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# America in Asia at the Turn of the Century

Lee Jong Won

"The Kingdom of God will come like a thief," says the Bible. Like natural disasters, historical changes often occur in ways that transcend human imagination and expectation.

The end of the cold war was no exception. When Mikhail Gorbachev, a new type of Soviet leader, emerged and began a series of unilateral initiatives to remold many of the decades-old cold war structures, most people held their optimism in check; most cautiously hoped for solutions to damper the cold war that had intensified under the Reagan administration, and sighed with relief at the return of détente. It took some time for people to understand the scope of the ideological earthquake that eventually engulfed almost all of Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union. We may need more time, and possibly make many more mistakes, to grasp the meaning of the ground swell. What we have witnessed is not just the end of the cold war, but the end of the twentieth century, and of the modern age itself.

In this era of historical transition, it may not be surprising to witness fissures like those between the new thinking and the old structures. Human perception is by nature conservative and resistant to change. In addition to the human instinct of defending one's past, our limited perception capabilities make us cling to old and familiar mental models when confronted with new realities. Old images continue to dominate our way of looking at the world until they completely fail to explain the changed realities. In Asia, where historical memories piled in many layers by generations of turbulence, and where catastrophic changes remain vividly ensconced among the people, this kind of "afterimage" phenomenon seems to be the most conspicuous.

Today the Asia Pacific region is often hailed as the growth center of the world economy. It has generated many aspirations for creating a new regional order. The entire region is replete with what might be termed "econophoria." At the same time, however, the specter of "back to the future" also looms over the horizon: according to the pessimism of the realists, a regression into the classic world of power politics is the most probable scenario in East Asia. Some observers even draw parallels between present-day Asia and nineteenth-century Europe, where several nation-states battled in cutthroat competition for wealth and might.

In which direction is Asia moving? Is it progressing or retrogressing? Will it succeed in establishing a stable regional order based on the region's phenomenal economic growth, and create a security community? Or will the economic successes turn into classical aspirations for politico-military power, giving birth to a Hobbesian world of power politics? By keeping these questions in mind, this chapter attempts to put American "engagement" in Asia into a longer historical perspective. It cannot be denied that the United States has exerted an overwhelming influence in the formation and transformation of twentieth-century Asia. America is already deeply integrated into the international system in East Asia. The role of the United States in the development of the trilateral relations between China, Japan, and the United States needs to be examined in this macrohistorical context.

## Americanism and Asia

The twentieth century can be defined and interpreted from many angles. It was the "century of the state," and also the "century of war." From the viewpoint of international politics, it should be known as the "century of American hegemony." During the past one hundred years, Pax Americana emerged, bloomed, and began to wither. Hegemony does not mean simply the supremacy of economic or military power. "Americanism" is also a vision of a new order of domestic and international society. Karl Polanyi's analysis of the "great transformation" at the turn of the last century is instrumental in elucidating this point (1957).

According to Polanyi, the twentieth century opened its chapter with a great transformation that produced three movements as reactions to the "market society" of the previous century: fascism, the New Deal, and the socialist planned economy. Generalizing his scheme, we can describe the history of this century as triangular interactions between fascism, Wilsonianism, and socialism. For the first time in human history, a "self-regulating market" independent from society emerged in nineteenth-century Europe and in the United States. The separation of the social and economic systems, Polanyi argued, was made possible by the phenomenal growth of productive power since the Industrial Revolution. The separated and strengthened market system began to prevail over other social principles.

Polanyi believed it to be an exceptional phenomenon in the history of humankind. Traditionally the market has been subject to societal and community controls. In societies dominated by the "self-regulating market," people became "economic men" whose sole concern was to maximize one's own profit. One can image as a typical example the "gilded age" in American history when Social Darwinism prospered, when the iron rule of survival of the fittest produced a

new class of millionaires. However, in addition to these "winners," such a society inevitably engenders losers as well. These marginalized groups of people eventually begin to protest and revolt against the ever-increasing social gap. Thus comes the "self-defense of the society against the tyranny of the market."

Fascism, the New Deal, and the socialist planned economy were the three different forms of this self-defense. What demands our attention is the fact the New Deal was devised and proposed consciously as "the third way" between the two extremes: fascism on the right, and state socialism on the left. In the United States at the turn of the century, a series of social and political movements (including the Progressives) emerged and attempted to reform strife-ridden laissez-faire capitalism, and eventually evolved into the New Deal system of the 1920s.

Recent authors have coined terms like "neocapitalism" and "corporate liberalism" to describe this new politico-economic system (McCormick 1982, 318–330; Hogan 1986, 363–372). In several important aspects, this neocapitalist system was intended to be an alternative to nineteenth-century capitalism. First, "organized capitalism" arose. In an attempt to control the inherent anarchy of laissez-faire capitalism, the state was encouraged to intervene in the economy, while business, labor, and farmers were organized into a corporatist system. Taylorism was invented and introduced to produce order and efficiency in the old-fashioned factories.

