The United States and Asia: New Century, New Challenges

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Executive Summary

In the inaugural edition of this year's *Issues & Insights* series, Robert Scalapino, Robson Research Professor of Government Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, surveys America's key bilateral relationships in Asia. The U.S.-Japan relationship, one of the most important alliances in the world, continues to be robust, although the U.S. is deeply worried about Japan's economy and its future prospects. The challenge for the alliance is moving toward genuine partnership and accommodating the likely drawdown of forward-deployed U.S. forces in Asia.

Despite some setbacks, U.S.-China relations are probably stronger today than at any time in the past. Although some forces in each country see the other as a threat, China's chief focus is resolving domestic difficulties while successive U.S. presidents have learned that engagement benefits both nations and the entire region. Taiwan will continue to be a sore spot, but overall, Scalapino argues the prospects for the Sino-U.S. relationship are good.

U.S. relations with Russia are better than at any time since World War II. Scalapino gives Russian President Vladimir Putin much of the credit for the improvement but cautions that future developments will hinge upon domestic trends in Russia and developments in South and Central Asia – two regions of concern to Moscow.

Uncertainty clouds the Korean Peninsula. South Korean President Kim Dae-jung is now a lame duck, which casts a shadow over his Sunshine Policy. While North Korea has done little to reciprocate South Korean overtures, the reclusive state has tried to strengthen relations with a host of other nations. Scalapino believes that the DPRK is committed to domestic reform and better relations with some countries to ease its economic crisis.

In Southeast Asia, the U.S. continues to support economic assistance through multilateral institutions. U.S. interest and participation in regional multilateral bodies such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum have increased. The antiterrorist campaign has facilitated closer relations with many states of the region.

In its dealings with all nations, Washington must balance the need for quick and effective action, which is often done unilaterally, and international legitimacy, which derives from multilateral coalitions. This dilemma is especially acute when facing "humanitarian crises" that challenge traditional notions of state sovereignty. As the world's pre-eminent military and economic power, the U.S. role in these debates will be critical.

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Introduction

We are privileged to live in the most revolutionary era in human history. Never has change penetrated so deeply and occurred so rapidly. Moreover, in terms of depth and speed, the United States is currently the world's most revolutionary society. Each American, of whatever status, has had to cope with constant changes affecting beliefs, relationships, and one's entire way of life. Yet the revolution is now global, with every nation and people affected. China is an example. While Shanghai demonstrates change in its most extensive forms, even in the remote parts of Yunnan or Tibet, transformation is underway.

In this setting, every nation must cope with the interaction among three forces: internationalism, nationalism, and communalism. Today, international organizations and less formal ad hoc groups involving multiple units have both proliferated, covering economic, political, and strategic issues, and affecting every nation-state. At the same time, we are witnessing a resurgence of nationalism in many parts of the world, sometimes as a substitute for declining ideology in rallying public support for national causes or as a response to the threats of globalization in its diverse forms.

Yet a third force renders the scene more complex. In a period of great pressure, individuals are often caused to ponder consciously or unconsciously the questions, "Who am I?" and "What do I believe?" Thus, psychological comfort is frequently provided by a commitment to religion, especially fundamentalism or sects, intensified emphasis upon one's ethnicity or tribe, or deepened allegiance to one's locality. Hence, communalism has been strengthened in a variety of ways, posing challenges to national unity. And how a government copes with the competitive and partly conflicting forces of internationalism, nationalism, and communalism has a major influence on the degree of stability it achieves.

Before speculating on the impact of these factors upon the United States and its foreign policy, let me turn to certain specifics, commencing with America's key bilateral relations in Asia. Despite the rise of multilateralism, bilateral relations remain a critical determinant of international relations at present.

U.S.-Japan Relations: Essential, if not Intimate

Successive U.S. presidents have referred to U.S.-Japan relations as the most important single relationship for the U.S. The United States and Japan are the two largest economies in the world, despite current difficulties. Economic relations between the two allies have been vitally important, albeit not without problems. Japan's extensive trade surplus with the U.S. and its reluctance to abandon protectionism have been past sources of unhappiness for many in Washington. Recently, progress has been made on both of these issues.

