The Emerging East Asian Community: Should Washington be Concerned?

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The Emerging East Asian Community: Should Washington be Concerned?

by Ralph A. Cossa, Simon Tay, and Chung-min Lee

Executive Summary

In the post-Cold War and post-Sept. 11, 2001 world, a great deal of attention has been paid to multilateral cooperation in East Asia and to the formation of economic and political cooperation and dialogue mechanisms aimed at creating a sense of East Asian and broader Asia-Pacific community. The United States has been an active partner in some of these community-building efforts and, in recent years (unlike the early 1990s), has been generally supportive of – or at least not actively opposed to – those in which it is not a member. In fact, the Bush administration, despite its (sometimes deserved) reputation for unilateralism elsewhere, has been particularly supportive of East Asian and broader Asia-Pacific multilateralism. This appears to be changing, however, as Washington keeps a cautious eye on the evolution of the ASEAN Plus Three forum (involving the 10 ASEAN States, plus China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) into an East Asian Summit (EAS).

The big question, of course, is whether Washington should be included as a member, or at least an observer, in this evolving East Asia community. How and why Washington is excluded could be as important as whether it is invited to participate.

In this volume, three different perspectives are provided regarding the evolving East Asia community and its implications for the U.S. In the first chapter, Ralph Cossa examines Washington's evolving attitude toward multilateral cooperation and regionalism in East Asia, to ascertain the kind of response one should expect from the U.S. regarding regional attempts to further develop an East Asian community – with or without Washington's direct participation. He argues that it is difficult, at present, to discuss U.S. attitudes toward East Asia regionalism or the development of an East Asian community since an East Asian community has yet to be defined – much less credibly emerge – and regional governance has barely evolved, especially if one compares Asia to Europe or other regions. Nonetheless, Washington is closely watching the EAS as it evolves, with particular attention being paid to the composition of the group, the criteria for membership, and most importantly (and still largely undefined) its mission, objectives, and priorities.

In the final analysis, Cossa argues that much will depend on who leads the East Asian community. Will ASEAN remain in the driver's seat? If so, can 10 drivers steer a steady course? If not, who will emerge? As the real economic giant in East Asia, one could argue that leadership should go to Japan. Ironically, a decade ago, when others in the region seemed prepared to accept Japan as the so-called "lead goose," Japan was hesitant to assume this role. Now, as Tokyo finally emerges from the shadow of its past,

it seems to be entering into the shadow of the region's emerging new giant, China. Will China be the presumptive or defacto leader of this new East Asia community? If so, will that leadership be benign or will it be aimed – or be perceived by the U.S. as being aimed – at limiting or replacing Washington's (and Tokyo's) influence in the region?

How an East Asian community relates to the region's other multilateral organizations and initiatives – both institutionalized (like the ARF and APEC) and ad hoc (like the Six-Party Talks and the Proliferation Security Initiative) – will also be a key factor affecting Washington's attitude, as will its adoption of global norms, especially in the areas of counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation. Will the new East Asia community reinforce these efforts or dilute them? Will it help the states of the region to more effectively address growing transnational challenges . . . or provide another excuse for avoiding such efforts? These are some of the questions that Cossa addresses.

In his chapter, Simon Tay provides an East Asian perspective. His paper examines what would appear to be the main factors that have emerged to drive the current and still nascent sense of regionalism in East Asia, postulating some reasons that some may wish to exclude the U.S. He characterizes the primary features of the emergent East Asian regionalism and examines some preferred principles that would allow the most stable and mutually beneficial relationships to emerge.

Tay also suggests how the U.S. might best respond to these developments in East Asia, and what Asians should do vis-à-vis the U.S. He argues that the U.S. should accept and understand its exclusion from the first EAS. It should neither ignore nor seek to "veto" the EAS and the underlying sense of East Asian regionalism. All EAS states, and especially those that are allies and friends of the U.S., will ensure that the vital interests they share with the U.S. are sufficiently accounted for and protected. Efforts by EAS participants to convey this to the U.S., both as intentions going into the EAS and as results emerging from it, should be redoubled.

He concludes that the U.S. and all in Asia – and especially ASEAN – need to revive relations across the Pacific and take existing relationships and institutions to new and higher levels. U.S. relations with states in Asia must both rise above the existing base that APEC provides and broaden beyond the almost singular focus on the global war against terrorism that some feel in dealings with Washington.

In his brief essay, Chung-min Lee, in chapter three, provides a contrarian view, questioning the wisdom of, and need for, yet another regional mechanism. Despite the potential inherent in an East Asian community, Lee argues that greater attention should be paid to four key areas: primary rationale or raison d'etre for conceiving, launching, and sustaining an East Asian community; the ability of East Asian states to overcome at times endemic and deep-rooted political, historical, ethnic, legal and other issues particularly in the context of state sovereignty and universal values; whether existing institutions, regimes, alliances, and even norms can complement such a community; and whether any new mechanism or organization would be able to manage East Asia's historic rise throughout the second half of the 21st century with minimal collateral

damage, including conflicts. In essence, the key question that proponents have to ask is: "is an East Asian community really necessary for the prosperity, stability, and cohesiveness of the region?"

Lee believes that one of the most interesting aspects of East Asian security at this juncture is the amalgamation of traditional and nontraditional security challenges. While Sept. 11 and the ensuing war against terrorism have resulted in notable policy shifts, for the most part East Asia has been immune from cataclysmic terrorist attacks. On a positive note, the specter of major war has declined measurably with the end of the Cold War (with the possible exception of the Korean Peninsula).

East Asia today is home to a confluence of both hard and soft security challenges ranging from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, more robust power projection capabilities, the struggle for dominance by the region's two great powers (China and Japan), realignments in the face of changing domestic determinants, accelerated energy competition, and rising environmental problems. Combined, the ability of the region to address centripetal and centrifugal forces over the next two to three decades is likely to emerge as the most important political challenge. How an East Asian community would deal with these so-called hybrid threats remains largely unknown.

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

All three authors seem to agree that it is premature for Washington to become too concerned about the emerging East Asian community; its current "wait and see" attitude appears appropriate. As long as many of the participants share U.S. values and concerns and see the value of a continued U.S. presence and deep association with East Asia, it is highly unlikely that this new community – if, when, or however it eventually evolves – would move in a direction that would be threatening to U.S. interests.

Chapter One
East Asian Community and the United States: An American Perspective

by Ralph A. Cossa

In the post-Cold War and post-Sept. 11, 2001 world, a great deal of attention has been paid to multilateral cooperation in East Asia and to the formation of economic and political cooperation and dialogue mechanisms aimed at creating a sense of East Asian and broader Asia-Pacific community. The United States has been an active partner in some of these institution-building and/or community-building efforts and, in recent years (unlike the early 1990s), has been generally supportive of – or at least not actively opposed to – those in which it is not a member. In fact, the Bush administration, despite its (sometimes deserved) reputation for unilateralism elsewhere, has been particularly supportive of East Asian and broader Asia-Pacific multilateralism.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to discuss U.S. attitudes toward East Asia regionalism or the development of an East Asian community since an East Asian community has yet to be defined – much less credibly emerge – and regional governance, even within the much more tightly knit Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, has barely evolved, especially if one were to compare Asia to Europe or other regions. It is not even clear to this author what constitutes "East Asia," much less America's place (or lack thereof) in it. Some envision an "Asia for Asians" approach, arguing that an East Asia community should be restricted, at least initially, to the ASEAN Plus Three (A+3) members; i.e., the 10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) plus China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. But, at the A+3 summit in Vientiane, Laos on Nov. 29-30, 2004, India was also represented (as it had been in 2003), with Australia and New Zealand also participating for the first time.

At this writing, it appears that all these states will be invited to the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in Malaysia in December 2005, even though former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir has made it clear that he personally does not believe Australia and New Zealand belong in the group (suggesting that they were quasi-European nations despite their location). He seems more favorably disposed toward New Delhi, even though India's ties to East Asia, while growing, pale in comparison to those of Canberra or Wellington. Meanwhile, no one is quite sure what to do about North Korea and everyone seems to overlook Mongolia while trying to ignore Russia, even though all three are arguably East Asian nations.

The big question, of course, is whether Washington should be included as a member, or at least an observer, in this evolving East Asia community. Arguments can be made both pro and con. (One can make similar arguments regarding Canada, for that matter, given Ottawa's deep Asian, and multilateral, connections.) How and why Washington is excluded could be as important as whether it is invited to participate. It is

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not clear if Washington even desires a seat at the EAS table – getting President Bush to two Asian summits in two months would be no mean feat. (He is scheduled to attend the APEC Leaders Meeting in Busan, Korea in November.) But Washington is interested in the composition of the group, the criteria for membership, and most importantly (and still largely undefined) its mission, objectives, and priorities.

It is also important to put East Asia regionalism into context. No one seems to be promoting or anticipating a European Union-type arrangement. Attempts by Indonesia in the past year to make ASEAN into more of a coherent community, through the establishment of an ASEAN Community (comprised of an ASEAN Security Community, an ASEAN Economic Community, and an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community) have shown just how difficult it is to get these nations – some of which have been closely aligned for over 30 years – to think and act as one, especially in the security arena. Developing a lowest common denominator for security cooperation among these 10 diverse nations is difficult enough; imagine adding China and Japan to the mix (much less the two Koreas). If current established multilateral community-building mechanisms, such as the ASEAN, A+3, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) "gathering of economies" are any indication of the willingness of East Asian nations (regardless of how the term is defined) to seriously address issues of regional governance (and the "interference in one another's internal affairs" that true regional governance requires), one should not expect much progress soon.