Second, the pursuit of a "middle way" between the older laissez-faire system and the paternalistic statism of an Orwellian nightmare followed. While government policies aimed at nurturing economic growth and providing social welfare were generally supported, excessive intervention and expansion of the state apparatus was to be watched and checked. One solution was the creation of "semiautonomous" agencies, where experts from the private sector participated in the public policy-making processes.

Third, productionism—the "politics of productivity"—was the ideological underpinning of the neocapitalist system. Productionism, according to Charles Maier, attempts to solve social conflicts by raising productivity through modernization (1977, 607–633). Instead of redividing the economic pie, it seeks to enlarge the absolute whole, thus presenting the only way out of the eternal problem of class struggle over redistribution. This does not just mean that the attained affluence will provide the material basis for mitigating social conflict. By focusing on growth instead of redistribution, it becomes possible to define a common agenda for all the different social groups.

The new American system can be summarized by two concepts, Taylorism and Fordism, named after two of the most symbolic figures of the time. The modernization and rationalization of production under Taylorism inevitably led to the fragmentation of labor and to the increase of labor intensity, along with dramatic increases in productivity. Technology was separated from the skilled hands of the traditional craftsmen and divided into a multitude of standardized

and simple labor. The fragmented laborers were integrated into the assembly-line production system, turning into parts of the machines. In return for such sacrifice, laborers were given a portion of the increased productivity. Ford Motor Company was the forerunner in implementing the eight-hour work day, wage increases, and other welfare measures. The co-optation of the labor class also contributed to the expansion of the domestic market by increasing effective purchasing power. Thus the cycle of mass production and mass consumption came to a full circle, giving birth to the mass society. The subsequent emergence of mass culture and mass communications accelerated the homogenization of the society. The American-style mass society was one in which material affluence was supposed to melt away the age-long class struggle by turning laborers into consumers.

Moreover, Fordism presented a brave new vision for international relations, replacing "territory" with "the market" as the source of wealth. The expansion of the market could now be achieved through the "deepening" of the domestic and foreign markets, rather than through the traditional way of creating colonies. The intensive—as opposed to extensive—development of economy became not only desirable but possible. To borrow the words of Richard Rosecrance, it meant the historical transition from the "military-political world," where "territorial states" repeated an endless zero-sum game over limited resources of territory, to the "trading world," where the "trading states" participated in a plus-sum game of international trade (1986).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a new political and economic system clearly emerged in the United States. This new system soon produced a conviction and consensus among the policy-making elites that this recipe of Americanism should be applied to the world, a world still suffering under the ineffective and immoral *ancien régime*. Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian known for his social concerns, declared that the age of armament expansion and empire building had been replaced by a new "economic age" in which the "legates of our empire are not admirals or proconsuls, but bankers" (Iriye 1993, 98). As Iriye Akira points out, a "widespread perception that economics, as opposed to traditional geopolitics, was becoming the dominant force in national and international affairs" emerged among the political leaders of the United States (1993, 98). Wilsonianism, symbolized by the Fourteen Points intended as prerequisites for a U.S. entry into World War I, should be understood in this context. The creation of the "open world" based on the principles of national self-determination, freedom of the seas, and so on, was believed to be the only way to save the old world from the shackles of power politics and to counter the challenges of Bolshevism.

World War I, brought about by the dysfunction and collapse of the classical balance-of-power system, provided a chance for the United States to embark on the enterprise to recast the old world in its own image. Efforts to replace the

traditional system of self-help and alliance with a collective security system were aborted by isolationism at home and by the resistant power politics of the European countries. However, we need to pay more attention to the fact that the United States attempted to bring a new order into postwar Europe by using its gigantic economic power, even as Wilson's dream of the League of Nations faded. As Charles Maier put it, America tried "recasting bourgeois Europe" in the first postwar era (1981, 327–352; 1975).

Even after the failure of Wilson's "missionary diplomacy," successive Republican governments continued to be actively engaged in the reconstruction of Europe, encouraging the flow of capital in the form of bonds and private investment. As if compensating for the lack of political involvement in international affairs, economic means assumed a key role in diplomacy. This "diplomacy of the dollar" did not simply stand for the outpouring of money. Along with private investment, American-style rationalization was introduced in economic policy, business administration, and labor-management relations. The relative stability and prosperity of the 1920s owed much to the first offensive of Americanism to recast Europe by disseminating American capital, technology, and ideas. However, this first offensive contained an innate fragility caused by the lack of an international political framework and by the speculative character of private capital; it was doomed by attacks from the two extremities of fascism and Bolshevism. Americanism had to wait for another postwar era for its global application.

