reportedly commissioned by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld) have recommended that more attention be paid to Asia, and some military prepositioned stockpiles are reportedly to be shifted from Europe to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, no decisions have yet been made regarding future force structure or disposition and Secretary Rumsfeld has assured America's NATO allies that there will be no lessening of U.S. interest in or commitment to Europe.

At this writing, both the outcome and the implications of the ongoing defense policy review were still pending, but it appears certain that regardless of possible adjustments in force structure (more likely downward than upward), Asia strategy will remain alliance-based, and will include a significant number of forward-based U.S. military forces. As Secretary Powell said during his July 2001 visit to Japan, the presence of U.S. military forces in East Asia "is a visible manifestation of our security relationship and our responsibilities in Asia." He further asserted that U.S. forces in Japan (including in Okinawa) are there "to give meaning, to give life to the security relationship." As Powell stressed at each stop during his five nation journey – to Tokyo, Hanoi (for the annual ARF foreign ministers' meeting), Seoul, Beijing, and Canberra – the U.S. was committed to Asia and committed to remaining in Asia. The U.S. East Asia alliance network demonstrates and is key to the success of this commitment.

U.S.-Japan Alliance

It has been two decades since then-U.S. Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield proclaimed the U.S.-Japan relationship as "the world's most important bilateral relationship – bar none!" This sentiment has been repeated by every U.S. president, secretary of state, and U.S. ambassador to Japan since then, more often than not using these exact words.

There were many, especially among the Republican opposition, who accused the Clinton administration of "Japan passing," given its seeming preoccupation with developing better relations with China, even though Washington (correctly) maintained at the time that its respective relations with Tokyo and Beijing were not part of a "zero sum" game and that Sino-U.S. relations would be built upon the foundation provided by the U.S.-Japan alliance, not at its expense.

In fact, the first significant effort to ensure the post-Cold War relevance of the U.S.-Japan alliance came during President Clinton's April 1996 visit to Japan, in the form

of the Joint Declaration signed by Clinton and then-Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro. This Declaration laid the groundwork for the 1997 revised Defense Guidelines, which prescribed the degree of cooperation desired (and, at the time, deemed possible) between the U.S. and Japan both during peacetime and during times of increased tension or crisis. This effort was a significant step forward in making Japan a "more equal" partner, although it still reflected the legal, political, and psychological constraints that limit the degree of military cooperation possible under virtually any scenario short of a direct military attack by foreign forces against Japan.

Japanese and American leaders since that time seemingly have been too preoccupied with domestic political and economic developments to look beyond the revised Defense Guidelines. In fact, while significant progress has been made in this regard, some pieces of legislation necessary for Tokyo to fully implement the 1997 Defense Guidelines remain to be passed.

With the election of Mr. Bush came the expectation that Washington would become more attentive to the maintenance and enhanced revitalization of the alliance, although the prospects for further movement were deemed initially to be slim, given the lack of public support for (and perceived ability of) the government of Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro. This situation changed dramatically with the selection of Koizumi Junichiro – unquestionably Japan's most popular and charismatic leader in recent years – as prime minister in April 2001.

Prime Minister Koizumi appears ready to expand the U.S.-Japan relationship while also supporting a greater role for Japan in regional security affairs. While stating that he is not prepared at this time to put the difficult question of constitutional revision on the political agenda, Koizumi has stated that it is desirable for Japan to be allowed to participate in collective defense activities and to help defend its allies (read: the United States) in the event of regional crisis. In a comment that appears aimed at stimulating debate on this once-taboo subject, the new prime minister noted that "we should stop branding anyone speaking about revising Article 9 as hawkish or a rightist," correctly noting that this section of the Japanese constitution – which stipulates that Japan shall never maintain land, sea, or air forces – "fails to reflect reality."

Koizumi's view seems to dovetail nicely with calls for a more equal relationship coming from Washington. Just prior to the fall 2000 U.S. presidential election, a *Special Report on The United States and Japan: Advancing toward a Mature Partnership,*

produced by the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies, stated that the 1997 Defense Guidelines should be viewed as a "floor" upon which to build further bilateral defense cooperation, and not as a "ceiling" preventing further, deeper cooperation. The so-called Armitage-Nye Report (after its two primary authors, former Assistant Secretaries of Defense Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye) calls for an expanded Japanese role in the transpacific alliance, while noting that the uncertainties of the post-Cold War regional setting require a more dynamic approach to bilateral defense planning between Washington and Tokyo.

While this was an unofficial, bipartisan report, Mr. Armitage has since assumed the position of deputy secretary of State and his remarks during his early May 2001 visit to Tokyo that "the lack of consensus on collective self-defense is an obstacle" to expanding U.S.-Japan security cooperation suggests that much of the thinking in the Armitage-Nye Report is being carried over into the Bush administration's policy toward Japan. While in Tokyo, Armitage noted that "the lack of an ability to participate in collective self-defense, although they are signatories to a defense treaty, is an obstacle." He further asserted that "it is a healthy thing for the Japanese to look at some of these things and see what is reasonable and what is not."

This should not be read, as some are inclined to do, as a U.S. desire to "deputize" Japan to carry out current U.S. security responsibilities. This is not likely to be acceptable to either side. But Japan has earned the right and, as noted, appears increasingly ready to accept the responsibility to participate more fully in regional security affairs. It seems quite clear that the Bush administration is strongly supportive of an increased Japanese security role, even if this requires constitutional reinterpretation or revision. However, administration spokesmen, including Secretary Armitage himself (some inaccurate reporting notwithstanding), have been careful not to directly call for a constitutional amendment, recognizing (as did the Armitage-Nye Report) that this is a domestic Japanese decision.

But what exactly does the United States expect from Japan? How much is Japan willing or able to contribute beyond current levels, given both legal and political restrictions to greater Japanese participation in collective defense activities? And, how can any revitalization or reconfiguration of the alliance and respective roles and missions be accomplished in ways that are both generally acceptable to the publics of both nations and non-threatening to Japan's neighbors? Such questions have seldom been asked, much less discussed, at the official level. A true strategic dialogue is long overdue!

Washington has a responsibility to make it clear to Japan what it expects and desires from Tokyo in terms of greater security cooperation. It is then the Japanese government's responsibility to determine where it wants to go and where and how its desires overlap with Washington's. The two sides then need to reach some common understanding about revised roles and missions to ensure that their actions continue to be complementary – this is what strategic dialogue is all about. Once Japan has determined what it is willing to do, it must further determine if reinterpretations or amendments to current laws or even the constitution itself are required in order to travel down this chosen path.