At present, however, the U.S. remains deeply worried about the status of the Japanese economy and its future prospects. Can Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro live up to his pledges of basic reform? Or like his predecessors, will these pledges dissolve amidst political wrangling and the power of certain interest groups? Japan is a classic example of the fact that no policy, however successful, is good for all time. The policies that underwrote earlier successes and made Japan a model for others are no longer viable in this age of globalization. Yet Japan is a very conservative society, loathe to accept a fundamental reorientation. The current scene, however, gives extensive evidence as to how important the health of the U.S. and Japanese economies is to the economic well-being of the entire Asian region.

On the political front, the U.S. and Japan are democracies. Yet the very different political cultures of the two have resulted in important divergences, with transparency being far more prevalent in the United States and with a one-party dominant system operating in Japan until recently. At present, however, significant changes may be underway in Japanese politics, symbolized by Prime Minister Koizumi's behavior ,who has operated with less dependence upon an inner-party cabal or the bureaucracy than his predecessors. Yet Koizumi is presently in trouble with the electorate and is charged by critics with having succumbed to traditional pressures and abandoning serious reform. Thus, it is too early to predict that a political revolution is finally underway in Japan.

In any case, strategic relations between the two nations remain strong. Once again, there have been problems. That the majority of U.S. military forces and installations have been concentrated on Okinawa has created much unhappiness. However, alterations are underway. Meanwhile, the U.S. has wanted Japan to do more in underwriting a stable global order, and Japan has complied with significant modifications in the security agreement first signed in 1951. It is now prepared to provide military forces abroad in a noncombat capacity to engage in a variety of auxiliary services. The geographic scope of its commitments has also been greatly expanded, as its activities with respect to Afghanistan illustrate.

Nationalism has been rising in Japan as elsewhere, a worrisome matter to some of Japan's neighbors. With respect to the United States, Japan would like to move from a patron-client status, now more than 50 years in operation, to genuine partnership. Its independent action in East Asia is one evidence of the new trend. Further, there is now discussion of amending the so-called antiwar article of the Japanese Constitution (Article 9) so as to enable Japan to be a "normal" nation with full strategic rights, although this issue is very controversial within Japan itself and not likely in the near term. Meanwhile, however, Japan is seeking to elevate its status in the world; one sign is its effort to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

While others may worry, the great majority of knowledgeable Americans are not seriously concerned about the threat of Japanese militarism. Most American observers believe that only a combination of two occurrences could advance such a development: a greatly increased perception of external threat and the loss of U.S. credibility as an ally. This combination is not likely to ensue in the foreseeable future.

It is virtually certain that the U.S. strategic presence in Asia will change in the future, given the revolution in military affairs (RMA). At some point, a reduction or removal of U.S. forces and installations in allied nations is probable, with greater dependence on bases kept in readiness and rapid deployment. However, a premature move in this direction would be unwise in the view of many Americans, given the unresolved international issues that exist, the military modernization programs underway, and the danger of sending misleading signals. Thus, the security pacts with Japan and others in Asia are likely to continue more or less in their present form, at least for the near term.

In sum, the U.S.-Japan relationship will probably continue to be very positive on balance, but perhaps not as intimate as that which the U.S. has with certain other countries. Japan has strongly homogeneous background, with reservations about "outsiders" reflective of an insular community. This continues despite Japan's deep and growing involvement in international affairs. Many Japanese as well as Americans are now trying to deepen the relationship by promoting informal dialogues and gatherings, especially of the younger generations.

U.S.-China Relations: The Outlook is Good

Another vitally important relationship is that between the United States and China. Despite certain unresolved problems and some new issues, that relationship is probably stronger today than at any time in the past, even during the days when the two nations were brought together by the perceived Soviet threat. Now, the commonly perceived threat is terrorism. But cooperation starts on the economic front. The U.S.

business community has increasingly found China to be a promising area for investment as well as for trade. Recent liberalization moves and entry into the World Trade Organization, moreover, should increase China's attractiveness in these respects. U.S. experts realize that the PRC has many economic problems to resolve, including the huge unredeemable loans held by banks, faltering state-owned enterprises, the large unemployed work-force, dissatisfied farmers, the east-west gap, and extensive corruption. These problems can be left unattended only at the risk of rising instability. U.S. policymakers, moreover, generally believe that the fourth generation of leaders that will soon to take responsibility are essentially technocrats not ideologues, similar in nature to the present third generation. Thus, they are likely to devote primary attention to resolving domestic difficulties.