In this opening chapter, I will examine Washington's evolving attitude toward multilateral cooperation and regionalism in East Asia to ascertain the kind of response one should expect from the United States regarding regional attempts to further develop an East Asian community – with or without Washington's direct participation. As this chapter's title indicates, I will provide *an* American perspective, not *the* American perspective, since this article represents my personal views and not those of the U.S. government, which remains generally quiet or circumspect on the subject.

Previewing my conclusion in advance, I would argue that, in the final analysis, much will depend on who leads the East Asian community. Will ASEAN remain in the driver's seat? If so, can 10 drivers steer a steady course? If not, who will emerge? As the real economic giant in East Asia, one could argue that leadership should go to Japan. Ironically, a decade ago, when others in the region seemed prepared to accept Japan as the so-called "lead goose," Japan was hesitant to assume this role. Now, as Tokyo finally emerges from the shadow of its past, it seems to be entering into the shadow of the region's emerging new giant, China. Will China be the presumptive or defacto leader of this new East Asia community? If so, will that leadership be benign or will it be aimed – or be perceived by the U.S. as being aimed – at limiting or replacing Washington's (and Tokyo's) influence in the region?

How an East Asian community relates to the region's other multilateral organizations and initiatives – both institutionalized (like the ARF and APEC) and ad hoc (like the Six-Party Talks and the Proliferation Security Initiative) – will also be a key

factor affecting Washington's attitude, as will its adoption of global norms, especially in the areas of counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation. Will the new East Asia community reinforce these efforts or dilute them? Will it help the states of the region to more effectively address growing transnational challenges . . . or provide another excuse for avoiding such efforts?

These are some of the questions that this paper will try to address.

Background

During the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War era, Washington's leaders (and most other regional policymakers) viewed the idea of institutionalized East Asia multilateral security cooperation with a great deal of apprehension and suspicion. In 1991, when then Japanese Foreign Minister Nakayama suggested at an ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) gathering that a forum be established to discuss regional security issues, his remarks were not well-received. The U.S., under President George H.W. Bush, was particularly cool to such an idea. More comfortable with a one-on-one approach to security issues in Asia, U.S. officials at the time were hesitant to embrace multilateral approaches to addressing security concerns.

As the Cold War faded into history, however, there has been a decided shift in regional attitudes toward, and U.S. support for, multinational security initiatives in Asia. On the U.S. side, the first clear signal of this shift came in 1993 when then-Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord identified "a commitment to enhanced multilateral security dialogue" as one of the incoming Clinton administration's 10 priority policy goals for Asia.

Of equal importance, voices were concurrently being raised within ASEAN calling for the introduction of security-related issues into PMC deliberations. One significant example occurred at the 1992 ASEAN PMC in Manila when a joint statement was issued calling for the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes involving the Spratly Islands (claimed in whole by China and Taiwan and in part by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam). While ASEAN had been in existence since 1967, it had historically been reluctant to delve into security matters, even amongst its own members, much less with its external dialogue partners.

Regional nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were also calling for greater multilateral security dialogue both at the official and NGO level. In 1991-92, the Honolulu-based Pacific Forum CSIS joined forces with the Seoul Forum for International Affairs, the Japan Institute for International Affairs, and ASEAN ISIS – a loose coalition of Southeast Asian institutes focusing on Asian security and international studies – to promote formalized track-two (nongovernmental) and official security dialogue. Their leadership led to the establishment in late 1992/1993 of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), an NGO focused on multilateral security dialogue and regional confidence building. The CSCAP founding statement also strongly endorsed the creation of official security dialogue mechanisms.

President Clinton added the icing to the cake in July 1993 when he firmly embraced the concept of multilateral security dialogue in Asia, calling it one of the four pillars of his vision for a "new Pacific community." This change in attitude was solidified at the 1993 ASEAN PMC meeting when the PMC dialogue partners met informally over lunch with representatives from China, Russia, Vietnam (which was not yet a member of ASEAN), and other PMC observers, to talk about security matters. The group decided that they would reconvene the following year in the precedent-setting ASEAN Regional Forum.

President Clinton also proposed and then in the fall of 1993 served as the first host of what has now become an annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Meeting. (APEC itself dates back to 1989.) While focused on broader regional trade issues, this gathering of the region's heads of state quickly took on a political and at least quasi-security role, just by its mere existence. This was then followed by the July 1994 inaugural meeting of the ARF in Bangkok, which again provided a clear signal that attitudes regarding multilateral security dialogue were changing, both in the United States and throughout Asia.

While instituted during the Clinton era, both the ARF and the APEC Leaders Meeting have thus far enjoyed strong support from the current U.S. administration as well, witness President George W. Bush's willingness to attend the October 2001 Shanghai APEC meeting in the immediate wake of Sept. 11 and the presence of Secretary of State Colin Powell at all four ARF meetings held during his tenure in office (something neither of his predecessors could claim).

This support was reinforced in the White House's September 2002 *National Security Strategy for the United States of America* which expressed the conviction that "multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations" and further stated that the U.S. would build upon the stability provided by institutions such as ASEAN and APEC "to develop a mix of regional and bilateral strategies to manage change in this dynamic region." The Bush administration has renewed and reinvigorated U.S. interest in the ARF and APEC and, against some initial regional resistance and criticism, insisted on a multilateral approach, under the Six-Party Talks, for dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem. It also places a great deal of importance in "ad hoc multilateralism" – the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), for example, serves as a primary vehicle in the U.S.-led global effort to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Pro-Multilateralism, with Caveats. As a general rule, Washington has historically viewed Asia Pacific multilateral organizations as useful vehicles both for promoting greater political and economic cooperation and for enhancing regional security. This support for multilateral institutions – in the Asia Pacific and globally – has one important caveat, however: no U.S. administration, be it Republican or Democrat, is likely to allow such institutions to be seen as substitutes for or threats to U.S. bilateral alliances and other security arrangements. But, like the Clinton administration before it, the Bush administration does not see bilateral and multilateral efforts as being in tension; rather,

they complement one another. East Asian multilateral organizations are seen as useful tools in pursuing U.S. national security objectives.

The Bush administration has also been cautiously supportive of multilateral organizations, such as ASEAN Plus Three and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which do not include the U.S., although it appears that, in its second term, the Bush administration is starting to cast a more watchful eye, especially on those organizations established and/or dominated by China, to ensure that these do not represent efforts to diminish Washington's (or Tokyo's) involvement or interests in the region. And, as the U.S.-led international war on terrorism demonstrates, while Washington is willing – indeed eager – to develop a multilateral approach in combating global terrorism, it has made it clear that this will not deter America from pursuing its objectives unilaterally if necessary.

While the U.S. is not attempting to block or interfere with East Asia regionalism efforts like the A+3 and SCO that exclude the U.S., it has stated a clear preference for Asia-Pacific regional efforts that include Washington, despite some of the inherent perceived weaknesses, as outlined below. It has also expressed a willingness, if not eagerness, to sit in as an observer at forums where full U.S. membership is deemed inappropriate or premature.

A brief examination of Washington's involvement in and attitude toward the region's two premier broader Asia-Pacific community building organizations – the ARF and APEC – may lend some insight into its view of East Asia regionalism in general.

The ARF: very, very useful "but limited"

The ARF brings together foreign ministers from the 10 ASEAN states plus Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Korea, North Korea, New Zealand, the United States, and most recently (since 2004) Pakistan, for annual security-oriented discussions. It received broad support during the first four years of the George W. Bush administration, being described by then-Secretary of State Powell as "very, very useful" after his first ARF meeting. While Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice missed her first opportunity to participate in the ARF when "scheduling conflicts" caused her to miss the 2005 ARF ministerial meeting in Vientiane in July – an omission which openly raised questions about Washington's continued commitment to East Asian regionalism and was deemed "unfortunate" by ASEAN leaders – the presence of her deputy, Robert Zoellick (an old and highly respected "Asia hand") helped to assuage these concerns.

Various ARF study groups (called Inter-sessional Support Groups or ISGs) have provided a vehicle for the U.S. to move the multilateral process along in areas important to Washington, such as preventive diplomacy, enhanced confidence building, and maritime (including search and rescue) cooperation; all of which help promote greater transparency and military-to-military cooperation. Most importantly, since Sept. 11, 2001, the ARF has helped focus regional attention on – and has served as an important

vehicle for practical cooperating in – fighting terrorism. At the ARF meeting in Jakarta in July 2004, the assembled ARF ministers repeated annual pledges to fight terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction through ARF Statements on "Strengthening Transport Security Against International Terrorism" and a "Statement on Non-Proliferation." (They also confirmed their intentions to further institutionalize the ARF process through the establishment of "an ARF Unit" within the ASEAN Secretariat to serve as a *de facto* ARF Secretariat, to assist "in carrying out the mandates outlined in the paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair" and to support the Experts and Eminent Persons Group.)

However, while the ARF seemed well-suited to serve as the consolidating and validating instrument behind many security initiatives proposed by governments and at nonofficial gatherings, and has become an important vehicle in the war on terrorism, from a U.S. perspective its contribution to the regional security order remains somewhat constrained. For example, Taiwan has not been permitted to participate and the PRC has insisted that internal Chinese affairs not be on the agenda, effectively blocking ARF discussion of cross-Strait tensions despite their obvious regional implications. The Chinese have even been reluctant to address conflicting claims in the South China Sea at the ARF, insisting instead on separate talks with ASEAN or with the other claimants on an individual basis.

Few expect the ARF to solve the region's problems or even to move rapidly or pro-actively to undertake that mission. The agreement to move "at a pace comfortable to all participants" was aimed at tempering the desire of more Western-oriented members for immediate results in favor of the evolutionary approach preferred by the ASEAN states, which all too often seem to see the process as being as (or more) important as its eventual substantive products. The Asian preference for noninterference in internal affairs also has placed some important topics essentially off limits. This suggests that the evolution of the ARF from a confidence building measures talk shop to a true preventive diplomacy mechanism (as called for in its 1995 Concept Paper) will be a long and difficult one.