What demands our attention is not the failure of Americanism in Europe but the relative neglect of Asia in this offensive. Though incomplete, a new order was discussed, dreamed, and attempted in Europe. On the contrary, Asia was rarely raised as a serious target for systematic recasting. Since the end of the nineteenth century, when the westward movement of America crossed the Pacific, the spread of Americanism into Asia followed a long and winding road full of crooks and turns.

The primary reason for such complex refraction was to be found in the peripheral character of Asia in the American worldview. This peripheral character of Asia had a long-term structural impact on U.S. policy toward Asia: the supremacy of realism over idealism. In its relations with Asia, America showed a strong tendency to tilt toward realist considerations and balance-of-power policies under the slogans of idealist values. For the project of recasting the world, American involvement and commitment was thought to be necessary. However, the resources to underwrite these kinds of global commitments were not unlimited. With the reality of "limits of power," it was a rational choice to rely on balance-of-power policies attempting to control, almost by remote, existing power relations through junior partners. The Asian policies of the United States in the twentieth century could be characterized not as a systematic attempt to regional order, but as successive changes of junior partners. The alleged hypothesis of trade-off between U.S-Japan and U.S.-China relations might be invoked

as evidence. For most of the twentieth century, the United States did not have friendly relations with the two regional powers simultaneously; each took turns with the roles of enemy and ally.

It is true that the United States took a series of initiatives toward Asia in the first postwar era, including the establishment of the Washington treaties system, private investment into Japan, and the international consortium to support economic development in China. Japan's Taisho democracy during the 1920s would not have been possible without the Washington treaties system, a partial forerunner of Pax Americana (Mitani 1988).

However, most of these efforts were fragile and half-hearted. In the face of the principle of national self-determination, America was not willing to confront Japanese domination over Korea and China. The neglect of mass uprisings in both countries was interpreted as giving tacit approval to Japanese colonialism. Widespread moral support toward the new China did not accompany financial commitment, which was symbolized by the failure of international consortium plans. What concerned America was how to maintain the status quo and to prevent a sudden change in the power balance in Asia; Japan was a junior partner for that purpose. Even after Japanese expansionist policy had crossed the point of no return on the road to the Pacific War, the basic U.S. strategy in the region was to pit China against Japan. A "Europe first" strategy prevented America from committing itself in Asia Pacific, which had only secondary significance.

## The Cold War and the "Empire by Invitation"

The second postwar era began with the advent of the cold war, which was really a de facto World War III. Put in historical perspective, the cold war functioned as a stage for America to embark on its second offensive to remold the world, and in the process moving away from the hesitation that had characterized the first efforts to reshape the world in its own image. It was a period in which Americanism, after defeating fascism, engaged itself in the apocalyptic struggle against the archenemy of Bolshevism to construct a world in which liberal capitalism dominated. The "Soviet threat" played the role of catalyst in facilitating the domestic consensus for global commitment.

However, in this second offensive, Asia was invariably assigned peripheral status. This point was clearly described in the "containment" strategy advanced by George Kennan. Contrary to its image in the common population, "containment" did not advocate erecting a global *cordon sannitare* around the Soviet Union. In fact, containment sought to secure five geographical strongholds, or five "vital power centers," to borrow Kennan's term: the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Central Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan (Gaddis 1982, chap. 2). For Kennan, these power centers were the only places with

strategic significance. He was opposed to U.S. commitments in areas other than these, with the Middle East being the only exception. In particular, he was skeptical and critical of involvement in the Asian mainland. As the mastermind of the U.S. cold war strategy, he took initiatives in rewinding commitments out of China and Korea. Because of "limits of power," he asserted that the United States should not be engaged in the peripheral region of Asia. When necessary and possible, a revived Japan as a regional center should be encouraged in taking care of the adjacent area. If the United States had any vision of the regional order, it was really a revised and reformed version of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, led by Japan.[1]

As recent studies by Michael Schaller and others show, U.S. policy toward Asia in the early cold war period was predicated upon the concept of "regional integration," which attemped to achieve economic integration by combining industrial Japan with the markets and resources of other parts of Asia. It also envisioned the ultimate realization of political and military manifestations of the regional organization. The strategy of regional integration was a logical derivative of the "open world" principle that aimed at the creation of a global, free-trade system. However, in the Asian realities of unequal development, regional integration would easily result in the fixation of the vertical division of labor inherited from the colonial period. Moreover, because the major motivation of this movement was the pursuit of an economical cold war strategy in the peripheral area of Asia, the U.S. strategy of regional integration tilted toward the centrality of Japan in its implementation. Even inside the U.S. government, voices of apprehension about the revival of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere were raised.[2] Naturally, newly born Asian countries like South Korea reacted fiercely to the American design for the region. The American regional plan was thought to be an "imposed regionalism" that, under the appearances of multilateralism, sought to maintain the hierarchical structure of the region. Realistic considerations and expediency prevailed over principles and values.