It has long been Tokyo's position that Japan, like all other members of the United Nations, has the right of collective self-defense. But, unlike all other states, Japan has elected not to exercise this right. The decision to change, or not to change, this self-imposed restriction is for the Japanese people and government alone to make. Whether more active Japanese participation in international peacekeeping, peacemaking, or other such activities requires a reinterpretation or revision of the current constitution or just more courageous political leadership and greater national consensus is likewise for Japan to decide. Opinions vary on this topic within Japan. Of note, former Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa, during 50th Anniversary celebrations for the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, expressed his belief that a simple reinterpretation by the Prime Minister's Office is all that is required for Japan to engage in collective defense operations with the U.S.; comments that would have been unthinkable a year ago. Washington needs to remain neutral but supportive during this internal Japanese debate. The U.S. should not been seen as pressuring Japan to change its constitution … neither should Washington be seen as opposing such changes if this is the will of the Japanese people.

Prior to Prime Minister Koizumi's coming to power, few Japanese leaders appeared willing to broach this subject. Yet it will become increasingly difficult to sustain the alliance relationship, much less answer Washington's call for a deeper U.S.-Japan security partnership, without identifying the possible challenges and the future roles and missions breakdown that would best sustain "the world's most important bilateral relationship" well into the 21st century.

This is not to imply that the U.S.-Japan alliance is seriously troubled today. The current state of the relationship is as good or better than at any time since the historic 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Declaration set the Defense Guidelines revision process in motion … but so is the opportunity for improvement. Considerable effort is required on both sides to sustain the momentum, however, in order to take advantage of the

opportunity to further expand and reinvigorate the alliance as new, forward-thinking leaders take command on both sides of the Pacific.

Given the bureaucratic processes in both countries, but especially in Japan, changes in the alliance structure are likely to be gradual and very deliberate; they will be evolutionary, not revolutionary. While some Americans (and even some Japanese) will undoubtedly call for faster progress, an evolutionary approach is more likely to garner the Japanese domestic support that will be essential to any forward progress. Such an approach is also less likely to provoke a negative response from Japan's neighbors.

U.S.-ROK Alliance

U.S. security policy since the end of the Korean War has been marked by a remarkable policy continuity throughout the Cold War and beyond. U.S. policy has been one of promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, first and foremost by maintaining a credible deterrent against possible North Korean aggression. The continued basing of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea under the U.S.-ROK Mutual Security Treaty makes this deterrent both possible and credible.

This policy has remained constant during periods of increased tension on the Peninsula and during those rare instances of increased cooperation as well. Leaders both in the U.S. and the ROK are quick to point out even today, during a period of significant (although still tentative and uneven) North-South cooperation, that this deterrent function remains necessary and solid. Both sides have also indicated that a continued U.S.-Korea security relationship would be beneficial even after reunification or some form of North-South confederation or federation, a contention this author enthusiastically supports.

But it is also clear that the current North-South thaw, however tentative, provides unprecedented demands and opportunities for lasting change both in security policies and in the overall prospects for long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula. The ability to adjust to changing circumstances appear critical in the aftermath of the June 2000 North-South summit and the subsequent on again, off again thaw in U.S.-DPRK relations. Sustaining a deterrence policy in the face of North Korea's "smile diplomacy" will be one of the major challenges confronting the Bush administration, as will be the development of new policies, in close coordination with the ROK and Japan, that will allow the alliance to adjust to emerging new realities.

It was with some trepidation that Koreans on both sides of the DMZ watched the Bush administration come to power, given the more hard-line position many Congressional Republicans had taken over the years regarding North Korea. This anxiety grew from Inauguration Day to June 6, when the administration's long-awaited Korea policy review was finally completed. Despite many predictions to the contrary (and even some reporting after the fact), the review was, on the whole, quite balanced and not significantly different in terms of overall objectives from those pursued by the Clinton administration.

Even before the policy review was completed, comments by Deputy Secretary Armitage and Assistant Secretary Kelly strongly suggested that we would see more continuity than change in Washington's dealings on Peninsula issues (including U.S. humanitarian assistance to the North, which continued even during the review process). The U.S. policy review, in many respects, merely confirmed what President Bush had told President Kim during their much-maligned March 2001 summit – namely that Washington will continue to support the Sunshine Policy, the Agreed Framework, and the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) process with Seoul and Tokyo. (The Bush administration also seems prepared to participate in the Four-Party Talks – U.S., China, South Korea, and North Korea – when and if Pyongyang agrees to its resumption.) As promised by President Bush during his summit meeting with President Kim, Washington has also indicated its willingness to engage in substantive dialogue with Pyongyang on a variety of issues including missiles.

As Secretary Powell stressed during his visit to Seoul in July 2001, the Bush administration is prepared to "go anywhere at any time" to resume dialogue with North Korea. While the administration has made it clear that it has certain expectations about what the dialogue should include and how it should proceed, Powell stressed that "there are no preconditions" to the initiation of dialogue.

The Bush administration has stressed reciprocity and verification in any future negotiations with North Korea, but so did the Clinton administration – recall that the missile talks were suspended by Clinton, reportedly because the North was not willing to put enough on the table to justify a presidential visit to Pyongyang. The main difference in approach seems to be a U.S. desire for a more comprehensive dialogue. As Assistant Secretary Kelly spelled out during June 2001 House testimony:

> The president has directed us to undertake serious discussions with North Korea on a broad agenda, including improved implementation of the Agreed Framework,

a verifiable end to the DPRK's missile production and export programs, and a less threatening conventional military posture.

Unlike the Clinton administration, which favored a "step by step approach," Washington now plans to take a "comprehensive approach," to address the many elements that comprise Peninsula and regional security and will try to make progress simultaneously on as many issues as possible . . . provided, of course, that Pyongyang is willing to cooperate.

This broad approach is quite understandable, given that one of the primary complaints logged against the Clinton administration in its dealings with Pyongyang (by many South Koreans and Americans regardless of political affiliation) was that it seemed to approach the Peninsula as a non-proliferation problem rather than as a regional security problem with an important proliferation dimension. Halting proliferation is not an end in itself, but a means toward the broader goal of creating a peaceful, more stable Peninsula where, prior to unification (which all seem to agree is a long way off), North and South can peacefully coexist.