APEC: cautiously testing the security waters

APEC is first and foremost a "gathering of regional economies" – it is not referred to as a gathering of states or governments due to the presence in its ranks of Hong Kong and Taiwan (which members have agreed remain part of "one China"). APEC started out as an informal dialogue group, growing from an original 12 members (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States) in 1989 to 15 in 1991 (with the addition of China, Hong Kong, and "Chinese Taipei") to its current strength of 21, with the addition of Mexico and Papua New Guinea (1993), Chile (1994), Peru, Russia, and Vietnam (1997). Institutionalization began in February 1993, when the APEC Secretariat was established in Singapore.

While primarily aimed at managing the effects of growing economic interdependence, APEC has had an important political and security role as well, especially since the 1993 Seattle meeting when President Clinton invited the APEC heads of state and government to the first of what have now become regular annual Leaders' Meetings designed to elevate the importance of this economic gathering. The Leaders' Meetings have become an important vehicle for fostering political relations in addition to raising the level of economic dialogue and putting pressure on the region's leaders (and especially the host state) to move the process forward.

APEC's Evolving Political/Security Role. The political and even strategic significance of the Leaders' Meetings was first underscored in Auckland in 1999, a gathering that was significant more for what happened outside the APEC venue than inside the meeting. Security issues dominated the side discussions and the talk in the corridors. Not the least of these was the growing (and well-founded) concern over the deteriorating security situation in East Timor. The Auckland meeting was fortuitous in that it provided an opportunity for regional leaders, including President Clinton and Australian Prime Minister Howard, to work out arrangements for the Australian-led multinational peacekeeping mission (INTERFET) that was subsequently sent to East Timor. Obtaining on-the-spot Chinese approval of this effort, made possible by Indonesia's reluctant acceptance of the intervention, helped assure UN Security Council authorization of the subsequent UN operation, the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET). (It should be noted that neither ASEAN nor the ARF were major players in the East Timor crisis, demonstrating their limited utility as crisis response mechanisms.)

In similar fashion, APEC 2001 provided an important vehicle for President Bush to explain Washington's war on terrorism to his Asian colleagues and to garner their support. In addition to the usual annual APEC Leaders' Declaration, the assembled leaders also issued an APEC Leaders' Statement on Counter-Terrorism – the first political document to be issued in APEC's 13-year history – which unequivocally condemned the Sept. 11 attack and deemed it "imperative to strengthen international cooperation at all levels in combating terrorism in a comprehensive manner." This was considered a real victory for President Bush and no doubt helped to increase APEC's (or at least the Leaders Meeting's) relevance in his eyes.

The Shanghai APEC meeting also provided President Bush with his first opportunity to meet directly with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, which helped to end the downward slide in Sino-U.S. relations underway since Bush's inauguration (and especially after the collision between a U.S. reconnaissance plane and a Chinese jet fighter over the South China Sea in April 2001). The two leaders were able to put the relationship back on track, aided by China's willingness to cooperate in the battle against terrorism.

Security matters continue to be discussed at the Leaders' Meeting, not to mention at the numerous side summits that normally accompany this gathering. For example, at the October 2003 APEC Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok, the final communiqué referred to cooperation on combating proliferation of WMD, while President Bush used the

occasion, and his side meetings with the leaders of South Korea, Japan, and China, to call on North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons aspirations, while repeating his offer to provide Pyongyang with written assurances that the U.S. does not intend to attack North Korea. Similar efforts took place at the November 2004 APEC Leaders' Meeting in Santiago, Chile.

As long as APEC provides a useful venue not only for the promotion of free trade but also for fighting the war on terrorism, we can expect that Washington will continue to be an active player. However, as with the ARF, it will remain more suited to talking about security problems than to actually helping to implement solutions. In addition to the usual drawbacks associated with East Asian multilateralism (as discussed below), APEC has the added "problem" of including Taiwan. Rather than using this venue as a vehicle for incorporating Taiwanese views and concerns into the regional security debate in a "nongovernmental" setting, Beijing has tried to block any substantive security-oriented activities and to further isolate Taiwan from the dialogue process.

Multilateral pluses and minuses

U.S. policymakers generally believe that Asia-Pacific multilateral organizations such as the ARF and APEC are useful vehicles both for promoting greater political and economic cooperation and for enhancing regional security. While such organizations hold many promises for Asia, it is important to understand their limits, as well as the opportunities they present. A comprehensive security arrangement or NATO-type alliance aimed at containing or responding to a specified threat simply does not apply to a post-Cold War Asia. Rather, East Asia multilateral security mechanisms should be viewed more as confidence building measures aimed at avoiding or dampening the possibilities of (rather than reacting to) crises or aggression. Peacekeeping and disaster relief operations and nontraditional security issues (such as refugee problems, maritime safety, pollution, and other environmental and safety issues) also seemed well-suited to a multilateral approach. In many instances, the process is as important as the product.

Efforts that build upon and seek to complement, and not to replace, existing bilateral and ad hoc relationships that already exist in Asia are of particular value from a U.S. perspective. Any effort that is perceived at undermining U.S. bilateral dealings, and especially those that seek to diminish or replace America s key bilateral security alliances, are sure to be rejected by Washington both today and by any future administration.

More generally speaking, Asian multilateral security mechanisms can serve as vehicles for promoting long-term peace and stability. They provide a framework for continued direct U.S. involvement in regional security matters. They offer a means for Japan, China, and Russia, among others, to become more actively involved in regional security affairs in a manner that is nonthreatening to their neighbors. They also provide a forum for exposing North Korea to regional realities while facilitating bilateral dialogue between North and South Korea, Japan, and the U.S., respectively. They also provide a mechanism for other regional actors to be heard, while contributing to a sense of regional

identity and a spirit of cooperation and confidence building. Since Sept. 11, they have also become increasingly relevant for coordinating regional views and efforts in the war on terrorism.

Nonetheless, their utility remains limited, especially in the security arena, for two primary reasons. First, while steps have been taken since Sept. 11, 2001 to put some operational substance behind cooperative efforts, these organizations still largely remain dialogue mechanisms that talk about – rather than respond to or deal effectively with – emerging security challenges. And second, Taiwan has been systematically excluded from many of these mechanisms and one of the region's greatest security challenges – cross-Strait relations – has been purposefully kept off the security dialogue agenda at Beijing's insistence. As long as these characteristics prevail, the prospects and promises of multilateral security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, at least from a U.S. perspective, will necessarily be limited.

Ad hoc multilateralism: the PSI and Six-Party Talks

If Washington has only limited confidence in institutionalized multilateral mechanisms (like the ARF, APEC, and United Nations), it is developing a clear preference for ad hoc or tailored multilateralism aimed at a specific task or objective and comprised of a "coalition of the willing." The multinational force assembled for the war in Iraq provides one example, as does the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Proliferation Security Initiative. The PSI was first laid out in a speech by President Bush in May 2003 and formalized at a 11-nation meeting (involving Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the UK, and the U.S.) in Madrid a month later. It is "a global initiative with global reach," under which coalition members have agreed "to move quickly on direct, practical measures to impede the trafficking in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), missiles, and related items." As such, it is clearly "task-oriented." It represents cooperation for a specific, clearly defined purpose, as opposed to dialogue for dialogue's sake or in support of more generic objectives. In Sept. 2003, in Paris, the 11 core participants agreed on a Statement of Interdiction Principles "to establish a more coordinated and effective basis through which to impede and stop [WMD] shipments . . . consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks, including the UN Security Council." Over 80 nations have expressed support for these principles.

The PSI core group now comprises 18 countries, with Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway, Singapore, Turkey, and most recently Russia joining the core group. It has conducted numerous air, ground, and (mostly) sea interdiction exercises to develop and demonstrate its capability to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear weapons and fissile material. (In October 2004, Japan for the first time hosted a PSI interdiction exercise in Tokyo Bay, involving nine naval and coast guard ships from Australia, France, Japan, and the U.S., providing yet another example just how deeply involved Tokyo has become in bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.)

Six-Party Talks. The best example of task-oriented ad hoc multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia is the Six-Party Talks, established by Washington to deal with the specific issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The talks were also intended, and served, to multilateralize what many initially viewed as a bilateral U.S.-DPRK problem.

The creation of the six-party process, in this author's opinion, may represent one of the Bush administration's finest diplomatic hours. [Please note that I am addressing here the *creation* of the multilateral process, not its results to date.] This initiative draws from the lessons learned during the first North Korea nuclear crisis, where – despite close coordination and consultation – Washington was widely perceived as unilaterally cutting a deal with Pyongyang before sticking Seoul and Tokyo with the bill. While Pyongyang argued for bilateral consultations (and a separate U.S.-DPRK nonaggression pact), Washington rightfully insisted this time that participation by Seoul and Tokyo was "essential." It also acknowledges the important role that China, and to a lesser extent Russia, must play if multilateral security guarantees are to be part of the final solution (as most would agree they are). Finally, the Bush administration recognized and tried to work around Pyongyang's strategy of trying to play all sides against one another by presenting different, conflicting messages depending on the audience.

All this is not to argue that the crisis could not have been handled better; it is to say that the multilateral approach represents the most logical avenue toward crafting a long-term solution that achieves not only Washington's immediate goal of stopping nuclear proliferation but also addresses the needs and concerns of North Korea's immediate neighbors. The concept calls for working- level discussions as well as plenary sessions, in order to dig more deeply into the problems associated with the nuclear standoff and broader peninsular security issues and concerns.