It was the desperate plots, intrigues, and efforts of rightist regimes in Asia that dragged the hesitant America into Asia. The United States was an "empire by invitation" in Asia, too (Lundestadt 1980). Faced with dual threats of communism and a revived Japan, these regimes found the resources for their nation-state in the U.S. commitments. In spite of repeated attempts by the United States, a regional security organization comprising the Western Pacific area was frustrated by the resistance of the Asian countries. Instead, a bundle of bilateral security arrangements between the United States and the countries in the region was created. The U.S.-centered "hub-and-spokes" security system was a product of the "Japan problem" deeply rooted in the region.

The outbreak of the Korean War was the dominant factor behind the change in U.S. policy toward Asia. The dramatic challenge from socialism brought America into a direct engagement in Asian affairs. Military commitments were

soon to be followed by economic ones in the form of aid. The transformation of the cold war into politico-economic warfare in the 1950s spurred U.S. economic engagement. In other words, the economic challenges from the successes in socialist countries facilitated the spread of Americanism into Asia. To counter the "peace offensive" and the "economic offensive" initiated by the Soviet Union and China, the United States had to shift its emphasis of policy from military containment to economic development.

During the 1960s, efforts to "modernize" the backward regions with systematic injections of American capital, technology, and ideas reached a climax in the symbolic person of Walt Rostow, the mastermind of cold war strategy for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In addition to economic aid, the war in Vietnam functioned as a stepping stone for other Asian nations to take off economically. The wave of developmentalism spread across the whole region, giving birth to the newly industrializing economies.

Strengthened by the economic growth, the Asian countries felt encouraged to form a regional framework on their own initiative. A regional organization was no longer to be feared as a Trojan horse for domination by great powers. The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, the main purpose of which was to form a regional order independent from outside powers, was a typical example of "regionalism from below." As Norman Palmer points out, the history of regionalism in East Asia can be characterized as "imposed regionalism" (1991, 45–46). The three historical regional systems in East Asia were all attempts by the powers to impose a certain hierarchical order on the region: a system dominated by Confucian thought, Western colonialism, and the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere. The advent of "new regionalism" in the 1960s by the initiatives of the Asian countries suggests that the achievement of relative equality in international relations would be a prerequisite to a stable regional order. The American hegemonic system in the postwar period was instrumental in creating the prerequisites by encouraging economic development. In the shadow of the U.S. cold war strategy, a variant of the "trading world" was formed in part of East Asia.

However, this "success" of Americanism was built on the back of imperial overreach. When the burdens were thought to cross a certain limit, the United States rapidly began to turn from a benevolent hegemon into an "ordinary power." Economic growth in Asia brought about by the dissemination of Americanism came to be considered as a new threat. Under the leadership of Nixon and Kissinger, disciples of classical power politics, American foreign policy shifted from emphasis on the establishment of a regional and global order based upon principles to the pure pursuit of national interests and balances of power favorable to the United States. When Kissinger asserted that "Our interests must shape our commitments, rather than the other way around," he heralded the primacy of unilateralism over multilateralism (Gaddis 1982, 276–283 and 298).

The "Nixinger" détente strategy was based on classical power politics. They were not hesitant to enter into a "marriage of convenience." The dramatic normalization of relations with China was negotiated without the prior knowledge of Japan. The "China card" was intended primarily as a series of countervailing measures against the Soviet Union. However, it also intended to establish a balance-of-power system in East Asia from a long-term strategic consideration. Japan began to be perceived, at least in policy documents, as a new economic threat with the potential for future political and military power. The *Military Posture Report* of 1977 made clear that U.S. policy "is designed to prevent a major rearmament by Japan for offensive purposes which would have profound impact throughout the Pacific" and "to preclude a need for Japan to seek nuclear arms." The significance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty was explained as a deterrent to Japan by preventing it from "alter[ing] fundamentally its defense posture, including the securing of a nuclear capability" (Statement of Gen. George S. Brown 1976, 391–393).

However, this grand strategy based on classical power politics was frustrated halfway, with the resignation of Nixon. Throughout the 1970s, amid serious domestic political turmoil, U.S. foreign policy continued to drift. Moreover, a series of revolutionary changes in the world economy presented a new dimension of problems. As the era of globalization and borderless economies—precipitated by information and technological revolutions—became a reality, the need for multilateral frameworks and initiatives increased. At the same time, those domestic sectors affected most by globalization created ever-intensifying political pressures for protectionism and unilateral foreign policy. As Kees van der Pijl summarizes, U.S. foreign policy after Nixon bifurcated into two competing streams: unilateralism and multilateralism (1994, chap. 9).

## The End of the Cold War and the Third Postwar Era

In December 1989, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev met in Malta and jointly declared the end of the cold war. It was only four years after Gorbachev had taken power, near the peak of the "new cold war." The Berlin Wall crumbled, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The speed and scope of the changes that happened in the final days of the cold war were far beyond human expectation.