The Bush administration has indicated that it will try to persuade the North to reduce its massive conventional forces and otherwise engage in military confidence building measures (CBMs) to achieve "a less threatening conventional military posture." This was a goal of the Clinton administration as well – it was to be a topic in the Four-Party Talks. While it appears unlikely that Pyongyang will put its conventional forces on the table during future discussions with the U.S., at least in the initial stages, it is fully appropriate for the U.S. (and South Korea) to focus on this issue.

Of note, the need for mutual force reductions and other Peninsula confidence building measures was acknowledged during former President Jimmy Carter's 1994 dialogue with then-North Korean President Kim Il-sung. More important, Peninsula CBMs were at the heart of the 1991/92 North-South Korea Basic Agreement, promulgated (but never implemented) during an earlier episode of North-South rapprochement. Given this earlier agreement, it would seem to make more sense for Seoul, rather than Washington, to be the primary negotiator of Peninsula CBMs, even though close ROK-U.S. consultation and cooperation will be necessary if meaningful measures are to be achieved.

As difficult as dealing with a mercurial North Korea is for the U.S. and ROK today, an even more challenging task will be preparing for a future Asia in which the

North Korean threat has receded significantly or perhaps even disappeared. This will require a new rationale for the alliance that stresses regional stability rather than deterrence. While developing that rationale should begin now, as long as the DPRK exists as a separate entity, I would argue that some form of deterrence will be required and that this means the continued presence of U.S. military forces in the ROK and a continuation of a unified military command structure.

Even in the event of more genuine North-South cooperation, or even a loose Korean confederation, a continued ROK-U.S. security alliance presents the best insurance policy as a hedge against a sudden change in intent by the North. As a result, Washington and Seoul must continue to make it clear to Pyongyang that the continued presence of U.S. troops in the ROK is not a bargaining chip but an essential stabilizing force that makes U.S.-DPRK and South-North dialogue possible.

North Korean rhetoric notwithstanding, until reunification, the status and fate of U.S. forces based in the ROK should be for Seoul and Washington alone to determine; as far as Pyongyang is concerned, the U.S. presence must be seen as non-negotiable. Once true reunification occurs, it will then be up to Washington and the new unified Korean government to decide the desirability and nature of any new bilateral security arrangement.

This does not preclude reductions in U.S. force levels, pragmatic restructuring and relocation, or modifications to existing command arrangements. If tensions are significantly reduced, the U.S. – in close consultation with the Republic of Korea – could conduct some limited troop withdrawals. (Likewise, renewed provocations could justify a measured build-up of U.S. forces.) Rather than become the victim of potential fast-moving future events or of Pyongyang's political maneuvering, the U.S. and ROK should be examining possible force and command structure modifications now. Washington and Seoul should jointly and publicly establish clearly-defined milestones, based on

significant, verifiable North Korean actions, for implementing future changes in the nature or structure of the alliance and American force presence.

One final point about the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. The press has been full of speculation about American desires to change the terms of the agreement. However, the Bush administration is firmly on record supporting the current agreement as long as Pyongyang also honors its commitments (which it has thus far done). However, the real moment of truth for Pyongyang and for the Agreed Framework in general is the

requirement for the North to come in full compliance with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) prior to the delivery of any sensitive components of the promised light water reactors (LWRs). This requires detailed inspection to determine past accountability, a process that some speculate could take two to four years. Thus far, Pyongyang has not allowed the IAEA to begin this task – the IAEA's most recent attempt, in May 2001, was once again rejected by the DPRK. Thus, North Korea has only itself to blame if additional delays occur in the completion of this project.

In the meantime, the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) are honoring their part of the bargain. Construction activity continues on the LWR site (even though striking North Korean workers had to be replaced with Uzbek laborers) and KEDO continues to provide North Korea with 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually as compensation for shutting down its Yongbyon reactor. These deliveries are scheduled to continue until the first LWR becomes operational, making North Korea's demands for compensation if the project is delayed doubly inappropriate: first because it is already being compensated through the heavy fuel oil deliveries and second because it has been at least as much at fault for delays experienced thus far (which make the 2003 target date unattainable). Further delays appear inevitable if North Korea continues refusing to cooperate with the IAEA to come into full compliance.

At this writing, the world was still watching to see if North Korea would respond positively to the Bush administration's offer for renewed, comprehensive dialogue. One positive sign was the resumption, on Sept. 15, 2001, of high-level North-South talks unilaterally suspended by Pyongyang in March 2001. Pyongyang originally provided no explanation for the halt, even though the press speculated at the time that the North's decision could have been in response to the Bush administration's seemingly more hard-line approach toward North Korea. Kim Jong-il's May 2001 statement that he was waiting for the Bush administration to complete its Korean Peninsula policy review before setting a date to visit Seoul fed this belief. However, the U.S. willingness to resume dialogue has not been met with DPRK willingness finally to set a date for Kim Jong-il's visit to the South, raising questions as to whether earlier comments regarding Bush's hard-line policy were the reason or merely a convenient excuse behind Kim Jong-il's refusal thus far to honor his return visit commitment.

There is no question that the prolonged U.S. Korean policy review process had a negative impact on sustaining the Peninsula peace momentum. However, it is direct North-South dialogue that is most critical to restoring and sustaining the momentum and

all this requires is for Pyongyang once again to sit down and talk substantively with its willing interlocutors in Seoul. Also required is Kim Jong-il's promised visit to the South. In the final analysis, it will be North Korea's actions that will be the primary determinant of U.S. policy on the Peninsula.

The Need for a Trilateral "Virtual Alliance." As noted earlier, close security cooperation among Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo has already paid rich dividends. The creation of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group has helped to institutionalize this three-way cooperation, at least as far as dealing with Pyongyang is concerned. The challenge is to determine how best to bring the three sides even closer together in a way that serves all three nation's national security interests, while also taking into account the concerns of others (especially China and Russia).

A formal, official trilateral security alliance does not appear to be a serious option either today or in a post-Korean reunification era. Absent a clear and present threat, a formal three-party alliance is neither necessary nor advisable. The challenges involved in creating – and in gaining both public support for and legislative approval of – a formal treaty would be daunting and, for Japan, would raise serious constitutional issues as well. Regardless of its actual motives, a formal treaty would also be seen by Beijing (and perhaps by Moscow and others) as an attempt to encircle or contain China and would thus complicate China's relations with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. It could also serve to drive Russia and China together in ways that would run contrary to U.S. or allied national security interests.