The creation of the Six-Party Talks mechanism provides a framework for broader Northeast Asia multilateral cooperation in the future. If the talks eventually succeed, most parties agree that a more formalized mechanism must evolve to implement the agreement, provide necessary security assurances, and monitor compliance, as well as facilitate whatever aid packages are associated with the final accord. If the talks fail, some (including this author) would argue that there will be an even greater need for some form of institutionalized cooperation in order to manage the danger posed by a presumably (and self-confessed) nuclear weapons-equipped North Korea, if the other parties are prepared for this level of cooperation. If and how the six-party mechanism transitions into a more institutionalized Northeast Asia forum will help determine the degree of future security cooperation in this East Asia subregion and Washington's involvement in it.

U.S. views of an East Asian community: unanswered questions

One objective of this chapter was to speculate on Washington's attitude toward the evolving East Asian community. The bottom line is that it is much too soon to tell. Much will depend on how (if) this community evolves and how it interacts both with the United States and with the institutions that Washington actively participates in and

supports. To the extent the new community signals its willingness to at least coexist with Washington, even if it fails to embrace its full membership, and is not seen as threatening or attempting to undermine Washington's bilateral alliances, its central role in East Asian security affairs, or the broader Asia-Pacific regional institutions in which it participates, there is little reason to expect objections from Washington or a serious effort to discourage or derail regional community building efforts. The reverse, of course, is equally true!

Another objective is to stimulate questions for others to answer, in order to better determine if Washington will see this phenomenon as supportive of its national security interests or designed to threaten or inhibit them. Allow me to end, therefore, with a laundry list of questions (with limited commentary).

- What are the objectives of Indonesia's ASEAN Security Community (ASC) proposal and what are the prospects of ASEAN successfully pursuing this effort? Will the ASC help set a more positive security agenda for the ARF or for the emerging East Asia community? My guess is that Washington would welcome a more pro-active ASEAN that put more emphasis on security cooperation and joint approaches to security challenges. The ASC emphasis on promoting democracy and individual rights, if seriously supported and pursued, would also be in keeping with Washington's regional and global objectives. Merely paying lip service to these objectives, on the other hand, will reconfirm negative opinions about ASEAN's seriousness and long-term direction.

- Is Indonesia prepared to lead ASEAN in developing an ASC? Are the other ASEAN members prepared to follow? Will ASEAN remain in the driver's seat for the ASC, A+3, and emerging EAS? If not, who will lead, and in what direction? Can/will Japan step forward and exercise leadership behind the scenes and act in concert with other friends of Washington (like Singapore and Australia) to ensure that the EAS does not evolve in a manner that runs contrary to U.S. interests?

- Is the East Asia Summit the primary vehicle for building and sustaining the East Asia community? Are the two synonymous? The relationship needs to be better defined, since there are many competing views of what constitutes East Asia and what vehicles will best create this sense of community. Since the various multilateral initiatives provide a mind-boggling array of combinations (one even includes Persian Gulf countries), it is getting more and more difficult even to define East Asia, much less to determine which effort or efforts are helping to establish the desired sense of community.

- Who gets to come to the EAS, in what capacity, and by what criteria? The EAS was initially envisioned as part of the A+3 process but appears destined to go beyond these 13 states. Why? How do the A+3 and EAS differ? What is the EAS mission statement and objectives? (To date, more time has been spent debating

who should join than determining what should be discussed. No agenda has yet been agreed upon for the December meeting.)

- Creation of the EAS could be viewed by an outside observer as an effort by the larger East Asia powers, like China and/or Japan, to try to gain increased control in shaping the agenda, a role up to now largely played by ASEAN. Is the decision that EAS members have to sign up to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) an effort by ASEAN to reassert its central role, or just a clever way to keep Washington (among others) out . . . or both?

- Finally, how do members of the East Asian community – whoever they may be – define the relationship between Asia-only mechanisms such as A+3 and broader efforts such as the ARF and APEC? Which type efforts will receive pride of place? Clearly it does not have to be, and is unlikely to be described as "either-or." But, where will the focus and bulk of the effort be? Will the outcomes and efforts be mutually reinforcing? Will the East Asia effort help set the stage for and supplement or even advance the broader dialogue or will it be used as an excuse for inaction? If the former, how does one create avenues of interaction between East Asian and Asia-Pacific mechanisms to enhance their mutually supporting roles?

In chapter two, Simon Tay begins to provide some preliminary answers based on developments to date. However until more definitive answers to these questions become clear, it will be difficult to determine the prospects for the creation of a true East Asia community and/or Washington's receptivity to this effort.

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Chapter Two
An East Asia Community and the United States: An East Asian Perspective
By Simon S.C. Tay

Introduction: sketching a region

In December 2005, the first East Asian Summit will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While this is a new and quite unprecedented event, it is one that has been considerably, and variously, anticipated.

The summit grows from a growing but still nascent sense of regionalism in East Asia, and may both mark and add to the momentum and strength of this sentiment. The path to this first summit has been paved by events in recent years, especially the ASEAN Plus Three (A+3) process that has brought together leaders from the 10 ASEAN member states with their counterparts from the three northeast Asian states of China, Japan, and South Korea. Indeed, the A+3 process has grown beyond summitry to provide a framework for initial Asian cooperation on diverse transnational issues such as finance flows (with the Chiang Mai initiative) and public health (in the wake of SARS). For these 13 states, therefore, the East Asia Summit (EAS) represents a logical next step forward from the A+3 process. Yet the EAS is more than a near and next extension of the ASEAN Plus Three. One significant difference is the effort to include other states. There was considerable discussion on who should attend the first EAS. Criteria has now been agreed to decide on states to be invited to the EAS, in addition to the A+3 states.

The criteria includes acceptance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), a central agreement on interstate relations among ASEAN states and others that agree to it, in relation to ASEAN. Many find the TAC uncontroversial in that it reiterates principles of interstate cooperation and the peaceful settlement of disputes that are drawn from the UN Charter. Indeed, to some the TAC has even been criticized as being too bland. Some suggest, however, that the TAC requires neutrality and may run counter to bilateral defense alliances with the United States or other countries. This suggestion is held by some notwithstanding that the Philippines and Thailand, both original TAC signatories, are U.S. allies.

Whatever the interpretation behind TAC, assuming that accession is forthcoming, the criteria established for the first EAS paves the way for the inclusion of India, Australia, and New Zealand. With this, the EAS is expanding beyond the A+3 states and even beyond the geographic notion of East Asia in potentially including India and the Pacific-2 of Australia and New Zealand.

Still, there seem to be an emerging limit to the possible expansion of the group. This would seem likely to exclude states on the other side of the Pacific, most notably the U.S. This may seem controversial to some, given the U.S. role in the region as a primary

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economic partner and a guarantor for security and regional order in the post-World War II period. This vital U.S. role in Asia has been understood and largely accepted, whether expressly or tacitly, by almost all Asian states as a fact of political life. Yet, for the EAS, even the allies and closer friends of the U.S. in the region, such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, seem to have agreed that the U.S. should not be included in the first summit.

The response from the U.S. to being excluded from Asian summitry has been mixed, and has changed over time. As outlined by Ralph Cossa in chapter one, for a considerable time it seemed that Washington did not notice the EAS or did not object to its exclusion. Certainly, the earlier summit meetings among the A+3 leaders elicited no strong opposition from Washington or request to be included. Yet more recent soundings from some in the U.S. indicate a questioning and perhaps quarrelsome attitude to its exclusion from the EAS. This has echoed early positions of the U.S. against the East Asian Economic Group, mooted by then Malaysian Premier Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, even before the formation of the Asia Pacific economic community. Some have also been reminded of the U.S. objection to the idea of the Asian Monetary Fund, mooted by some in Japan and the region, during the financial and economic crises that arose in 1997-98. In both cases, a strong U.S. "No" combined with doubts among some Asian states to derail these initiatives.

Might the EAS suffer the same fate from a U.S. "veto"? What is driving East Asian regionalism and the EAS and in what direction might the region develop? Can Asians assure themselves and Americans that the EAS will likely generate more benefit than harm, not just for Asians but also for the U.S.?

It is in this context that this chapter will consider the prospects for East Asian community and its relations to the U.S. First, I will examine what would appear to be the main factors that have emerged to drive the current and still nascent sense of regionalism in East Asia, postulating some reasons that some may wish to exclude the U.S. Second, I will seek to characterize characteristics of the emergent East Asian regionalism and examine some preferred principles that would allow the most stable and mutually beneficial relationships to emerge. Third, I will suggest how the U.S. might best respond to these developments in East Asia, and what Asians should do vis-à-vis the U.S.

These discussions are necessarily exploratory, given the stage of present preparations and responses to the EAS, both among the states that would be likely to attend the EAS and the U.S. and others that would be likely to be excluded. This is still a situation in which what states and leaders do would matter; human agency is very much at play. Conclusions are therefore not easily drawn.

However, this chapter concludes that, first, the U.S. must accept and understand its exclusion from the first EAS. It should not ignore or seek to "veto" the EAS and the underlying sense of East Asian regionalism. Second, it suggests that all EAS states and especially those who are allies and friends of the U.S. seek to ensure that the vital interests that they share with the U.S. are sufficiently accounted for and protected. Efforts

to convey this to the U.S., both as intentions going into the EAS and as results emerging from it, should be redoubled.

Third, the U.S. and all in Asia – and especially ASEAN – need to revive relations across the Pacific and take existing relationships and institutions to new and higher levels. In this, U.S. relations with states in Asia must both rise above the existing base that APEC provides and broaden beyond the almost singular focus on the global war against terrorism that some feel in dealings with Washington.

Reasons for regionalism: neutral factors or anti-Americanism?

Some suggest that regionalism in East Asia is a natural phenomenon that has little to do with the U.S. and does not demonstrate anti-American sentiment. There is considerable truth in this. Regionalism that brings proximate states together to cooperate is not in opposition to the forces of globalization that link all states more closely together than ever, and especially to the U.S. as the primary economic actor and only post-Cold War superpower. Regionalism has been a companion to globalization, not its opponent. For while globalization connects all states and societies more closely, proximate and neighboring states are more closely connected to each other *inter se* than to states that are further away and/or are more different in make-up.