A small contingent of Americans worry about a future "China threat," envisaging the possibility that with nationalism running strong and military modernization and economic growth advancing under the slogan "make China rich and strong," the PRC may abandon the five principles of peaceful coexistence at some point and seek to be the dominant power in Asia, rejecting all compromises on territorial issues or other matters. This is a minority view, however, with a majority committed to the thesis that in handling its domestic challenges, China will need and desire a peaceful, harmonious atmosphere in the region and seek cooperation with its neighbors, as it is now doing. To be sure, this latter effort may be viewed as an attempt to provide a buffer state structure or a balance of power against perceived U.S. hegemony, but in any case, it is a constructive effort.

The last six U.S. presidents, irrespective of party, have reached the conclusion that a relationship with China that is on balance positive and one of engagement is not only of benefit to the two nations, but to the region as a whole. President George W. Bush's trip to China in late February 2002 provided further evidence of that fact. China and the U.S. have cooperated on a wide range of issues from Korea and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to antiterrorism. They have worked together in a concert of powers devoted to resolving or containing these and other challenges.

There remain human rights issues that periodically emerge, and most important, the issue of Taiwan. China regards U.S. involvement with Taiwan as interference in its internal affairs, and there was deep resentment over the Taiwan defense minister's March visit to Florida and his unofficial meetings with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly. Subsequently, China denied a port call to Hong Kong of an U.S. warship.

Taiwan will continue to be an unresolved problem, and it could become more serious. The U.S. will continue to furnish military equipment for Taiwan's defense, while

urging Taiwan authorities to avoid any declaration of independence if it wishes American support. At the same time, while it will adhere to the "one China" doctrine, the U.S. will urge the PRC to seek a peaceful resolution of the issue, and indicate that the use of force would be of "grave concern" while declining to stipulate precisely what it would do in the event force was employed. President Bush, however, in response to a question, asserted that the U.S. would do "whatever was necessary" to defend Taiwan. Despite such statements, the United States wants to retain good relations with the PRC while not abandoning its commitment to Taiwan, a commitment deeply rooted in modern history, starting with the Korean War. If its current policy with respect to Taiwan is not wholly consistent, it is one that accords with U.S. public opinion.

Most U.S. experts do not believe that conflict over Taiwan is imminent. As noted, China has more important priorities and, furthermore, its military force is inadequate to undertake a major military campaign. Moreover, in recent times, it has shifted from the use of threat and limited intercourse to a policy of encouraging maximum economic and cultural interaction, even with "nonseparatist" members of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's party while continuing to boycott Chen and Vice President Annette Liu. Taking into account the trends and current conditions in Taipei, Beijing appears to believe that time is on its side.

However, the longer-range picture is cloudy given China's insistence that it cannot wait "indefinitely" for reunification under the "one China, two systems" formula. This formula is not acceptable at present to the great majority of people of Taiwan as public opinion polls show clearly. As for the future, much will depend upon both domestic developments in the two societies and in the regional arena.

Sovereignty under Assault

Despite this highly sensitive and very difficult issue, the prospects for a U.S.-PRC relationship that is positive on balance are good. These two nations have many common interests and, given the trends within China, increasing compatibility with respect to domestic matters. Nevertheless, both states must continue to wrestle with another vitally important subject, namely, "humanitarian intervention," as it is sometimes termed. The gravest danger to peace and stability at present is not a war between major powers. Such a war is increasingly recognized as unwinnable. Rather, it is the problem of failing and faltering states, and the chaos including massive slaughter that often ensues, with extremists rising in importance.

The position that the sovereignty of the nation-state is absolute and must never be violated is not a viable position in the contemporary world. Domestic upheaval or the terrorism emanating from a given state frequently transcends national boundaries. Even

peaceful actions can have international repercussions. For example, when Sumatran farmers burn their land to prepare for crops and the resulting pollution sweeps over Singapore and Malaysia, is it a domestic or international issue?