This is why I would call instead for the creation of a "virtual alliance," achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-ROK security relationship post-unification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul. Such a virtual alliance, in my view, is not only achievable, but also provides the best hope for long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole. [For more on this issue, see Ralph A. Cossa, *U.S.-Korea-Japan: Building Toward a "Virtual Alliance"* (CSIS Press: Washington, D.C. 1999).]

The basic prerequisite for a closer triangular relationship is a continued American commitment to Asia Pacific security, best demonstrated through a continuation of its existing bilateral alliance structure and through a modest yet still credible forward military presence. Future trilateral cooperation also hinges on the ability of Japan and South Korea to overcome past suspicions and focus constructively on the future.

Unfortunately, of the three legs of the virtual alliance, ROK-Japan remains the weakest link. The two countries took a major step forward when President Kim Dae-jung and then-Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo, during their October 1998 and March 1999 summits, made the politically courageous decision to put the past behind and build toward a cooperative future relationship. This manifested itself through the establishment of hotlines between their military headquarters and through high-level exchange visits and planning for even greater military-to-military interaction. However, the spring 2001 controversy over a new Japanese middle school textbook that Koreans believe "glorifies" Japan's past and the heated response to Prime Minister Koizumi's August 13 visit to Yasukuni Shrine shows how fragile the relationship still is.

What's needed most today (beyond concerted, cooperative efforts to defuse the lingering textbook controversy) is a broader education campaign, vigorously supported by both governments, to overcome the suspicions, concerns, and general reluctance of both Koreans and Japanese to see one another as natural allies. If the ROK-Japan link can be restored and then further strengthened, and if America's security ties with Tokyo and Seoul remain firm, then a virtual alliance will naturally emerge and prosper, thus increasing the prospects for stability in East Asia.

U.S.-Korea Alliance Post-Reunification. Just as a strong defense alliance relationship between the U.S. and ROK today contributes immeasurably to regional stability, so too can a future alliance between the U.S. and a reunified Korea, assuming (as appears inevitable) that any genuine reunification will be under the political and economic system that currently prevails in the South. Even after reunification, common ideals, common values, and common objectives between Washington and Seoul can provide the basis for a continued robust security relationship, one that will prevent a resumption of historic strategic rivalries and thus ensure peace and stability on the Peninsula. This will enhance the prospects for simultaneous good relations between a reunited Korea and all its giant neighbors.

As a "shrimp among whales" – to borrow an ancient Korean proverb – Korea has always been concerned about being dominated by its neighbors. While the most recent transgressor was imperial Japan during the first half of the 20th century, both China and Japan have, over the past millennium, exercised control over the Peninsula on numerous occasions. Meanwhile, Russia played the central role in dividing Korea during the U.S.-Soviet Cold War confrontation and exerted sufficient control over Pyongyang first to veto and then to approve (if not order) the North's invasion of the South.

The introduction of a fourth whale into Korean waters has been largely beneficial to the ROK since the U.S. has no territorial or colonial ambitions and – debates over bases and status of forces agreements notwithstanding – has generally respected the ROK's sovereignty, while providing the security guarantees under which both political and economic reform have safely taken place.

In today's geopolitical setting, the U.S. – as the regional "balancer" or "stabilizer" – continues to help underwrite current and future Korean security. The U.S.-ROK alliance allows Seoul simultaneously to pursue close and cordial relations with all its neighbors. Without U.S. security guarantees, the options are limited. Korea could attempt to go it alone, although neutrality has not proven to be a successful strategy in the past. Or, it could choose to align with one of the nearby whales. Whichever one Seoul chooses – and China would be the most likely (though not inevitable) choice, since memories of Japan's domination are freshest and Russia today has little to offer – historic rivalries and suspicions are almost certain to be revitalized, leading to greater regional instability.

Particularly unsettling would be a unified Korea that looks toward Japan as its primary future threat or enemy. It is an unfortunate fact that one of the few things that the people of North and South Korea have in common today is an historical sense of distrust for their Japanese neighbors, a distrust shared, and all-too-frequently played upon, by the Chinese. If future South-North or Korea-China ties are built on this factor however – with Japan emerging as the common concern today and future threat tomorrow – this will put Korea on a collision course with the United States, whose national security strategy rests upon the foundation of close U.S.-Japan relations and greater Japanese participation in regional security affairs (within the framework of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty and Japan's Peace Constitution).

A unified Korea closely aligned with and under the protection of either China or Japan is sure to make the other great regional powers nervous, even if the relationship is professed to be benign. This is why many South Koreans, President Kim Dae-jung foremost among them, attach high priority both to simultaneous close relations with the four major powers and to the continuation of a strong alliance relationship with the U.S.

The U.S. likewise sees the value of a continued strong U.S.-ROK alliance relationship even after North-South reconciliation or reunification. The Clinton administration's EASR states that "the U.S. strongly agrees [with President Kim Dae-

jung] that our alliance and military presence will continue to support stability both on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the region after North Korea is no longer a threat." This sentiment has been reinforced by the Bush administration. Under most plausible scenarios, I personally see a future role for U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula even after reconciliation or reunification, at least in the near term, in order to help ensure a secure environment conducive to much-needed demilitarization, if for no other reason.

Not addressed here is the real, but hopefully remote, possibility that Pyongyang's current "smile diplomacy" will not be sustained. Given the roller coaster-like history of North-South relation, it is possible that relations could once again take a sudden downward plunge. Renewed tensions and a resumption of North Korean-instigated provocations would, of course, end any prospects for force adjustments, other than perhaps a measured build-up of U.S. forces. In addition, a resumption of North Korean missile tests could (and should) result both in the deployment of additional theater missile defense (TMD) assets and a ROK commitment to participate in future research and development and deployment of advanced TMD systems.

North Korea is not the only one capable of derailing the current peace initiative. It must also be noted that the Kim Dae-jung administration and opposition party leaders have failed to reach a bipartisan consensus on President Kim's Sunshine Policy toward the North. The main opposition Grand National Party (GNP) has severely criticized President Kim's conciliatory approach to the North and the GNP's presumptive candidate in the 2003 elections, Lee Hoi-chang, has been one of the most vocal critics of President Kim's "too soft" approach toward dealing with the North. The early September no-confidence vote against Unification Minister Lim Dong-won, which resulted in his removal from this key position, represents another partisan blow, especially since members of the then-ruling coalition abandoned Kim Dae-jung on this issue. It would be an absolute tragedy if, at this historic moment, domestic politics in the ROK were to unravel the Peninsula's greatest opportunity for North-South reconciliation since the Peninsula was divided.