Globalization is not a complete and neutral phenomenon in this regard. Simple facts such as the cost of telecommunications and transport demonstrate its incompleteness and unevenness. Geography and distance have been reduced as determining and primary factors, but nevertheless still matter. Cultures and societies too, while being much more open to exchange and influence, resist homogenization. This is true not only in Asia, it is even more clearly visible in Europe and in North America. Regionalism has arisen and thrived in parallel to, and not necessarily in conflict with, globalization.

In this view, therefore, East Asian regionalism is natural, neutral, and indeed long overdue. Support for this idea of a "neutral" East Asian regionalism is, evidenced by economic data. This witnesses both the predominant place of trade and investment between the U.S. and Asia, as well as the rapid growth of intra-Asian economic ties. It does not seem to be an either/or situation.

Yet Asia has no strong and enduring history of unity and accepted commonality, whether in polity, culture, language, or religion. The antecedents of East Asian regionalism have been brief and contested. One such period was in the 15th century, when the Ming Empire of China ruled the waves and, in the pre-colonial period, extracted an acceptance of suzerainty from most of the kingdoms in East and Southeast Asia. A second incident was the Japanese co-prosperity sphere during WWII. Neither sets a happy precedent for East Asian regionalism. Even within ASEAN, after nearly four decades of association, national sovereignty has tended to trump integration in economics and certainly politics. While this has gathered speed, the ASEAN efforts still do not rival – both in aspiration and even more so in reality – the integration of the European Union.

As such, we may conclude that East Asia has no precedent in regionalism, and only a limited and very recent movement forward in this direction.

Why then East Asia now? To understand this, I think it is necessary to go beyond the "neutral" factors that I have briefly canvassed. I would suggest that less neutral factors are adding to the emergence of an East Asian regionalism to which, in some settings and instances, the U.S. will not be party.

These factors are, in approximately chronological order: first, attitudes about the U.S. during and after the 1997 financial crisis that swept through Asia; second, the failure of APEC; third, the need for a competent and competitive regionalism in Asia; fourth, the reception of U.S. security policies, post Sept. 11; and, fifth, the rise of China and the responses among different Asian neighbors.

During and after the 1997 Asian financial crisis

The Financial Crisis. The economic crisis that started in mid-1997 spread quickly among almost all economies in East Asia, with little regard to the real differences in their economic fundamentals and little coordinated response by the countries affected. While the crisis has abated, the sense among some in East Asia is that the U.S. could and should have done more. For example, in Thailand and South Korea (both U.S. allies), negative comparisons were drawn to the level of U.S. assistance to Mexico when its NAFTA neighbor was earlier struck by a financial crisis.

The role of international financial institutions (IFI), especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was also brought into question. While there were no better mechanisms that were readily available, Asians have been among those who argue that many of the prescriptions were ineffective or indeed counterproductive. In the years since the crisis, more have come to share aspects of this view, including well-known U.S.-based economists like Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz. Yet efforts at reform and policy changes within the IMF and IFIs are still wanting.

Criticisms of the IMF and IFIs, moreover, rebound on the U.S. as – rightly or otherwise – some perceive that Washington sets and controls their agenda. To some of these critics in Asia and elsewhere, the "Washington consensus" is not named innocently for the headquarters of the IMF and World Bank, but bespeak a consensus shared by the powers that be in Washington itself.

The Failure of APEC. While the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process continues, there is some sense that it has in some ways "failed." This sense of failure comes from at least two sources. The first, and probably quite unfair, criticism is that APEC failed to respond to the Asian financial crisis. It is fair to point out that APEC was never intended to serve such a purpose. But the criticism sticks in some quarters. Critics ask: if little or no response could be made to such a crisis, what is the point of APEC?

The second source of criticism over APEC is perhaps a more measured one. This is that the U.S. and other major economies have ceased to regard APEC as being sufficiently important to be used as a mechanism for enabling and managing economic cooperation and integration between APEC members. Some would trace this to the impasse between the U.S. and its close ally, Japan, over trade liberalization measures.

In the wake of these developments, more states in Asia and the Pacific have turned to the World Trade Organization – despite its own delays and faltering – as the linchpin of economic liberalization. Additionally, greater stock is being given to sub-regional and bilateral economic partnerships and trade agreements. Amidst this focus on the global level and the sub-regional/ bilateral level, focus on APEC has diminished when compared to a decade ago. Some now believe that, given the present trajectories, there is little prospect of achieving the APEC Bogor goals by the stated deadlines.

A Competent and Competitive Asian Regionalism. In the wake of the Asian crisis, Asians have come to better appreciate their interdependence. This appreciation has gone beyond the question of financial flows that were implicated in the 1997 crisis.

Other areas such as trade and investment and environmental pollution demonstrate the interdependencies in the region or sub-regions of East Asia. Some examples of this are the haze from Indonesian fires, the acid rain and yellow dust from China that impacts Northeast Asia, and unsustainable and often illegal logging in ASEAN countries to meet the demand of Japanese and Chinese markets (especially since China has banned domestic logging). Public health concerns over SARS and avian flu have been other manifestations of the negative face of an increasing interdependence without sufficient governing structures and regimes.

Even in sensitive areas such as violent political upheaval and gross human rights abuses, there is a growing awareness and moral interdependency among many of the people of Asia. While many issues remain off-limits among Asians, sporadic events such as the crisis in East Timor after the vote in 1998, and current developments in Myanmar have attracted wide spread concern among Asians. Institutionally as well, the ASEAN Regional Forum, which includes non-ASEAN members and covers a wider geographical footprint in Asia, has begun to move into a phase for developing preventive diplomacy among its members.

In Toto, whether in economics, the environment or other fields, Asians now give greater recognition to the need for cooperation to manage their existing and still growing integration. Regionalism, in this view, is a process for competently handling globalization and interdependence. It is also a competitive issue among Asians, given parallel developments in Europe and the Americas.

U.S. Security Policies, post-Sept. 11. A fourth factor has been U.S. security policy, post-Sept. 11, and its prosecution of a global campaign against terrorism. While there was initial support for the U.S. across Asia, reactions are not uniform. Some states are staunch U.S. supporters and have been proactive in their own domestic fight against terrorism.

Others have been ambivalent and even reticent in response, preoccupied with their own domestic politics. Criticism and opposition to U.S. policies have risen.

Polls and surveys point to this trend across Asian societies, especially in the wake of the U.S.-led "invasion" of Iraq and the revelation of human rights abuses in Abu Gharib and allegations of mistreatment at Guantanamo Bay. Criticism of U.S. policies among some quarters also relates to wider issues, such as the question of Palestine and Israel.

This sentiment is strongest in Asian countries, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, where there are Muslim majorities. Yet it has grown even in societies where Muslims are only a minority or absent. Indeed, in countries like South Korea – without Muslims and historically intertwined with and dependent on the U.S. – sentiments among common people about the U.S. have soured. In many cases, this change in attitude toward the U.S. relates to U.S. policies not only about terrorism in the global theater, but its implications in national and local spheres. America's post-Sept. 11 agenda has complicated existing internal conflicts and insurgencies in Southeast Asia.

The change in sentiments in Asia toward the U.S. has paralleled changes in many European societies. However, it would seem that European criticisms more greatly emphasize questions of human rights and of the observation of international law. Indeed, while Asian opinions have shifted about the U.S. post-Sept. 11, there seems to be a considerable difference in the tenor and level of criticism as compared to Europe. Asian states did not join France and Germany in leading opposition to the U.S.-led action. Public opinion is not the chief difference. As in Europe, there is no strong and widespread domestic support among the peoples of Asia for American action in Iraq. Indeed, in some societies, as noted briefly, anti-American sentiments have risen sharply.

The majority of Asian states have nevertheless continued to support the U.S. or at least measure and limit their criticisms and opposition, to varying degrees and in different ways. These relate to a realist – if not *real politik* – calculation of the role of the U.S. in economics and security. There is a calculation of the costs of openly opposing the Bush administration on post-Sept. 11 issues, after the admonition that "you are either with us or against us." There are also some benefits to the governments in the region. In the U.S. post-Sept. 11 agenda, Asia has again received American attention, and Asian governments have generally been quick to respond to align their interests and agendas to those of the U.S. Equally, most have sought to prevent direct interventions into their territories and domestic affairs by cooperating with the United States.

Thus, many Asian governments face an increasing tension between their external commitments to support the United States and these internal views and demands within their societies and among their citizens. While some Asians dissent, this realist logic prevails in thinking that it is best to ally with the U.S. Its policies of "benign selfishness" offer the closest match to world interest – the desire for free trade, rule of law, free movement of capital and people, as well as security for persons and property. In this

view, stability in Asia may be provided by a hegemonic power, provided it is relatively benign.

The prospect of ensuring that U.S. interest in Asia and the world is indeed benign and broadly supported has o contend with a number of factors however. Chief among these is that the post-Sept. 11 agenda in the U.S. responds first and most directly to U.S. domestic opinion (some might say "only"). This means that there will be severe limits to how much influence other countries, including those in Asia, can have in persuading the U.S. administration in any direction that is contrary to the views of the U.S. voter. American exceptionalism in treaties and multilateral settings illustrates the concerns that Asian and other states have about the dependability and benign character of the U.S. internationally. The necessary corollary of this concern is that Asians should find frameworks to depend less on the U.S. and also to collectively influence the U.S.

The Rise of China. This brings up the fifth factor that bears mention in the context of the East Asian community and the U.S.: the rise of China. This phenomenon has been long predicted and yet still attracts controversy in interpretation and prediction.