In the United States, the first and popular reaction to this drama was the exhilaration of a victor. In particular, the success of the militarist policies of Ronald Reagan's new cold war was hailed. It is true that the Reagan administration pushed forward a consistent policy of pressure against the Soviet Union, in an effort to "roll back" the Soviet spheres of influence that had expanded during the détente of the 1970s. In Nicaragua contra guerrilla groups were organized and supported, while Somalia was pitted against pro-Soviet Ethiopia. To aid

Solidarity, the Polish labor movement, a variety of covert operations were attempted. With the collaboration of Saudi Arabia, the United States also succeeded in lowering oil prices in spite of the second oil shock. The Soviet Union, which relied heavily on oil exports, was hurt the most. A decisive blow came from the high-tech arms race ignited by the "Star Wars" plan. The Soviet Union, which failed to keep pace with the technological innovations of the 1970s, and languishing in declining productivity, could no longer remain in the race (Schweizer 1994).

However, Reagan's strategy was only one side of the coin. The drama could have been different from what really happened if the antagonist had acted differently. It is rather exceptional for a power to retreat and render its own sphere of influence peacefully when confronted with a crisis. The long history of international power politics shows that quite often the declining power would rather choose a preventive war in an attempt to stem the tidal change while it still had a military advantage (Gilpin 1981, 191–192). In fact, strong hawkish voices in the Soviet Union demanding confrontational and militarist policies against Reagan's pressure were heard. Gorbachev's initiatives to retrench peacefully the Soviet version of "imperial overreach" was not an automatic result of economic decline; it rather was the product of political decision and choice. Behind this choice lay a profound change in the conception of national security.

The Brezhnev era came to be known as the period of "immobilism." After Khrushchev was deposed—largely for being "soft" on America—efforts to de-Stalinize the Soviet economy into a modern and balanced one were reversed. Ironically, the failure of the United States functioned as a catalyst to accelerate the long-term decline of the Soviet Union. Trapped in the quagmire of Vietnam, America seemed to be approaching a disintegration of sorts. Richard Nixon, who tried to revive America by retrenching the "imperial overreach," was forced to resign to avoid impeachment.

Under presidents Ford and Carter, U.S. diplomacy continued to drift; it was without clear direction and leadership. In the arena of international politics, the decline of Pax Americana was more than clear. The rise of the Third World was assumed by many to be a given. According to zero-sum political realism, the loss of the enemy means a gain for the other side.

In addition, the oil shocks of the 1970s were a windfall for the Soviets, making it more difficult to feel the necessity of economic reforms. As if determined to fill the vacuum caused by the retreat of the United States, Brezhnev launched offensives to expand Soviet commitments in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan. However, it did not take long for the Soviet Union to learn the lessons of the overextended empire. Industrial growth plummeted to the nadir of 3.4 percent in 1979, from an average of 7 percent to 9 percent in the 1960s.

It was in such a situation that Gorbachev tackled the gigantic task of restructuring the socialist system. Like Khrushchev, Gorbachev also needed a favorable

and stable international environment for his domestic perestroika. He took a series of unilateral initiatives to soften the tension brought on by the new cold war. The eventual retreat from Afghanistan, a peripheral area, was not surprising. However, the decision to abandon the satellites in Eastern Europe was a revolutionary leap from traditional national security doctrines.

In fact, a revolution of sorts was brewing in the Soviet national security doctrines, facilitated by the dissemination of the idea of common security. Through the contacts with the West during the Helsinki talks in the 1970s, a group of national security experts emerged in the Soviet Union and formed an "epistemic community" with their counterparts in the West (Risse-Kappen 1995, 187–222). What impressed them was the new concept of common security proposed by the Palme Commission, and gradually accepted by the West European governments (Palme Commission 1982; Dewitt 1994, 1–1S; Kerr 1995, 233–255). As a country that had suffered most from the siege mentality, the Soviet Union was also in the best position to know the seriousness of a real security dilemma.

In the course of the discussions inside the Soviet Union, these new thinkers argued against heavy spending on conventional military capabilities that would only serve to reinforce "the myth of the Soviet military threat" without enhancing Soviet security. They asserted that "future security cannot be achieved by military means." The following passage showed how desperate the Soviet new thinkers were in trying to persuade their compatriots out of the vicious circle of security dilemma.