In sum, until the Korean Peninsula is fully reunified, the U.S.-ROK security alliance remains essential for continued peace and stability. It remains a potentially relevant factor in assuring peace on the Peninsula post-reunification as well. The American security blanket provided through a continued alliance relationship will continue to make it possible for Seoul, both now and after reunification, to pursue close, cordial relations simultaneously with its three giant neighbors: Japan, China, and Russia. Absent such assurances, Seoul might feel compelled to establish security links with one

of its larger neighbors to the perceived detriment of the other two, a destabilizing prospect, especially if it resulted in a Sino-Korean strategic relationship seemingly aimed at Japan.

A word of caution, however. The desire and ability of both sides to continue a close security alliance after unification cannot and should not be presumed. If U.S. and ROK officials and strategic planners are convinced that a continued U.S. military presence is necessary or desirable even after North-South reconciliation or reunification, they must begin serious discussions now in order to develop the strategic rationale. They must then begin making convincing arguments to potentially skeptical legislatures and publics in both nations, lest they be overtaken by events should reunification or some other form of genuine reconciliation or rapprochement come more quickly than expected.

U.S.-Australia Alliance

The U.S.-Australia alliance is in many respects the strongest and most secure of America's Asian alliances and the one least affected by the end of the Cold War. The alliance had its birth in the 1951 ANZUS Treaty that linked Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. together as part of a Cold War structure that included similar, failed attempts to link together the nations of Southeast Asia (through the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization or SEATO) and Central Asia (CENTO). It survived New Zealand's exit following disputes in the early 1980's over America's "neither confirm nor deny" nuclear weapons policy and the New Zealand "nuclear allergy," which resulted in American

nuclear powered ships (regardless of weapons status) being prohibited from entering New Zealand ports.

While ANZUS was a Cold War creation, U.S.-Aussie military cooperation dates back to World Wars I and II, when U.S. and Australian soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder, as they subsequently have during Cold War conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and the first post-Cold War conflict in the Persian Gulf. The alliance draws its strength from common values and objectives and closely shared interests. It also includes a special intelligence partnership that is as relevant today as it was in the Cold War and could become potentially more critical as Washington pursues ballistic missile defense (BMD) initiatives. And, lest we forget, the Australian flag still flies in front of the United Nations Command Headquarters in Seoul, underscoring Canberra's continued commitment to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

1996 was a pivotal year for the U.S.-Australian alliance relationship as well, as that year's Sydney Statement emanating from the annual Australian-U.S. Ministerial Dialogue (AUSMIN) underscored the post-Cold War relevance of the alliance while charting its future course. This is not to say that the relationship has not experienced its share of problems and occasional drift. This was particularly true during the 1999 East Timor crisis, when Washington failed to meet Canberra's expectations of direct U.S. support for the Australian-led effort to end the chaos that followed East Timor's referendum in favor of independence from Indonesia.

Nonetheless, the alliance relationship remains strong, with its greatest challenge perhaps coming from benign neglect as both sides, but particularly Washington, run the risk of taking the relationship for granted. Disagreements over China policy can also put strains on the alliance, as Canberra attempts to have a steady cooperative relationship with Beijing despite the wide swings up and down in Sino-U.S. relations. Australia is also seen as somewhat more attuned to its neighbors concerns about "external interference in one's internal affairs" and has the need, post-Timor, to smooth over ruffled relations with its giant neighbor Indonesia and the other ASEAN states. None of these differences is too difficult to manage, much less alliance threatening.

One could further argue that Australia is also a silent partner in the emerging U.S.-Japan-Korea virtual alliance, given Canberra's military commitment to the UN Command, its active participation in KEDO, and its stated support for other initiatives such as the Four-Party Talks and TCOG process. Few attempts have been made to strengthen or deepen four-way cooperation among these key U.S. alliance partners, however, although (as will shortly be argued) they could form the core for a future "coalition of the willing" in East Asia.

To ensure the future relevance of the U.S.-Australia alliance, more frequent high-level contacts and strategic dialogue are needed to jointly address future challenges. Attention must also be paid to continued interoperability as technological advancements in the American military can make future joint military operations (or even joint training or cooperation in operations other than warfare) more difficult – this is a problem for the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliance as well.

Finally, it should be noted that the U.S.-Australia alliance can also serve as a useful model for what America's Northeast Asia alliance relationships might look like once the threat from North Korea has receded. Few doubt the solidity of the U.S.-

Australian alliance, given the number of times Americans and Aussies have fought shoulder to shoulder in the century just passed. Yet, on a day-to-day basis, there are few American military forces based on Australian soil, beyond those manning the joint intelligence facilities. The U.S.-Australia model demonstrates convincingly that alliance relationships do not necessarily or always require large forward detachments of U.S. troops to be credible.

The number of deployed U.S. forces is not equivalent to the degree of U.S. commitment to an alliance relationship. Rather, it is a reflection of the surrounding threat environment. In a more benign Northeast Asia, fewer forward-deployed forces would be necessary to provide the same level of deterrence and rapid response capability, especially as the so-called revolution in military affairs enhances America's ability to project power from greater distances. To sustain an alliance, the most critical factors are mutual interests and shared values and objectives, combined with a willingness and readiness to respond if challenged.

While I would not personally subscribe to a total withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Northeast Asia even under the most benign circumstances, a considerable reduction in the number of U.S. overseas forces would be both possible and desirable post-Korean reunification, provided new security challenges do not emerge. A carefully thought through and closely coordinated reduction would not decrease either the viability or the credibility of the U.S. bilateral alliance structure. To start a major drawdown now would be irresponsible. But discussions with all of Washington's alliance partners about future force postures and mutual agreement regarding the changed circumstances that would merit a phased drawdown are already overdue.

Multilateral "Coalitions of the Willing"

From time to time there have been suggestions about the need for a broader NATO-like multilateral security arrangement in the Asia Pacific region. As the failed SEATO/CENTO attempts demonstrated, this proved impossible to achieve, even during the Cold War. The prospects of such a formalized multilateral security mechanism evolving in a time of relative peace thus seems remote. However, security-oriented multilateral cooperation *per se* is not unthinkable in Asia; in fact, it is alive and well and spreading.