China has done much to assure the world and especially the region of its intentions for a "peaceful rise." This has been well received, apart from cross-Strait relations, with an increased level of comfort becoming evident in South Korea and, especially, among ASEAN member states. With ASEAN, China's initiative in proposing an free trade agreement and deepening its economic and trade ties has been welcome. On the security front, while much remains to be done, the agreement on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and a generally more forthcoming engagement with China in the ARF and other frameworks have lessened tensions that once marked the relationship, especially after the Mischief Reef episode.

Questions of course remain. This is especially in respect to relations between a rising China and the U.S., as the incumbent and pre-eminent power. Sino-Japanese relations also preoccupy strategic thinking, given both the historical issues and (even more importantly in my view) the present and forward-looking issues of accommodating these two giants in the emerging frameworks for Asian regionalism. For the newer ASEAN members, questions over the headwaters of the Mekong, that lie in China, will continue and perhaps grow in coming years. National differences in Asian attitudes toward China also can be traced to economic competitiveness and prospects of complementarity, as well as to historical differences. There is, as such, considerable variation even among the remaining Asians of how we do and should look at the rise of China (which is worthy of further study).

Notwithstanding this diversity, the rise of China raises two primary issues in the context of East Asian community and the U.S. The first of these issues is the ability to imagine an Asia that is less centered on the U.S. If the predictions of China's rise prove true, there could be a rebalancing of the economic center for Asia – which still predominately exports to the U.S. market and depends quite considerably on cross-Pacific investment and trade. In politics and security too, there would be changes, with

China's promises of a "multipolar" world providing a contrast to the existing arrangements that center on Washington as the hub of various bilateral agreements and alliances.

The second of these issues is connected but different: the need for Asians to pursue ways to engage China and shape its policies toward the rest of Asia. This is especially important if and when U.S.-China relations grow more competitive and perhaps tense. If so, many Asians would like to have the option of having an independent policy toward China, rather being reflexively aligned to the U.S. position. At the same time, some in the U.S. may be concerned that such "independence" merely disguises the slip of these Asian states into the orbit of a China that they do not trust.

This issue appears to be coming more alive at present, as the EAS approaches. A number of different constituencies in the U.S. are raising issues of contention with China, such as the revaluation of its currency, the promotion of democracy and cross-Strait issues, and the build-up of Chinese military forces. U.S. policies toward China have changed in tenor from Clinton to Bush, and from early-term Bush to post-Sept. 11 Bush, swinging between the poles of "cooperation" and "strategic competitor." Of late, in statements such as those by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the direction seems to be toward the latter pole of China as a strategic competitor.

Between them, the five factors surveyed have created a much greater sense of doubt among Asians about the U.S. global and regional role than existed during the Cold War or its immediate aftermath. A strongly "anti-American" sentiment exists but perhaps only among a minority. Asians in responding to the post-Cold War order (disorder) in general and post-Sept. 11 Bush in particular, seem to swing between the poles of fearing that U.S. would ignore us and that Washington would intervene unilaterally at the whim of its domestic audiences. The answer of some East Asians – that we want sustained, knowledgeable, and consultative U.S. engagement – seems an almost impossible wish.

The post-Sept. 11 U.S. has declined in "soft power" and suasion in Asia, while China has gained in standing and acceptability: thus, the rise of the Chinese dragon is in parallel with the wounding of the American eagle, a coincidence that may bring misgivings and sudden shifts.

Nevertheless, the main driving forces for the sense of East Asian regionalism are not, in my view, anti-Americanism. Nor, however, are they completely neutral in my estimate. There is a growing ambivalence about the U.S. among many Asians. This "love-hate" attitude finds expression in the now popular adage, "Yankee go home … and take me with you." There is an emerging wish for a greater independence and capacity in Asia. More Asians now believe it is the time that their countries and their region mature and grow beyond the unequal relationship with and dependency upon the U.S., so that Asians can do about what matters most to Asia.

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Principles and versions of East Asian regionalism

In surveying these five factors, I hope that I may not be mistaken to suggest that this is a single or predominant Asian opinion or perspective on these issues. There is a great variety among the Asian states and peoples whether we look at Asian perspectives on the rise of China, the different responses to U.S. actions and policies post-Sept. 11, or the varied experiences in the Asian crises.

Accordingly, there is no single and agreed vision about the future of East Asia as a region. There is instead a quite broad and even bewildering range of suggestions of what East Asians can and should do together. Some examples include an East Asian Union, *a la* Europe, and an Asian currency. Rather than add my own suggestions to this considerable and still growing list, I would like to list some principles that should guide the evolution of East Asian regionalism and suggest broad directions or versions of East Asian regionalism.

Regionalism Principles. From the observations of the driving forces and limits of East Asian regionalism, several principles may be suggested. First, it should be an open and flexible caucus, not an exclusive group or bloc. East Asian regionalism should not detract from Asia Pacific and international efforts, but serve to make them more effective and representative. Moreover, East Asian regionalism can seek out areas of cooperation and begin to build institutional capacity in these areas. In this regard, the ASEAN Plus Three and EAS are significant markers and can evolve as primacy mechanisms, but they should not be the only ones.

Second, East Asian regionalism should have functionality and interdependence, not political fixity, ideology, or some easy and false sense of shared civilization. One of the most constructive factors is the need to manage and cooperate in the face of integration and globalization. This emphasizes that the new regionalism should be functional. This will test the tendency to include and exclude members on largely political grounds. An example of this would be in the field of economic and financial cooperation. This has been emphasized in the A+3 process and also in the EAS, with the inclusion of India and the Pacific-2. If we accept the A+3 or newer EAS as fixed or the only structures, then we would exclude important economies such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, in preference to smaller and more isolated economies. The new regionalism should instead be inclusive, with reference to the function that each member can bring to the issue.

Third, East Asian regionalism should be led by issues, and not by great powers. If we look at traditional modes of regionalism, central leadership seems critical. However, without a historical reconciliation between China and Japan, this will not be possible in East Asia. The region lacks a single leader that is acceptable and able. There are suggestions that the small- and medium-size countries, such as South Korea and ASEAN, might therefore lead the region. They may have a special and larger role to play than expected, but they cannot offer permanent and strong leadership. East Asian regionalism therefore might have to look at newer and more limited forms of leadership. This could

be offered by having leaders on different issues. Leadership would arise from the initiative and interests of different state. This would follow principles of equality more closely than the idea of "great power" leadership. In this way, the new East Asian regionalism might accord with many of the aspirations voiced in ASEAN and the Asia Pacific.

Fourth, the region should be led by coalitions of the willing (although some new term may be necessary, post-Iraq). The above principles, in total, suggest that East Asian regionalism and its manifestation in the EAS should not be a fixed bloc or union with permanent membership and permanent leaders. Instead it should be a framework for like-minded states to caucus and act in coalition. These coalitions can arise from certain issues or events. They might then dissolve or evolve to new issues. As the need arises, they would work with existing regional and sub-regional institutions. The idea of the EAS has demonstrated this is extending beyond the geographic definition of East Asia, to raft together other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and India..

Lastly, in giving voice to regionalism, East Asians should avoid a state-selected version of "Asian values" and identity, as we witnessed in the early 1990s. This argued that, in the then-predicted rise of Asia to equality with Europe and North America, Asians could and would legitimately differ in questions of democracy and human rights. Asians would as such be exceptions to what are arguably "universal" aspirations and values.

While interactions will increase among East Asians, there are dangers in tying too tightly the ideas of interdependence (especially economic interdependence) with values or morals in a community. We should distinguish between three uses of the idea of increased unity: as interdependence and cooperation, as increasing similarity between the states and societies that are so interdependent and cooperative, and as a consciousness of a shared humanity or culture. East Asians should prefer regional institutions and a growing sense of cooperation and identification with each other, without exceptionalism. Even as Asians cohere more closely, there can and should be interactions with international norms and practices. Globalization and regionalization, as such, are running in tandem, and not as an either/or choice.

Different Versions of Regionalism. The principles that I have suggested stand in contrast to others, as a range among three directions or versions about the possible future of East Asian regionalism. These, for discussion, can be clustered around three "models." The first of these would be "East Asia adrift." This existed before the A+3 and EAS processes, and (some might argue) still exists today. While different East Asian states have considerable strengths in economics, security, or other fields, the region as a whole offers little synergy and positive interactions. Instead, intra-East Asian engagements continue without much function, energy, leadership, or high aspirations. Regionalism remains fragile and indeed fractured. In this version, nothing much happens – or certainly nothing happens that upsets that status quo and the U.S. as the key actor in East Asian affairs.

On the other end of the range of possibilities for an East Asian future is an "East Asian bloc." In this, East Asians would aspire to a much higher degree of integration, perhaps a la the European Union. However, the East Asian bloc could be closed or even opposed to the U.S. and other non-Asian states. It might be based on a fixed set of "Asian values" as perceived by leaders and elites, rather than being more open to global influences and the aspirations of citizens.

In between these two poles, a third possible version is one that can be described as "East Asian Identity without Exceptionalism." In this scenario, East Asians develop processes and institutions to deal with functional interdependence and better recognize an emerging sense of institutional identity. Yet these identities, institutions, and processes remain open to influences from other states and from within different societies, and evolve over a longer period, allowing for adjustments.