Yet if the answer to these complex matters is not to ignore them using the shield of sovereignty, neither is it to employ unbridled unilateralism, namely, the action of a single outside party without recourse to the views and interests of others. This signals a complex problem that has faced the United States, as recent events demonstrate. To tackle the issue of terrorism quickly and effectively after Sept. 11 required leadership, and no international organization could provide this under current institutional limitations. Yet from the outset, the U.S. sought to coordinate unilateralism or leadership with multilateral support, and this it proceeded to seek on a global scale with considerable success. China among others signaled approval, although with certain reservations. The survival of multilateralism regarding Afghanistan will no doubt depend upon developments. At present, however, many observers see strong evidence that the U.S. has recently gravitated toward unilateralism with scant regard for the opinions of others and a stridency exemplified by the president's reference to an "axis of evil" in his January 2002 State of the Union address. In any case, a key issue confronting many nations in these complex times is that of combining leadership when essential to protect one's vital interests with maximum global support and participation as the challenge is confronted, with the interests of others fully acknowledged.

In sum, cooperation between the U.S. and China, while not without its difficulties, is vital to peace and stability of the region, and one can hope that the leaders of both nations continue to recognize that fact. But they must have support from their people, and hence, it will continue to be important to bring various civic groups together, especially the younger generations of both societies.

A New U.S.-Russia Relationship

Meanwhile, the most significant advances in U.S. bilateral relations probably relate to relations with the Russian Federation. Today, those relations are better than at any time since World War II. For this fact, President Vladimir Putin must be given extensive credit. Underwriting his policies is a broad strategy – that of re-establishing Russia as a global power. Thus, Putin looks both West and East. Having earlier created a "strategic partnership" with China, he has subsequently sought a new, more positive and involved relationship with Western Europe and NATO, and emphasized the common interests that Russia has with the United States. His strong support for the American antiterrorist campaign in Afghanistan, including approval for U.S. forces to be located in Central Asia, is ample proof of his desire for closer relations with the U.S.

There are differences, some of them unresolved, between the two parties. When no agreement could be reached on revising or abandoning the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), the U.S. acted unilaterally. Like China, Russia protested, calling the move "a mistake," but the comments were relatively mild. Further, an agreement upon a major reduction in nuclear weapon stockpiles seems likely, with Bush pledging a large cutback. This would benefit Russia greatly, since its aging weapons stockpile is costly to maintain, and increasingly unsafe. But the recently publicized Nuclear Posture Review, listing seven countries, including Russia and China, as possible future challenges and suggesting that the U.S. might consider new types of smaller nuclear weapons for such purposes as destroying underground facilities was not received well in Moscow or Beijing.

With the Russian economy recovering after a lengthy demise, relations in this sphere should advance. Moreover, Putin's commitment to a market economy and the maintenance of democratic institutions, although doubted in some circles, underwrites a generally favorable image of the man and the society in the U.S. Neither do Moscow's other key relationships worry Washington. Russia-China relations and organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) create no anxieties. The Sino-Russian relation may be labeled a "strategic partnership," but it is far from an alliance, and for various reasons, will remain such. Meanwhile, Russia's moves to strengthen its relationship with India, a former partner, find no opposition in the U.S.

In sum, the U.S.-Russian relationship, once the center of global tension, looks favorable today. Much will hinge upon both domestic trends in Russia and international developments, especially with respect to South and Central Asia – areas of long-term importance to Moscow and newly unfolding importance to the United States. If cooperation can be established and maintained with respect to this region, however, the future looks promising.

Walking the Tightrope in South Asia

One final U.S. bilateral relation warrants attention, the relationship with India. In the recent past, U.S. interest in an expanded relationship with India has grown significantly. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has taken steps to strengthen the pledge to open the Indian economy, with its vast labor market and its rising strength in information technology. Politics are more or less stable and India presents a picture of more unity than at most times in the past, although rising religious strife between Hindus and Muslims is worrisome. Finally, and perhaps most important, India is now perceived as likely to play a greater role in helping to preserve a balance of power in Asia.

There is deepening concern about the India-Pakistan relationship, especially given the recent events. The United States faces the challenge of seeking to keep relations with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharaff favorable, without which no resolution of the Afghanistan problem is possible, while improving relations with India – an enormously difficult task under present circumstances. If Musharaff were overthrown, Pakistan fell into chaos, or an India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir ensued, the repercussions would be disastrous, and the United States would face multiple dilemmas. Thus, as South Asia has assumed greater importance in America's foreign policy agenda, it has also posed a number of uncertainties and threats for the future.