In the security area, the ASEAN Regional Forum annually brings together foreign

ministers from 22 Asia Pacific nations plus a European Union representative – 23 members in all – for dialogue on security issues. ARF working groups (called Inter-Sessional Support Groups) have also been established to delve further into issues of common concern. While the ARF is focused on dialogue and the examination and development of CBMs today, it hopes to evolve into the field of preventive diplomacy and eventually take on a limited conflict prevention or conflict resolution role as well. However, while military officials have been encouraged to participate, it is very much a foreign ministry-run enterprise and there is little prospect (or apparent desire) for the ARF to take on an active military role.

In addition, since 1993 the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation "gathering of economies" – as opposed to "nations," a compromise reached with China to permit participation by Taiwan and Hong Kong – has added an annual "Leaders' Meeting," which has brought regional heads of state together for dialogue ostensibly focused on economic and trade issues. However, their mere gathering has security implications, as do the many side summit meetings that occur along the sidelines. This was most evident in 1999 when the leaders, meeting in Auckland, came together outside the APEC context to deal with the then-ongoing crisis in Timor. The resultant military operation, headed by Australia, was conducted under United Nations auspices, however, and not as a regional ARF or APEC effort.

In addition to these more established multilateral dialogue mechanisms, there has been growing military-to-military cooperation in the Asia Pacific region in recent years, largely spearheaded by the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM). There has been a growing effort to take regularly recurring U.S. bilateral exercises and multilateralize them, both to create habits of broader cooperation as well as to stretch exercise dollars through more efficient use of military personnel and resources. For example, this year's Cobra Gold 2001, the 20th iteration of a U.S.-Thai military exercise, included participation for the first time by Singaporean forces. Nine other nations – including U.S. allies Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines – sent observers. (China was also invited as an observer but declined.) Similarly, CARAT 2000 last year involved sequential U.S. exercises with naval forces from the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Thailand, while the U.S. Pacific Fleet's annual RIMPAC exercise has for years brought allied and other friendly navies together for combined training off Hawaii.

One thing many of these multilateral training exercises have in common is participation by America's various Asia Pacific allies. Thailand, for one, has been

increasingly receptive to broader cooperative efforts and the Philippines has also warmed up to the idea following the passage in 1999 of a new Visiting Forces Agreement that paved the way for renewed exercise activity with U.S. forces. Japanese military forces have also been observers at such exercises, despite Tokyo's self-imposed collective defense prohibition, and has routinely participated in bilateral training with the U.S. Navy coincident with RIMPAC, in effect providing the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force with exposure to the operations of other navies beside the U.S.

As noted earlier, no attempt has been made to try to further institutionalize multilateral military cooperation among the U.S., Japan, ROK, and Australia, much less with America's two Southeast Asian allies (Thailand and the Philippines) . . . and none should be attempted. The logic that argues against a formal U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral alliance applies here as well. But the degree of interoperability established by frequent contact between the U.S. and its Asia Pacific allies, both bilaterally and in broader settings, can allow them to form the core of cooperative coalitions among the willing in the event of future crisis, whether they be caused by opposing military forces or Mother Nature. Australia's own multilateral cooperative effort with New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the UK – the Five Power Defense Arrangement – also serves to provide an informal linkage between American forces and those of several other Southeast Asia states, as does concerted efforts by several ASEAN states (Singapore in particular) to increase military cooperation with the United States. For example, Singapore has provided facilities for a modest U.S. logistics presence in that city-state since the time of the U.S. base closures in the Philippines and has recently developed a new deep water pier to facilitate visits by American aircraft carriers.

During the visit to Canberra in July 2001 of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the question of closer defense cooperation among the U.S., Australia, Japan, and perhaps even South Korea created a tempest in a teapot, largely through exaggerated press reporting and a series of no doubt well intended but misdirected follow-ups and pundit commentaries. Despite the efforts of both U.S. Secretaries and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to play down the issue, a debate quickly ensued in the press regarding the advisability of a "JANZUS" alliance. Foreign Minister Downer made things worse, first by using the "N"-word – he said that no one was suggesting an Asian NATO, which of course lead to accusations that this way the intent – and then allowed as how these informal multilateral dialogue would not take place if China objected – which Beijing immediately did. Surprisingly, there was little fuss made over Downer's apparent willingness to give China a veto over who Australia could discuss security issues with, which seems to me to be the most newsworthy

statement of all.

As noted earlier, I would not call for a broader formal alliance network; JANZUS seems particularly inappropriate given that ANZUS no longer exists as a functioning security relationship. But regular dialogue and closer security corporation among U.S., Japan, and Australia seems both reasonable and increasingly useful, especially in areas where security interest and objectives closely overlap – Indonesia most readily coming to mind. Washington, Tokyo, and Canberra should be making a greater effort to coordinate their respective attempts to ensure Jakarta's ongoing (and occasionally imperiled) quest for democracy and territorial integrity succeed. It is also clear that common values, interests, and objectives and the interoperability brought about by years of combined military training make the U.S. and its Asian allies logical partners in any future contigency calling for a coalition among the willing. It is also important for Washington and its regional allies to ensure that their respective relations with China do not run at cross purposes with one another.

Sino-U.S. Relations

Everyone expected the first few months of the Bush administration would be tough for Sino-U.S. relations: a decision was due on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian was seeking overnight stays in the U.S. on his way to and from his visit to Latin America while his predecessor, Lee Teng-hui, had another trip planned to his alma mater, Cornell University; the delay in China's accession to the WTO meant another potential Congressional challenge to Beijing's "normal trade relations" status; and Bush's anticipated decision to push forward with national and theater missile defense now lumped together as MD by the Pentagon) was sure to increase Beijing's paranoia regarding Bush's true intentions toward China. Add to this the desire by some on the American right and left for Washington to actively seek to block Beijing's 2008 Olympics bid, and a rise in tensions appeared inevitable.

