



Aloha! It has been a busy year at Pacific Forum CSIS. We hope you have enjoyed our weekly *PacNet* commentaries. As always, we invite readers to submit their own contributions when they have thoughts they would like to share.

While you recently received our listing of PacNet reports for 2001 (PacNet 52) and information, you may not have recently visited our Web site www.csis.org/pacfor/ and seen what's there. In addition to back issues of *PacNet* and our quarterly journal, *Comparative Connections*, there are also reports from our conferences and dialogues with other institutions in the region. Recent reports include:

Issues & Insights 4-01

"U.S.-Japan-China: Developing Stable Trilateral Ties," by Jane Skanderup and Brad Glosserman

What are the common interests and objectives that the United States, Japan, and China have to build a more cooperative three-way relationship in the 21st century? Can historic suspicions and recent tensions be overcome? Or will differing world views, opposing concerns about offensive and defensive missile developments, and rising nationalist tendencies create barriers to more effective cooperation between and among these three major Asian powers?

It was with these questions in mind that the Pacific Forum CSIS joined with the Tokyo-based Research Institute on Peace and Security (RIPS) and the Beijing-based China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in July 2001 to convene the second of three dialogues aimed at fostering positive trilateral relations. Participants met in Beijing against the backdrop of a handful of troubling political and security issues. Yet the dialogue was frank and productive, and provided participants with useful insights about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their country's respective policy approaches toward these bilateral relationships.

Issues & Insights 3-01

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

Does an alliance-based policy in the Asia Pacific region still make sense for the United States in the post-Cold War era? "Yes," argues Pacific Forum CSIS President Ralph A. Cossa, but sustaining these alliances well into the 21st century will not be easy. The strategic rationale for the two most vital U.S. East Asian alliances – with Japan and the Republic of Korea – needs to be further developed, especially as (and if) the North Korean threat fades.

Avoiding the temptation of substituting a "China threat" for the threat posed previously by the former Soviet Union and currently by North Korea seems likewise critical to maintaining regional stability. This *Issues & Insights* report lays out some of the future challenges and paths that should be taken to reinforce the positive aspects of America's key bilateral alliances in Asia, while helping to ensure their future relevance as a force for continued peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region.

Issues & Insights 2-01

"Confidence Building Measures in the South China Sea," by Scott Snyder, Brad Glosserman, and Ralph Cossa

The collision of a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance plane with a Chinese fighter jet in air space over the South China Sea in April 2001 refocused attention on the region's territorial disputes and reminded the world that the South China Sea is a site for possible international confrontation. The South China Sea's strategic significance has meant that territorial claims are fiercely contested. That sensitivity and the sheer volume of traffic through the sea have turned the area into an international flash point.

Yet, the most serious immediate threats to the South China Sea result from a vacuum of responsibility rather than hegemony by a dominant regional power. They include environmental threats caused by a possible oil spill or illegal fishing, and the rise of piracy in the region. The EP-3 incident also highlighted the dangerous potential impact of expanded military capabilities in the region, raising the possibility that as neighboring countries improve their naval capacities in the future, accidental or intentional military conflicts in the South China Sea will also rise. Many Southeast Asian neighbors are particularly concerned about the long-term implications of PRC naval and air force improvements for power projection in the South China Sea, as a result of which the balance of power to enforce disputed claims with ASEAN claimants may shift decisively in the PRC's favor. The EP-3 incident underscores the dangers of unintentional conflict, and demonstrates the need for all parties to establish confidence building measures (CBMs) and to put preventive mechanisms into place to manage potential South China Sea disputes.

Issues & Insights 1-01

"U.S.-Japan Strategic Dialogue: Beyond the Defense Guidelines"

What does the United States really expect from Japan? How much is Japan willing or able to contribute beyond current levels, given both legal and political restrictions to

greater Japanese participation in collective defense activities? And, how can any revitalization or reconfiguration of the alliance and respective roles and missions be accomplished in ways that are both generally acceptable to the publics of both nations and non-threatening to Japan's neighbors?

These are among the many critical questions addressed in this Pacific Forum CSIS *Issues & Insights* report on "U.S.-Japan Strategic Dialogue: Beyond the Defense Guidelines." The assembled papers provide divergent as well as some commonly held views of what the United States and Japan individually or jointly need to do to shape the alliance for the future interests of the two countries. The authors do share one common view and objective, however: all believe that the U.S.-Japan alliance is fundamental to long-term peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and must be sustained and revitalized because it is in the mutual national security interests of both nations, and of the region in general, to do so.

Comparative Connections, Special Annual Issue, June 2001

"The Perils of Progress: The U.S.-South Korea Alliance in a Changing Strategic Environment," by Eun Jung Cahill Che and Brad Glosserman

No one said managing the U.S.-South Korea alliance would ever be easy, but we seem to be going through a particularly challenging period at present. For much of this year, the focal point of the relationship has been the March 2001 summit between U.S. President George W. Bush and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. The summit left all involved feeling a little uneasy about the role the U.S. would be willing to play in inter-Korean relations. The delay in U.S.-DPRK contacts pending the North Korea policy review did nothing to assuage the worriers.

During the summit, Mr. Bush made his suspicions of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il plain. The president's skepticism garnered undue attention. What was lost was Bush's endorsement of the South's engagement policy, his support for the 1994 Agreed Framework, and the recognition by both leaders of the importance of the U.S.-South Korea alliance. Nonetheless, the overall tone of the summit made the prospects of future inter-Korean talks seem bleak.

Amid the interplay of the various issues and the widely divergent perspectives that the different players bring to negotiations, it is easy to lose sight of the chief objective: reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Every country has clearly stated that peace on the Peninsula is the ultimate end. The hard part is getting there. And the challenges are made even more daunting by the competing visions of what a "peaceful" Peninsula would look like. The U.S.-ROK relationship has been instrumental in promoting peace and stability on the Peninsula and promises to play a similar role in the future, provided both sides can agree on a common path toward a mutually desired end.

The current and all back issues of *Comparative Connections*, our quarterly journal that highlights major regional bilateral relationships are also available on this site.

Other Items of Interest

Our Web site also features a new USCSCAP page with information on the U.S. member committee, for which we are the administering institution, and its activities. Of interest are the most recent reports from USCSCAP meetings, the Third CSCAP General Meeting, which was held in Canberra in December, as well as reports from the CSBM Working Group, which USCSCAP co-hosts along with CSCAP Singapore and CSCAP Korea.

Finally, please update your address book and databases.

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All of us at Pacific Forum CSIS wish you the best in this holiday season and in the New Year.