Continuing Uncertainty on the Korean Peninsula

Turning to the small and medium Asian nations, the Korean Peninsula is undoubtedly of greatest importance to the United States. At present, U.S. relations with both the ROK and the DPRK have their uncertainties. The reopening of a dialogue between North and South is now scheduled for early April and hopes exist that progress can be made on the many issues confronting the two parties – divided family visits, reconnecting the Seoul-Sinuiju railway, and security concerns that have previously not been on the North-South agenda. This may be the last chance during the Kim Dae-jung era and it is clearly in the North's interest to support an ongoing dialogue with some promise before the "Sunshine" president leaves office. In any case, for the first time, the DPRK appears willing to separate its policies toward the ROK and those toward the United States.

U.S. relations with the North have been minimal since Bush's State of the Union address in January and his inclusion of the DPRK in the "axis of evil." Epithets have continued to be thrown by both sides. Modest talks, however, have been taking place in New York with the U.S. State Department and the DPRK Mission to the UN involved. Moreover, while the president's bombastic language has received a frosty reception from the Seoul administration and from most other allies, the U.S. has reiterated its support for Kim's policy of engagement with the North as well as the continued firm commitment to uphold the security of the South. After an in-depth review of policy, moreover, the Bush administration has repeatedly expressed its willingness to meet with the North "any time, any place," and without preconditions, albeit, with a strong desire to discuss a full range of security issues from the production and sales of missiles and weapons of mass destruction to readjustments of conventional forces. The U.S. recently refused to certify that the DPRK was complying with its commitments under the Agreed Framework, but agreed to continue fulfilling U.S. obligations. This is one more chapter in the troubled saga of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) project which seeks to provide two light-water nuclear reactors to the North. Progress has been

repeatedly delayed and recently, questions have been raised about its feasibility – but it continues.

Meanwhile, the DPRK has been accelerating its efforts to strengthen relations with Russia as well as China, and with a range of nations from the European Union to the states of Southeast Asia. Issues such as energy and other forms of economic interaction are at the heart of this effort. There can be little doubt that the DPRK is now committed to economic changes at home and a strengthened economic relationship with other nations to alleviate its deep economic crisis. Will this lead to a progressive evolution on the domestic front, first economic, then political?

Meanwhile, the U.S. has been concerned about political and economic developments in South Korea. President Kim Dae-jung has been greatly weakened by a troubled economic picture and the faltering of his "Sunshine Policy." His party, the Millennium Democratic Party, suffered serious losses in recent regional elections, and in their aftermath, Kim resigned as party head. If national elections were held today, the opposition, the Grand National Party, headed by Lee Hoi-chang would probably win, although a number of new candidates have entered the scene, making a forecast of the late 2002 election more uncertain. Meanwhile, politics is likely to continue to be divisive and rancorous, with Kim Dae-jung a lame-duck leader for the coming months.

The ROK economy recorded growth of slightly over 2 percent for 2001, significantly below South Korea's recent growth. If the U.S. economy achieves gains in 2002, and domestic conditions do not interfere, ROK growth should improve in the next 12 months, but like others, the South faces a challenge in remaining competitive in the international marketplace.

Meanwhile, as elsewhere, nationalism in both the North and the South is playing a potent political role. In the North, the effort to get off the U.S. list of terrorist states and thereby gain access to such international agencies as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has led to Pyongyang's signature on various antiterrorist agreements, but it is coupled with strident denunciations of the United States for its supposed threats against the North. However, it is likely that at some point, U.S.-DPRK discussions – informal or formal – will resume.

In sum, the Korean Peninsula remains a troubled region. The North is in dire economic straits despite certain recent modest improvements, with the challenge of undertaking major economic reforms and reaching out to others to obtain assistance. The South, on balance, has been a success story, but it is now faced with both economic and political difficulties. In this setting, the U.S. must keep its policies flexible but rooted in continued support for the ROK while exhibiting a willingness to discuss all issues with

the DPRK and hopefully, refraining from making inflammatory statements that irk allies without achieving any purpose.