Complicating this predictable list of sore points was the unanticipated April 1, 2001 collision between a U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance aircraft and a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea, which resulted in the loss of the Chinese pilot and aircraft and the emergency landing and subsequent 11 day detention of the U.S. aircrew on China's Hainan Island. Following the collision and the EP-3's emergency landing at a Chinese airfield on Hainan Island, the U.S. was quick (perhaps too quick) to pin the blame on the Chinese side. Beijing, in turn, immediately upped the ante, not only by placing the blame

squarely on the "intruding spy plane" but by demanding a U.S. apology for causing the accident. The international spotlight became focused on Beijing, in whose hands rested the fate of the American crew, not to mention the possible future direction of Sino-U.S. relations

The Chinese handling of the incident – publicly blaming the U.S. before the facts were known (and in defiance of conventional logic, given the type of aircraft involved) and protesting the U.S. spy plane's "violation" of Chinese airspace (by flying to Hainan Island and landing without diplomatic pre-clearance, despite the obvious emergency nature of the "mayday" divert) – was reminiscent of earlier periodic confrontations between the U.S. and North Korea, when American aircraft inadvertently strayed across the DMZ. Even here, such incidents in recent times have been handled more expeditiously, as Pyongyang determined that a less confrontational approach with Washington occasionally was in its interest.

Fortunately, cooler heads ultimately prevailed. On balance, the Bush administration deserved high marks for defusing the situation and meeting Beijing more than half way. China also accepted less than initially demanded. Both sides appeared to proclaim the incident "over and behind us" during Powell's July 2001 visit to Beijing. However, a considerable amount of ill-will was generated by the incident, especially

within the respective defense establishments, and this is sure to have a lingering impact on Sino-U.S. relations.

Another event with potential long-lasting impact was President Bush's April 25, 2001 remarks that his administration was prepared to do "whatever it took" to help Taiwan defend itself if attacked by the PRC. Senior administration officials, including the president himself, were quick to take to the airways to proclaim that there had been no change in the U.S. "one China" policy and that a declaration of independence by Taiwan "is not part of the one China policy." Nonetheless, to many in Beijing, it confirmed deep suspicions about Bush's true intentions. Taiwan officials, already delighted by Bush's victory, were further heartened by Bush's initial comment. The concern in Beijing and elsewhere (including Washington) was that Taipei would also be emboldened by these remarks – hence the perceived need for Bush's caveats – but Taipei wisely maintained its non-confrontational approach toward the Mainland.

Secretary Powell seemed to successfully skirt this issue during his Beijing visit, simply declaring that the U.S. continued a "one China" policy, while stating that "the

Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and the three communiqués that subsequently followed that act are the basis of our relationship with China and are a sound enough basis for us to move forward in a positive way." Powell's reference to the TRA in addition to the three communiqués sends and important message to Beijing about Washington's continued commitment to Taiwan's security. Of note, during then-President Clinton's 1999 visit to Shanghai, he also made an oblique reference to the TRA when, following his controversial "three no's" statement – no Taiwan independence, no two China's or one China, one Taiwan, and no participant by Taiwan in official governmental multilateral forums – he added an important caveat – that the cross-Strait problem be handled peacefully since "this is our law." The fourth no – no use of force – was subsequently followed by a fifth one: no solution that is unacceptable to the people of Taiwan. While Bush administration officials are unlikely either to repeat or specifically revoke the three no's, Clinton's fourth and fifth no's are likely to be featured prominently when articulating China policy.

During my visits to Beijing in June and July 2001 (before the Powell visit), almost everyone I talked to, from government officials to leading scholars to the man on the street, seemed genuinely puzzled and concerned about the future direction of Sino-U.S. relations. Few were ready to conclude that Washington was embarked on a course of confrontation and containment, but many saw this as the prevailing trend. Most curiously, they also seemed to see the nature of the future relationship as resting almost exclusively in America's hands. Few seemed prepared to acknowledge that Beijing's actions have had (and will continue to have) a significant impact on the future direction of what almost everyone on both sides agrees is a seriously strained relationship.

Their confusion is understandable. The Bush administration has taken great pains to define what China is and is not. China is a "competitor for influence" and a "potential regional rival" but also a "trading partner" and a "potential partner willing to cooperate in areas where our strategic interests overlap." China is all these things, said Secretary of State Powell, "but China is not an enemy and our challenge is to keep it that way." While the Chinese still recall candidate Bush's "strategic competitor" label – Powell was asked about it repeatedly throughout his Asia trip – for the most part this highly pejorative slogan has been dropped from the official Washington lexicon. When pressed about this term during his July Asia trip, Powell replied that the Sino-U.S. relationship was "too complex" to be captured in a single word or phrase. But beyond general statements that Washington "is not in a confrontational mode" or that the U.S. seeks a "cooperative relationship" with Beijing, little effort has been made to define the desired end state.

During the Clinton years, Washington and Beijing had agreed to "build toward a constructive strategic partnership." Current nostalgic reporting notwithstanding, neither side claimed that such a relationship already existed; only that this was the long-term goal. The Bush administration rejected this slogan – realistically speaking, a true strategic partnership was an over-idealistic goal, given the fundamental differences that exist between the two societies.

But the Bush administration has yet to clearly articulate its vision for a future Sino-U.S. relationship, leaving the Chinese to engage in worst case assessments. Those who see an administration bent on confrontation and containment claim lots of evidence: the robust U.S. arms sales package to Taiwan; Bush's commitment to pursue a missile defense shield that they fear will place China's "minimum deterrence" force in jeopardy; the high-profile transits of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian; the granting of a visa to Taiwan's chief "troublemaker," former President Lee Teng-hui; America's continued spying against China, as highlighted by the EP-3 incident; and, of course, Bush's infamous "whatever it took" statement.

Overlooked are the silver linings in these gray clouds: the decision to withhold the weapons system most desired by Taipei (and feared by Beijing), Aegis-equipped destroyers with enhanced anti-missile capabilities; assurances that only a limited missile defense is planned, one that "should not cause Beijing sleepless nights"; the lack of "official" activities during Chen's two transits; the low-keyed nature of Lee's visit; the willingness to meet Beijing more than half way in resolving the EP-3 affair while carefully avoiding the "H"-word (hostage), which would have turned the incident into a full-fledged crisis; and Bush's quick follow-up to the "whatever it took" comment which underscored his continued commitment to a "one China" policy, to which he added, significantly, perhaps Washington's most direct warning to date against a Taiwan "declaration of independence." Add to this the administration's approval of "normal trade relations" status for China for another year, its compromise agreement on China's WTO entry, and its neutral stance on Beijing's Olympics bid (despite heavy pressure from many in Congress to try to block Beijing's effort). With all these facts, one can find equally compelling evidence that a cooperative relationship is genuinely being sought. Yet the Chinese tendency at present is to see the glass half empty, not half full.