> It is only openness that allows us efficiently to make the peoples of other countries aware of our political tasks, to convince them of the peaceful intentions and plans of the USSR and to isolate reactionary and militaristic groups. That is why steps aimed at broadening the openness of our foreign political and military activities are of tremendous importance in strengthening the security of the Soviet Union. They reduce rather than increase the threat. (Oye 1995, 75–76)

The end of the cold war was accompanied by revolutionary changes in national security discourses and practices. The cold war was a de facto World War III, and Wilsonianism had achieved victory over Bolshevism. However, the victory was not earned by military means, but by the expansion of the trading world as defined by Rosecrance. In the second postwar period, for the first time in human history, the trading world had become a reality in most parts of the world, making it possible for an increasing number of countries to share the profits. As the trading world expanded and stabilized, the relative costs for the military-political world increased, which led to the gradual collapse of the territorial states with excessive military burdens and commitments. The path of the Soviet Union symbolized the agonies and the dilemmas of the territorial state. In the second postwar era, Americanism succeeded in recasting half the world, providing international public goods for the trading world. However, in the

process, the United States undertook enormous military burdens. In the coming third postwar era, the international community will face the historical task of broadening and stabilizing the trading world, and achieving the long-cherished dream of a truly global security community.

## Post–Cold War Strategy and the Asia Pacific Region

In the process of developing its post–cold war strategy, the United States retrogressed into classical power politics based on the sovereign state system. The first document discussing the post–cold war strategy was *Discriminate Deterrence*, a report by the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, in the last days of the Reagan administration (1988). The report proposed, while maintaining the basic tenet of containment against the Soviet Union, to shift to a strategy of making discriminate responses to a variety of threats, such as the emergence of Japan and China as military powers.

Based on the judgment that global war between the two superpowers had become extremely unlikely, the report characterized the emerging international system as multipolar. The report raised four dangers regarding new threats in this new, multipolar world: Japan and China becoming military powers; the rapid modernization of military technology; global proliferation of high-tech weapons; and low-intensity conflicts in the Third World. As symbolized by repeated references to the possibilities of Japan and China emerging as military powers, the world depicted by the report was a classic Hobbesian world. Economic issues like trade and technology were placed in the context of military competition. Moreover, considerations on security were strictly confined to the level of the nation-state.

The changes in international relations had gone beyond the assumptions of the report. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the Gulf War made a fundamental revision of the strategy inevitable. The new strategy of the Bush administration was soon dubbed the "Regional Defense Strategy" (Cheney 1991, v; 1992, 6–7; 1993, 1–2). It demanded that the focus of national strategy should be shifted from global threat by the Soviet Union to regional threats in major regions such as Europe, Southwest Asia, and East Asia. To cope with the new regional threats—threats that were as diverse as they were unpredictable—the military posture of the United States was to be restructured into four categories: strategic deterrence and defense forces, forward presence, crisis response forces, and reconstitution capability. Readiness and strategic agility were presented as key principles on which the new military posture should be based.

Moreover, the Base Force plan constituted concrete force-level plans for the Regional Defense Strategy. Though it planned a 25 percent reduction in overall force levels in the five years starting from 1990, it was still based upon the

assumption of fighting major regional conflicts. One reason why the reduction turned out to be so small—compared to the general expectation of a greater "peace dividend"—could be found in the assumption of unilateralism.

The Regional Defense Strategy was a step forward in the sense that it tried to redefine the changed nature of threats in the post–cold war world. However, it still retained strong military tendencies in its approach to regional conflicts. In addition, the "new world order" was based on the assumption of a military unipolar system led by the United States, which by now was the only superpower left. Multilateralism was forced to recede to the backstage while unilateralism came to the fore. The Base Force plan presupposed that the sole responsibility to fight major regional conflicts would be on the United States. However, the assumption of military unipolarity proved to be unreal in the general post–cold war trend toward mutlipolarity, particularly in areas other than military power. In fact, most heretofore post–cold war threats, including regional conflicts, have causes deeply rooted in factors not related to military considerations. The Gulf War—the model behind the Regional Defense Strategy—was not a symbol of American strength, but of its limitations. The United States could not afford to fight a regional war without the financial support of its allies.

During the last days of the Bush administration, several important shifts took place: that from unilateralism to multilateralism, and that from a realist balance of power strategy toward one of interdependence. The decision-making process leading to official *Defense Planning Guidance for Fiscal Year 1994–1999* was symbolic on this point. The first draft prepared by the Pentagon was strongly influenced by classical power politics, and as such demonstrated a clear preference for the unipolar system (Tyler 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). It defined the role of the U.S. military as one that should "prevent the reemergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union, or elsewhere . . . Western Europe, East Asia, . . . and Southwest Asia" (Tyler 1992c, A14).

The collective security system of the United Nations was also completely neglected. Even the multinational forces of the Gulf War were considered "ad hoc assemblies, often not lasting beyond the crisis." The draft demanded that "the United States should be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated" (Tyler 1992b, A14).

However, the final version of the guidance that emerged from the discussion took on a totally different tone. The revision was the product of fierce criticism from both inside and outside of the government (Tyler 1992d, 1992e, 1992f; *New York Times* 1992). The strong unilateral biases were revised into mild multilateral expressions. The goal of the United States was now to "strengthen and extend the system of defense arrangements that binds democratic and like-minded nations together in common defense against aggression, build habits of cooperation, avoid the renationalization of security policies, and provide secu-

rity at lower costs and with lower risks for all" (Tyler 1992f, A14). U.S. leadership was to be built in cooperation with the community of democratic nations. The United Nations was also expected to play a leading role in broad issue areas, including the economy, the environment, and many other areas.