Some of the principles underlying these three contrasting versions or directions for East Asian regionalism are outlined in the following table:

	East Asia "Adrift"	**East Asia "Identity without Exceptionalism"**	**East Asian "Bloc"**
Membership	Focus on ASEAN and Asia-Pacific processes.	East Asian process, centered on A+3, but open to U.S., others in region, and to global institutions	East Asian process, closed and even opposed to U.S. and global institutions.
Use	Dialogue	Function and interdependence	Ideology
Leadership	ASEAN-led (ARF), U.S. or leaderless rotation (APEC)	Issue-led, including smaller and medium-size powers	Great power leadership and rivalry
Organization	Informal, minimal secretariats, and non-binding undertakings	"Coalitions of the willing," with bilateral, ASEAN and ASEAN+1 processes, and growing institutionalization	Consenus for unified, region-wide agreement
Identity	"Pacific Way" with tension between ASEAN and Western approaches	Interdependence and institutional identity	"Asian" Values

Perceptions about A+3 have warmed both in Northeast Asia and ASEAN. It has also made some useful contributions with the financial swaps arrangement and with the discussion of the SARS outbreak; both demonstrate the usefulness of this framework in preparing for future crisis and even in helping deal with present ones. There is some optimism looking forward to the first EAS, notwithstanding the rise in Sino-Japanese tensions and possible friction in the U.S.-China relationship.

If East Asian regionalism attempts too much, it risks opposition from the U.S., which may feel that it is being left out from developments that might impact its strategic interests. If so, there are dangers that U.S. allies and friends might defect from East Asian efforts. American pressure is traced by a number of accounts to the failures of the earlier proposal by Malaysia's Dr. Mahathir for an East Asian Economic Grouping and to the idea of the Asian Monetary Fund, discussed earlier. Given the importance of the U.S. to many Asian states, including its allies Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, strong U.S. opposition is likely to be fatal to the newer regional efforts as well.

Even left to themselves, East Asians may prefer not to attempt too much, too quickly. The region's historical and ongoing divides prevent such commitment and pace. There has, for example, been no rapprochement between Japan and China. There are also developmental divides among the 13 states: the gap between Japan and the Lao PDR, for example, is as stark a gap as any in the world, and far beyond existing gaps in the European Union. On the other hand, if East Asian regional efforts attempt too little and too slowly, they risk failure and a downward trend in perceptions with time and perhaps the passing of new events. As in the case of APEC, differences of expectations among members and the failure to respond to crisis may change perceptions from positive to negative.

Between these two dangers, the A+3 and EAS processes should have to balance different needs and tread a middle ground. East Asian regionalism should also be nimble if it expects to progress. In this regard, we should come to see that the A+3 and EAS will not, of their own, suffice to bring about an East Asian community. While significant, it is not determined that the A+3 or EAS will be the only or main mechanism for East Asian cooperation and community.

Many other institutions and processes can and will play a part – and often in ways that were not originally imagined. This seems to have been the experience in bringing Europe together, when many institutions other than the European Union played their part. Without encouraging more experiments in the alphabet soup of interstate dialogues, East Asians will need to learn more from those European experiences and adapt (not blindly adopt) them to their own circumstances.

How the U.S. should respond

The future of East Asian regionalism and community does not lie exclusively within Asian hands. Given the role of the U.S. in the region, what it does and how it responds are important and critical to the emerging regionalism. There is some sense that East Asian regionalism has come this far toward the first EAS because Washington did not notice it or, if it did, that it was comfortable that its primary interests would not be adversely affected. Otherwise, some believe that a U.S. "veto" would have been exercised, as it was against Mahathir's proposal for an East Asian Economic Group.

During the A+3 processes, U.S. suspicion and antagonism were largely avoided. This is due, in part, to the pre-existing APEC framework that has not been displaced by

the A+3. Another positive factor was the generally supportive attitude of most East Asian countries to the U.S., post-Sept. 11, despite the sentiment of some of the peoples of the region. A third factor was that the U.S. seems to have been preoccupied and, if indeed Washington's thinkers considered the prospects of East Asian regionalism, thought it very limited.

This appears to be changing with the EAS. While U.S. interest in East Asia is critical and much wanted, a sense of alarm and U.S. opposition to the EAS and East Asian community is unwarranted and would be counter-productive. So would an insistence that the U.S. be included in the EAS.

The U.S. should allow the first EAS to proceed without obstacle or an insistence of inclusion. The U.S. can legitimately rely on its allies and friends in the region to ensure that its/their vital interests are not compromised by whatever might happen at the EAS. Indeed, all of East Asia would be well served if such bilateral dialogues between the U.S. and its Asian allies like Japan, Australia, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines, and other close friends like Singapore, would be energized and directed toward a dialogue on the EAS and underlying issues and factors in East Asian regionalism. In this, I would hope that Asian perspectives on the five factors that this paper has surveyed might be conveyed to the U.S. This is especially in regard to different and varied Asian perspectives on the rise of China, and on U.S. policies, post-Sept. 11.

We should, however, have caution over what might be called "excessive bilateralism," in which one or more U.S. allies and friends would be seen (or see themselves) as surrogates to protect any and all U.S. interests to the point that it might up-end East Asian efforts to go forward. One sign of such "excessive bilateralism" has been the suggestion that the U.S. will engage in military training with Japan and Australia, which some have regarded as a warming up of a potential alliance to counter and contain China. To be a useful friend to the U.S. in Asia, these states will have to realize that they must be *in and of Asia*, as much as being a U.S. friend.

Having said what I hope the U.S. will not do, what positive suggestions can be offered? Given my argument that the A+3 and EAS cannot be the only mechanisms, I would point to the possibilities of increasing and deepening U.S. engagement with East Asians in different fora. Two processes that deserve greater attention and effort are APEC and the ASEAN Post-Ministerial dialogue with the U.S.

In asking that we re-examine APEC, we should be reminded that APEC itself initially represented a change in U.S. policies. In the 1990s, there was a policy shift for the U.S., through then-Secretary of State James Baker, to express support for a new Asia Pacific architecture, which would comprise a framework for economic integration, a commitment to democratization, and a revamped defense structure for the region. The Clinton administration embraced the concept of multilateral security dialogue as one of the pillars of the "new Pacific community" and expressed support for several potential areas of dialogue including APEC.

There were several considerations that contributed to Washington's appraisal of policies and APEC, but none was more important than the prediction that U.S. power could no longer perform the coordinating role characteristic of the Cold War period. The assessment by many in this period was that the two traditional pillars of American predominance in Asia – it's "wallet" (in the form of its markets and overall financial presence) and its "muscle" (from its bilateral alliances and military bases) – were both diminishing assets.

This possibility has remained unproven. Indeed, the past decade seems to have gone in the opposite direction, with the U.S. emerging as the pre-eminent power. Nevertheless, I would argue that APEC needs to be reenergized as an overarching relationship with Pacific Asia (ASEAN, Northeast Asia, the Pacific-2 of Australia and New Zealand, and India). This would be a good forum to address trans-Pacific issues, to place China-U.S. relations in a broader context, and also to serve as a safety net in the event that, as was earlier predicted, traditional sources of U.S. influence –its wallet and its muscle – should wane. APEC's broad agenda of cooperation can also be useful for the U.S. to demonstrate a much broader engagement with Asia, beyond the sometimes singular focus on terrorism and security.

Some have suggested that the U.S. needs to be more mindful of public relations and perceptions in East Asia. I would go further to suggest that a real dialogue about U.S. policies and their communication is needed, to guard against unintended consequences and the continued reduction of its "soft power" to influence, persuade, and serve as an example to be admired and emulated.

In re-looking at the ASEAN-U.S. Post Ministerial Conference, Americans sometimes wonder why they should bother at all with a group of 10 small to middle-size countries. Terrorism post-Sept. 11 has provided something of an answer and a reason for U.S. attention to the region. But terrorism is also proving a narrow lens that obscures as much as it reveals.

One thing that seems to have been obscured is the relative importance of ASEAN in East Asian regionalism. In addition to the A+3 process, it should be noted that ASEAN is the hub for trade and economic ties. There are also separate spokes under negotiation to link it to China, Australia, New Zealand, and India, as well as discussions of links to Japan and to South Korea. Much of this has been possible not because of ASEAN's strength – whether economic or security. Rather, it has been because of ASEAN's political acceptability in providing a relatively neutral and positive hub to many different states in Asia.

Additionally, some ASEAN member states like Singapore and Thailand have also shown themselves to be capable of taking initiative through bilateral agreements and then helping steer the rest of ASEAN in the same direction. ASEAN's own integrative efforts towards an economic community, and with security and socio-cultural communities coming after, also bear mention.

In this regard, it would serve the U.S. well to engage ASEAN more fully and in more rounded perspectives to remain engaged and vital to East Asian developments. A free trade agreement with more ASEAN member states or with ASEAN as a whole would be one policy option. Another is an ASEAN-U.S. summit, regularly if not annually. China, Japan, and others in East Asia already have such arrangements with ASEAN.

Conclusion: visions, contingencies and assurances

Some hanker for a longer-term vision or roadmap for East Asian regionalism. This is notwithstanding the fact that an East Asian Vision Group, formed by experts and eminent persons, concluded its work some years ago with a broad report. Like Europe, they hope for politicians and others to give regular affirmation to an ideal of union, of community, or some other form of deeper association and integration in the region.

There are very real limits to a realism that is bereft of ideals and broader visions and values. Yet I would argue that ideals, visions, and values in East Asia should be more appropriately developed over the longer term, rather than concocted here and now by governments or their surrogates.

There are doubts, contestation, and differences among East Asian members that I have touched upon and that cannot be wished away. Given this, if we were to attempt another vision, the vision would in some ways be captive to these differences. As such, rather than a vision that might unify the governments and peoples of the region, it may instead divide them.

A hasty declaration of visions, values, and ideals for East Asian regionalism may also unnecessarily upset relations with the U.S. This is not just an issue for those in the region who are friends and allies of the U.S., but also for those whose relations remain in balance, or are in flux. For much that is happening in East Asian regionalism is necessarily contingent and contested. This is not only the situation within and among Asians, with different histories, priorities and hopes. The sense of contingency and contestation is also present when we think, as we must, of the relations between a more institutionalized East Asian process and identity and the U.S., which has been for so long and is still in many respects the predominant pillar of the region, even if it is not physically part of it.