Nonetheless, senior Chinese officials recognize the importance of good Sino-U.S. relations and want to see the relationship get back on track. During the Powell visit, both sides took great pains to underscore the positive side of the relationship. Beijing, of course, still wants Washington to pay due respect to China's core concerns, especially as

regards Taiwan and missile defense. But Beijing must be willing, in return, to abandon its own incessant rhetoric accusing Washington of seeking "absolute security" or "global hegemony in a unipolar world" in favor of a constructive strategic dialogue with Washington that recognizes the legitimate security concerns of both sides. With Powell's visit over, both sides appear intent on building a more positive relationship, one that can be solidified (perhaps with a new, more positive slogan) when President Bush visits Shanghai and Beijing in October 2001.

Missile Defense: Dialogue Welcome . . . and Needed. President Bush's announcement on May 1 that the U.S. was committed to pursuing a missile defense system added additional strains not only to Sino-U.S. relations but to Washington's ties with many of its longtime allies (in Europe as well as in Asia). Bush announced that "deterrence can no longer be based solely on the threat of nuclear retaliation," further arguing that "defenses can strengthen deterrence by reducing the incentive for proliferation." As a result, Bush said he tasked the Defense Department to identify "near-term options that could allow us to deploy an initial capability against limited threats," stating unequivocally that "when ready, and working with Congress, we will deploy missile defenses to strengthen global security and stability." President Bush also promised "real consultations" in determining what America's future missile defense system would look like. "We are not presenting our friends and allies with unilateral decisions already made," Bush asserted, stating his administration's willingness to take the concerns of others into account.

There appeared to be a dual message in Bush's announcement. First, to those who were intent on convincing Washington that missile defense was a bad idea or impossible dream that should be abandoned, the message was, simply stated, "save your breath." The U.S. was going to have some form of missile defense; the "will we or won't we" debate was over. But Bush was also saying that the form of missile defense to be pursued had not been determined and that he was willing to listen to, and to factor in to the final system design, the concerns of those most affected by this decision. To underscore this point, he sent high-ranking teams to Asia and Europe to discuss the issue and collect feedback.

The decision to pursue NMD has been highlighted by many international critics as another example of "U.S. unilateralism" and there is some truth in this argument. But few countries, in making what is essentially a sovereign national security decision, have taken as many pains as has the U.S. (under Clinton as well as under Bush) to consult with allies and others every step of the way. When Russia announced a few years back that it was abandoning its nuclear weapons "no first use" policy, no consultations were held.

Likewise, when China decided to unilaterally expand its military presence in the South China Sea (Mischief Reef) or to dramatically increase the number of offensive missiles it has deployed within range not just of Taiwan but of all its neighbors in Southeast and Northeast Asia, it just did it. Yet both continue to lead the crusade against U.S. "unilateralism."

The unenviable task of soliciting Chinese feedback on Bush's missile defense announcement fell upon Assistant Secretary Kelly. Kelly had accompanied Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to Japan and South Korea for similar discussions. But, in a powerful message that "it was not business as usual" in the wake of the EP-3 crew's earlier 11 day detention and the (at the time) still unresolved dispute over the aircraft's return, Armitage proceeded instead to India (arriving on the anniversary of New Delhi's May 1998 nuclear test – another pointed message?). By most accounts, Kelly had frank and substantive talks with Chinese officials, including the Foreign Ministry's Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Sha Zukang, who (at least publicly) remained unconvinced about NMD's "non-threatening" nature.

Missile defense was also high on the agenda during Secretary Powell's brief one-day visit to Beijing in late July. While there, Powell also tried to assure his Chinese interlocutors, including President Jiang Zemin, that America's envisioned missile defense system would not threaten China's (or Russia's) deterrent capability. This has been a constant State Department message – Powell earlier told a skeptical U.S. Congress that the president's missile defense plan should not cause Moscow or Beijing any sleepless nights.

Nonetheless, Beijing's rhetoric still seems fixated on the "trying to convince Washington not to proceed" mode, however. What's needed is a serious Sino-U.S. dialogue on what China's genuine security concerns are, given Washington's current inclination to listen. Secretary Powell has said that the currently-envisioned U.S. missile defense plan is not aimed at negating China's nuclear deterrent capability. But if Beijing continues to insist on its current "all or nothing" approach, it could end up being faced with a more vigorous, threatening (to China) U.S. missile defense system. Proponents for such a system are numerous, especially in the U.S. defense establishment. The time has come for Beijing to exhibit some "understanding" of U.S. concerns, even as it pursues its own national security interests.

Looking Down the Road

The U.S. bilateral alliance structure that served well the cause of regional peace and stability during the Cold War can similarly help promote future peace and stability if properly maintained and focused, once the North Korean threat subsides, on regional stability rather than deterrence or containment.

As is the case today, the U.S.-Japan alliance remains the linchpin. Washington and Tokyo must work together closely to permit more equal participation and a greater overall role for Japan, even if this requires a reinterpretation or revision to Japan's constitution. Special care must be given, however, to accomplish this transition in a manner that remains non-threatening to Japan's neighbors. Conversely, Japan's neighbors must realize that today's leaders, several generations removed from those responsible for World War II and earlier atrocities, are a new breed, justifiably proud of Japan's post-war accomplishments and eager to see Japan play a more active, responsible role in the international community.

On the Korean Peninsula, deterrence remains the order of the day as long as North Korea remains a separate entity with a separate military. But the U.S. and ROK, in close cooperation with Japan, should begin now to develop the rationale and lay the groundwork for future U.S.-Korea security cooperation post reunification. While a formal trilateral alliance appears unnecessary and could even prove counterproductive, the U.S., Japan, and South Korea should work toward the development of a virtual alliance, achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-Korea security relationship post reunification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul.

Likewise, a more structured multilateral military alliance system involving Australia and other U.S. Asia Pacific allies or like-minded friends makes little sense in the post-Cold War era. However, America's Asia Pacific bilateral alliances and the extended military-to-military contacts both with U.S. military forces directly and with the forces of America's allies, has created enhanced ability as well as a growing inclination to cooperate in the military arena, especially for operations other than war. It is doubtful that this expanded cooperation will result in a more formalized military structure in the Asia Pacific region similar to the ever-expanding NATO in Europe, absent a clear and present (and broadly recognized) danger, such a formalized multilateral structure is unnecessary, undesirable, and in all probability unachievable. However, the habits of cooperation and enhanced interoperability provided by America's bilateral alliances and increased military-to-military contacts between U.S. and regional military forces provides

a solid foundation for the creation of ad hoc coalitions of the willing as circumstances may dictate or demand in the future.

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