The Clinton administration accelerated the shift further. For Bill Clinton, who claimed he would "focus on the domestic economy like laser," the redefinition of national security in the post–cold war era was also instrumental in reducing the defense burden. The concepts of "common security" and "cooperative security" were actively introduced into reformulation of national security strategy.[3] The result was the "strategy of engagement and enlargement," which was based on "enlarging the community of market democracies," while maintaining global engagement (The White House 1995, 2). The strategy had three central components: to maintain strong defense capabilities and to promote cooperative security measures; to make efforts to open foreign markets and to spur global economic growth; and to promote democracy abroad. These three components correspond to the military, economic, and diplomatic aspects of national security respectively. The strategy of engagement and enlargement is aimed at integrating these different components into a comprehensive strategy. The emphasis on nonmilitary—particularly on economic—aspects of national security policy has been a consistent characteristic of American foreign policy throughout the twentieth century.

The strategy of engagement and enlargement was interpreted into military strategy, leading to the publication of a series of policy documents.[4] The *Bottom-Up Review* stressed that the most striking change in the U.S. security environment since the end of the cold war was "in the nature of the danger to our interests" (Aspin 1993, 1–2). The new threats could be divided into four categories: the spread of weapons of mass destruction; threats by regional powers and disorder; the potential failure of democratic reforms in the former Soviet Union; and the potential failure to build a strong U.S. economy. By expanding the scope of national security, the new strategy aimed at lowering the relative importance of purely military aspects.

By integrating the nonmilitary dimensions into national security strategy, the military strategy itself began to change. The newly revised version of the *National Military Strategy* shows that a fundamental change is under way regarding the very meaning of the military force. The report pointed out four principal dangers: regional instability; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; transnational dangers like drug trafficking and terrorism; and the dangers to democracy and reform in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Shalikashivili 1995).

The objectives the military should pursue are twofold: promoting stability and thwarting aggression. To achieve these objectives, the U.S. military has three essential tasks: peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict preven-

tion, and fighting and winning the wars. What deserves our attention is the increased importance given to peacetime activities aiming at preventing conflicts and instability. "Peacetime engagement" includes military-to-military contacts, national assistance, humanitarian operations, and drug counterintelligence. Conflict prevention is implemented in regional alliances, arms control, confidence-building measures, and peace enforcement. The influence of concepts such as cooperative security and preventive diplomacy is clear here. Under its Cooperative Engagement Strategy, the U.S. Pacific Command has been expanding peacetime activities like military contacts while scaling down combat exercises.

The kinds of support the United States expects from the allied countries are also changing. The recent report on Allied Contribution to the Common Defense proposed to use the phrase "responsibility sharing," instead of "burden sharing," to emphasize the shifting focus (Secretary of Defense 1995). Besides the traditional host nation support or military expenditure, new and diverse activities such as crisis management, peace operations, denuclearization, promoting democratization, and providing economic and humanitarian assistance were added to "responsibility sharing."

Let us now turn to the problem of how these changes in the overall strategic considerations have affected U.S. Asian policy. The outline of the Bush administration's policy toward post–cold war Asia was first made public in April 1990 in a Defense Department report to the Congress entitled *A Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim*—the first East Asia Strategic Initiative (EASI-I). In mid-1992 the Pentagon submitted a second progress report, which was soon called EASI-II.[5] In these policy papers, the Bush administration envisioned a sort of unipolar regional order under dominant U.S. leadership. Regional security arrangements discussed actively among the Asian countries were criticized as unrealistic and undesired. The reports were unanimous in emphasizing the obstacles on the road to a horizontal and spontaneous order in this region, including deep-rooted mutual mistrust and antagonism, the potential danger of aggressive nationalism, diversity in culture, religion, and language, and the enormous economic gap.

It is in this context that the need for the United States to maintain the military presence in East Asia, even after the demise of the Soviet threat, becomes obvious. The future role of the U.S. military in the Western Pacific has been described as one of a "regional balancer, honest broker, and ultimate security guarantor" (Department of Defense 1990, 9).