What we should therefore seek to offer, over the next few years is not a new vision of East Asia or a categorical decision about Asia-American relations. Assurances instead should be offered. These assurances relate to the principles for East Asian regionalism that should be preferred – such as its openness and functionality – as well as to the willingness and even fond wish to broaden and deepen engagement with the U.S. in parallel to East Asian regionalism.

Such assurances do not settle things for the long term. However, if given and taken, such assurances would allow the emerging and still nascent sense of East Asian

regionalism to go forward with a United States that is not watching as an outsider in alarm or opposition, nor ignoring these developments. Rather, with these assurances, Asians can hope for a U.S. that is fully engaged and watchful with both anticipation and awareness that if things go right, East Asian regionalism can better serve both Asia and U.S. engagement in Asia.

Chapter Three
East Asian Community and the United States: A Contrarian Perspective
by Chung Min Lee

The conceptual challenge

The idea of an East Asian community has gathered momentum over the past decade, particularly in the aftermath of the launching of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) gatherings, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ASEAN's expanded membership and corresponding roles. Other venues such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process, the growing "European identity" of the European Union (EU) (despite the fallout from the French and Dutch vetoes of the EU constitution), and East Asia's own spectacular economic rise have also contributed to increasing calls for an "East Asian" community.

Yet despite the potential inherent in an East Asian Community (EAC), greater attention should be paid to four key areas: the primary rationale or raison d'etre for conceiving, launching, and sustaining an EAC; the ability of East Asian states to overcome at times endemic and deeply-rooted political, historical, ethnic, legal and other issues particularly in the context of state sovereignty and universal values; whether existing institutions, regimes, alliances, and even norms can complement an EAC; and whether an EAC would be able to manage East Asia's historic rise throughout the second half of the 21st century with minimal collateral damage, including conflicts. In essence, the key question that EAC proponents have to ask is: is an EAC really necessary for the prosperity, stability, and cohesiveness of the region?

The accelerated economic growth of East Asia over the past three decades, the significant diminution in the threat of major war since the end of the Cold War, and unprecedented democratization (and other factors) have all contributed to the need for a more formal intra-regional cooperative body along the lines of the EU. Notwithstanding the recent setbacks in France and the Netherlands, Europe has made significant progress over the past three decades in formulating more "common" security and foreign policies. But it is critical to understand the core assumptions underlying any region-wide body akin to the EU and the formidable challenges such an organization would face in East Asia.

First and foremost, if the EAC is conceived as an intrinsically "Asian" – as opposed to an "Asian-Pacific" – grouping, the role of the United States would be significantly curtailed in formal, structural terms. While no multilateral security system currently exists in East Asia along the lines of NATO, one could assume, for the moment, that the array of bilateral security alliances could exist in tandem with an EAC, not unlike NATO's coexistence with the EU. While some European governments (notably Germany and France) have called for a more extensive "Europeanization" of European security, the

U.S. has opposed any moves to dilute or erode the preeminent role of the United States in NATO. Thus, it would be critical to define whether an EAC would be focused primarily on economic, trade, and nontraditional security issues (or a modernization of APEC) and whether it would be geographically defined to exclude membership by the U.S.

Second, the level of political disparities in East Asia are so significant that any group's overall effectiveness would be constrained by deep divergences. Unlike the EU, an EAC would include both democratic and non-democratic states (in addition to in-between states) so that perhaps a better comparison would be the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (or more accurately, the Commission on Security Cooperation in Europe), given that it included both NATO and Warsaw Pact Treaty Organization states.

It is noteworthy that of the remaining communist states in the world, all but one are in East Asia: North Korea, China, Vietnam, and Laos. Even within the context of ASEAN's "quiet diplomacy," which has been a hallmark of that sub-region's political strategy, key changes have appeared recently, such as growing anxiety over Myanmar's chairmanship of ASEAN – Rangoon was pressured into "temporarily" skipping its turn in 2006 – and the need to stress greater transparency, rule of law, and greater democratization in the region. Thus, ASEAN's future clout is likely to be increasingly dependent upon the degree to which liberal democratic values are adhered to by member states.

Third, the weight of history also cautions against any accelerated creation of an EAC. While the recent downturn in Sino-Japanese relations and Korean-Japanese relations attests to the sensitivity of pre-World War II historical legacies in the region, coming to terms with individual and collective histories is likely to be severely constrained in certain countries by rising nationalism. Papering over historical disputes is unlikely to create greater intra-regional trust and, left unchecked, there is little doubt that sporadic outbursts against perceived historical injustices will continue to flare up in the region.

Fourth, perhaps one of the most challenging dimensions of an EAC is the extent to which such a grouping would be able to adopt and maintain liberal democratic values, institutions, and norms. The Asian vs. universal values debate that surfaces from time to time in the region is becoming increasingly marginalized in the context of rapid globalization. Although Asian states have every right to be proud of their national heritages and cultures and the abiding need to preserve them, it also goes without saying that the IT revolution, globalized manufacturing and service hubs, and the increasing dilution of intrinsically "national" identities are likely to accelerate political and social changes over the ensuing decades. Again, if one takes a cue from Europe, EU (or for that matter, NATO) expansion has been premised on shared values and democratic institutions. While emulating Europe certainly has drawbacks – such as the burden posed by decades of socialized welfare schemes – an EAC that lacks shared values, norms, and principles in line with global trends would be self-defeating.

East Asian paths and the rise of China

Although it is extremely difficult to accurately forecast East Asia's key paths over the next several decades, some of the major drivers can be identified that could significantly accelerate or impede regional integration. For the first time in Asian history, two great powers are currently dominant in the region: Japan and China. If one includes South Asia, then the rapid ascendance of India must also be taken into account. To be sure, a weakened Russia also cannot be discounted, although Moscow's overall level of influence in the Asia-Pacific region has diminished significantly since the collapse of the USSR. While the United States is not an Asian power, the fact that it alone sustains a web of military alliances in the region, coupled with its economic presence, means that it will retain its dominant position in the region for quite some time. But the crucial factor is the Sino-Japanese rivalry in the political, military, economic, and technological domains.

Seen from this perspective, any serious attempt to forge an EAC must take into account the rise of China and the corresponding role of Japan in that context. China's accelerated economic growth over the past two decades and increasing political leverage attest to the importance of China's rise in assessing East Asia's future paths. While much of the debate in the U.S. has focused on the China threat coming on the heels of key force modernization by the PLA, China's rise poses quandaries for its neighbors.

China's economic takeoff has resulted in a rush by all East Asian states (as well as the U.S. and the EU) to emphasize the primacy of economic linkages while downplaying, for the most part, China's longer-term geopolitical ambitions in the region. China has displaced the U.S. as the largest trading partner for Japan and South Korea and ASEAN's collective trade with China has multiplied several fold over the past decade. Thus, the key question that Asian states should be asking is what type of a China is likely to emerge over the next 20-30 years and how best the region can both accommodate the rise of China while minimizing the potential for more aggressive Chinese foreign and defense policies.

It is impossible to imagine an Asian version of containment vis-à-vis the PRC for the simple reason that China is not equivalent to the USSR. One of the most adroit facets of Chinese foreign policy over the past two decades has been that none of the 14 nations that shares borders with China today has hostile relations with it. This is not to suggest that tensions and disputes don't exist; only that for the first time since 1949, the PRC has been able to "normalize" ties with all of its bordering states. Thus, the ability to forge a coalition to "contain" China is not only impractical, it is virtually impossible.

Such a turn of events is likely to pose challenges for the region since the major counterbalance in the context of a more robust and potentially aggressive China (such as in the South China Sea) is the web of alliances forged by the U.S. after the Korean War. Yet, as illustrated by changes in the ROK-U.S. alliance, the ability of the United States to manage its alliances in the region is going to be increasingly shaped by domestic political forces that may serve to weaken, rather than strengthen, bilateral alliances. Notable

exceptions are apparent, such as the U.S.-Japan alliance, but re-engineering this alliance to prepare for a range of China-related contingencies is also likely to be problematic.

Hybrid challenges

One of the most interesting aspects of East Asian security at this juncture is the amalgamation of traditional and nontraditional security challenges. While Sept. 11 and the ensuing war against terrorism have resulted in notable policy shifts, for the most part East Asia has been immune from cataclysmic terrorist attacks. On a positive note, the specter of major war has declined measurably with the end of the Cold War, with the possible exception of the Korean Peninsula. Even here, the greater threat emanates from a North Korea with operational nuclear weapons and the potential for implosion or collapse rather than a replay of the 1950 North Korean invasion.

What is clearly evident is that East Asia is home to a confluence of both hard and soft security challenges ranging from weapons of mass destruction proliferation, more robust power projection capabilities, the struggle for dominance by the region's two great powers (China and Japan), realignments in the face of changing domestic determinants, accelerated energy competition, and rising environmental problems. Combined, the ability of the region to address centripetal and centrifugal forces over the next two to three decades is likely to emerge as the most important political challenge. How an EAC would deal with these so-called hybrid threats remains largely unknown.

In summary, East Asia today and into the foreseeable future is going to become the testing ground for new governance principles and norms given the vast array of political, military, economic, social, and technological revolutions currently underway. In that sense, the EU during its earlier years could prove to be a working model for an EAC, but such cooperation depends critically on whether individual states are able to come to terms with a range of issues that have so far been ignored or pushed aside for a combination of reasons. Based on the record of the past two decades, the "Asian story" is a remarkable one given the unprecedented level of economic development and political liberalization. That said, coming to terms with hybrid challenges with contending if not contrasting political institutions is likely to become a key factor that could inhibit any accelerated formation of an East Asian community.

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