Closer Ties to Southeast Asia

Turning to Southeast Asia, three broad trends with respect to recent U.S. policies are to be noted. First, concerned about the current economic downturn in such diverse states as Indonesia and Singapore, and the political uncertainties that affect almost every nation in the region, the U.S. has supported IMF and Asian Development Bank assistance programs. Special economic assistance to Indonesia has also been furnished in recent months. Further, it is worthy to note that the United States and Vietnam have ratified a bilateral trade agreement, auguring an increase in U.S. trade and investment in a former enemy country. The times have changed.

The second broad trend has been closer interaction with respect to terrorism and related threats. Even earlier, special strategic agreements with the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand had been reached. Almost all of the ASEAN members voiced support for the U.S. in connection with the post-Sept. 11 events, but with various reservations regarding the use of force. Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri faced the most difficult situation since the Indonesian domestic scene remains precarious, and this nation has the largest Islamic population in the world, albeit, one in which the moderates are a strong majority. No U.S. military forces are to be sent to this country, for good reason since their presence would almost certainly evoke a widespread protest.

Support has been most evident in U.S.-Philippine relations where President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has urged military cooperation, calling it "a strategic asset for the Philippines," and secured assistance in the struggle against the Muslim extremists in Mindanao. Singapore and Thailand have purchased sizeable amounts of relatively sophisticated U.S. military equipment, and throughout the region, military and intelligence consultations have been strengthened. Even Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir, well known for his criticisms of the U.S., joined in condemning the terrorist attacks and pledged cooperation. In general terms, the U.S. is more active strategically in the region than it has been in the past decade.

The third trend has been increased U.S. interest and participation in the region's key multilateral bodies, notably, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) body. High-level officials including the U.S. president have attended meetings and urged action on such key issues as free trade, drug traffic control, and antiterrorism.

Thus, while the focus of U.S. attention has shifted to Southwest Asia in the aftermath of 9-11, Southeast Asia continues to be of both economic and political-strategic importance.

Key Challenges for the U.S.

Let me conclude with a few general comments about U.S. foreign policy, present and future. First, one major challenge is to find an effective method of relating unilateralism and multilateralism. In the aftermath of events like the 9-11 attacks, the United States has little option except to take action independently, after in-depth, rapidly conducted consultations with others. To assert that the UN or some similar organization could have acted effectively and in time is naive. A coalition of support was put together rapidly with the United Kingdom playing a key role in the West, Russia in the center together with certain Commonwealth of Independent States countries, and above all, Pakistan in South Asia. Yet, it must be reasserted that unilateralism can be dangerous if it is focused solely on the presumed interests of a single state and oblivious to the damage or threat to others. Thus, rapidly building effective coalitions and international agency support are essential in most instances. Yet as Somalia and Kosovo indicate, such actions are not always acceptable to outsiders and not always effective. The United States as well as other nations must explore this issue further, seeing if it is possible to reach a satisfactory solution.

A closely related issue is that of "humanitarian intervention," noted earlier. If a nation is falling apart, with extensive slaughter taking place, and tens of thousands dying from cold and hunger, is external intervention permissible and under what stipulations? As indicated, merely to say that a nation's sovereignty should never be violated is not a satisfactory answer. When does a nation cease to exist, or demonstrate an incapacity to control its citizenry, with refugees flooding out and starvation together with widespread bloodshed dominant within? Again, we do not have adequate answers to this matter, but it is likely to be a paramount issue in the decades ahead.

Meanwhile, the United States, given its economic and military power, is destined to be a central player in the effort to preserve and enhance global peace and prosperity, as recent events have demonstrated. This does not mean that U.S. policies are always correct, and external criticism should be carefully evaluated. Neither does it mean that leadership is always necessary. Many situations and problems can and should be handled without U.S. involvement or on the basis of an initial consensus. Incidentally, it should be noted that a number of Americans would prefer lower international commitments, financial or otherwise, and greater attention paid to handling domestic needs – social

security, medicare, housing as well as education – problems that increase with the aging of the society, as is now taking place.

Nonetheless, U.S. foreign policy will continue to rest on two foundations: a concert of powers and a balance of power. Further, when action seems necessary, it would be wise to seek some combination of unilateralism and multilateralism. In addition, while making every effort to bolster its key bilateral relations, the United States should work to strengthen international organizations and dialogues in a variety of ways. In all of these respects, moreover, Asia will be central from an American perspective.