Whatever the reasons behind the U.S. decision to remain in the region, they were not altruistic. The reports reiterated the importance of the region to the United States strictly from the point of national interest. "The U.S. is a Pacific power," and for "the United States, a maritime power, the Pacific Ocean is a major commercial and strategic artery. . . . U.S. exports to East Asia and the

Pacific were $130 billion—that translates into roughly 2.6 million American jobs dependent on our trade with the region." Therefore, major objectives of U.S. Asian policy should be to secure "commercial access to the region" and to prevent "the rise of any hegemonic power or coalition." Instead of a regional security arrangement, the United States should seek to maintain a "strong system of bilateral security arrangements" (Department of Defense 1992, 2–3, 14). As Secretary of State James Baker and other high officials repeatedly stressed, the United States tried to establish a "hub and spokes" or "fan spread wide" type of regional system, placing itself at the center (Lasater 1996, 14–17; Kerr 1995, 236–238). Unilateralism-cum-bilateralism was the favored approach in U.S. Asian policy.

The United States reacted almost hysterically to the proposal of the East Asian Economic Caucus by Malaysian Premier Mahathir. Bush was negative even toward the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which proposed an "open regionalism" comprising both North and South America.

The Clinton administration reversed some of these tendencies toward multilateralism. Incorporating the new concepts of comprehensive and cooperative security, the United States began to formulate a long-term policy toward Asia. With the declaration of the "new pacific community," APEC was given a higher policy priority and more attention. In the EASI-III report of February 1995, it was stipulated as an objective that the United States should "explore new 'cooperative security' approaches" through regional and subregional security arrangements, military confidence-building measures, and other multilateral mechanisms (Department of Defense 1995, 3–4, 12–14)

## Cooperative Security in East Asia and China-Japan-U.S. Relations

As the twentieth century draws to an end, the dissemination of Americanism into Asia is also nearing its final stage: the realization of one open world including the remnant socialist countries. As is characteristic of a transitional period, the U.S. policy toward Asia oscillated between the two streams. Though still not clear, the general trend seems to be toward the establishment of a regional system based on the concept of cooperative security. However, before that can be accomplished, several problems must be solved and issues surrounding the "constructive engagement" of the United States in the region must be dealt with.

The first and foremost is the deeply rooted unilateralist tendency of U.S. diplomacy, especially toward Asia. To implement the cooperative security measures, multilateral frameworks are indispensable. Even the Clinton administration, with its stronger inclination toward multilateralism, had to compromise under domestic political pressures. In the EASI-III report the supremacy of the

bilateral approach over regional/multilateral arrangements in U.S. security policy is reiterated. It is true that the United States has functioned as a supplier of international public goods. However, with the progress of democratization and economic development of the whole region, it will get more difficult politically to justify the stationing of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers. The American military presence should be defined and utilized as an interim catalyst to facilitate the formation of regionwide multilateral frameworks. Balance-of-power strategies based on bilateral relations contain the potential danger to ignite a chain reaction of virulent nationalism.

The significance of the trilateral relations between China, Japan, and the United States should be understood in this context. That does not just mean that the three countries have responsibilities for a stable regional order as regional powers. Rather, the problem is that the trilateral relations may turn into the most serious sources of regional disorder. The smaller countries in the region have managed to organize themselves into a "trading world" during the postwar period, achieving an embryonic form of security community. It is almost unthinkable that military forces would be employed as a means to resolve disputes between the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the ASEAN countries. Heavily dependent on the world economy for its survival and prosperity, those smaller countries have no other choice but to pursue a stable regional order.

In contrast, the United States and China retain natural tendencies to return to unilateralism, backed by the illusion of self-sufficiency. Japan, which long ago attained the status of economic power, has nurtured domestic sentiments for self-esteem. The three countries also have various instruments of influence upon the region. Political confrontations and maneuvers among the three powers would result in regionwide instability.

Powerful vestiges of cold war mentality are still with us. While emphasizing the fundamental changes in the nature of the threats, the *Bottom-Up Review*, for instance, still clings to advocating a high level of nuclear and conventional forces. As a result, the resources needed for preventive diplomacy are severely restricted. The concept of "two major regional conflicts that occur nearly simultaneously" contains numerous unrealistic assumptions (Aspin 1993, 7). In East Asia the most probable regional conflicts were thought likely to occur on the Korean peninsula or in the Taiwan Strait. What should be stressed, however, is the fact that the two "remnant socialist states" are no longer fundamentalist or ideological revisionist states. They are more eager to join the vibrant regional economy than to try to topple the whole capitalist system. The problem is how, when, and at what price. One core idea of twentieth-century Americanism is the emphasis on the economic aspects of political and security issues. It is high time that this basic idea be given renewed attention.

## Endnotes

1. For the regional integration plans for Asia in the early postwar period, see Schaller (1985).
2. An example of the discussions in the U.S. government is Lacy to Merchant, "Mr. Voorhees' 'Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,'" March 8, 1950, RG 59, Lot File 54D190, box 1, National Archives.
3. William Perry, secretary of defense under the Clinton administration, was an active proponent of "cooperative security" before taking office. See Carter, Perry, and Steinbruner (1992).
4. See Aspin (1993); Department of Defense (1994); Shalikashivili (1995).
5. See Department of Defense (1990), (1991), and (1992).

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