

**Relating the U.S.–Korea and  
U.S.–Japan Alliances to Emerging  
Asia Pacific Multilateral Processes:  
An ASEAN Perspective**

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## Introduction

American military power underpinned the security structure of the Asia Pacific region during the Cold War. Post-Cold War, its role is still vital to peace and stability in the region. The most overt manifestations of American military might are the Japan–America Security Alliance (JASA) and the Korea–America Security Alliance (KASA). These bilateral alliances, together with a modified Australia–New Zealand–United States (ANZUS) treaty relationship, point to the diversity of security interests and perspectives in the region. Even during the height of the Cold War, the region never quite presented the kind of coherence that would have facilitated the creation of a truly multilateral defense framework of the sort exemplified by NATO. In Southeast Asia, the lack of strategic coherence resulted in a patchwork of defense arrangements between local and extraregional states. Dominated by the United States, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was only nominally regional.

During the Cold War, the United States entered into region-wide alliances to “contain” communism. In the post-Cold War period, uncertainties, rather than clearly definable threats, have marked the Asia Pacific’s strategic landscape. While not disengaging from the region, the United States is encouraging greater burden-sharing by its friends and allies located there. In consequence, JASA and KASA are undergoing change even as regional states accept their utility and reassurance value. At the same time, region-wide multilateral confidence-building and cooperative security processes, which involve practically all the states on opposite sides of the old Cold War divide, have emerged. China—the object of Cold War containment policies—is being constructively engaged through these multilateral processes. How the existing alliances, which still have their deterrent func-

tions, can be related to these nascent multilateral processes is the focus of this paper. Because the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the driving force behind the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the only region-wide process seeking a balanced relationship among the external powers in the post-Cold War setting, we explore first the evolving ASEAN perspectives toward KASA and JASA. The paper will then relate the ASEAN-driven framework to the security concerns of Northeast Asia.

## Regional Perspectives on Alliances

A complex mix of factors has shaped the attitudes of Southeast Asian states toward alliances in the Cold War period. These factors include their historical experiences, unique security needs and location, and strategic and ideological orientation. Their differential impact resulted in a post-World War II Southeast Asia that never constituted a coherent region for military alliance formation. A checkered history of colonial disengagement reinforced the region's ambivalent attitudes toward overt military involvement with external powers.

American security underpinning of the region during the Cold War bought time for non-Communist Southeast Asia to concentrate on economic development. But the regional stability that the United States ensured through its policy of containment of China (and later, North Vietnam and its extraregional patron, the Soviet Union), also allowed other regional states to avoid a deep or extensive entanglement with American power. In consequence, SEATO, sustained by American military power, remained only nominally Southeast Asian, even among the anti-Communist regimes in the region.<sup>1</sup> Only Thailand and the Philippines were (and continue to be) the formal allies of the United States, by virtue of the 1954 Manila Pact, which has not been abrogated despite the dismantling of SEATO's organizational structure following the end of the second Indochina war in 1975.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere in non-Communist Southeast Asia, a British-centric alliance system emerged as a result of British decolonization rather than as a grand regional security vision. From 1957 to 1971, this system provided an external defense guarantee to Malaya (later Malaysia and Singapore) under the Anglo-Malayan (Malaysian) Defense Agreement (AMDA). Although they were not formal signatories, Australia and New Zealand were also associated with the Agreement. This alliance, whose members all belonged to the British Commonwealth, saw Malaysia and Singapore through Indonesia's policy of Confrontation, which posed the most severe threat to the external security of the two local states. It also enabled Malaya to distance itself from the Cold War-inspired SEATO (whose members also included Britain, Australia, and New Zealand). A certain deliberate ambiguity in the treaty provisions, however, allowed external Commonwealth forces based in Malaya to be redeployed to "elsewhere" in Southeast Asia—in effect, to the treaty area covered by SEATO.<sup>3</sup>

Facing growing financial strains, Britain decided to accelerate the withdrawal of its troops from Southeast Asia after the end of Confrontation. By 1971, there was only a residual British military presence in the region. The AMDA was replaced by a loose consultative arrangement involving the five original signatories and associated powers of AMDA. Renamed the Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA), the agreement has become the only multilateral defense network in Southeast Asia involving regional and extraregional states.<sup>4</sup>

Vietnam's December 1978 invasion of Cambodia (to overthrow the Khmer Rouge regime which was then allied to China) led to renewed polarization in continental Southeast

Asia. On the Communist side, the alliance formation centered on Vietnam—the subregional hegemon that was linked by two bilateral, twenty-five-year treaties of friendship and mutual assistance to Laos (1977) and Cambodia (1979). The “external overlay” took the form of a separate friendship treaty in 1978 (entered into just prior to the invasion of Cambodia as an insurance against China’s reaction) between Vietnam and the then-Soviet Union. This alliance gave Moscow unprecedented military access to bases in Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>

The patchwork of alliances in Southeast Asia during the Cold War period reflected the desires of militarily disadvantaged local states for recourse to some extraregional or regional hegemon, as a means of addressing external security needs. In the case of SEATO and the Indochina treaties, the Cold War alignments in turn determined the nature of local states’ external affiliations. In the case of AMDA and later, the FPDA, a more benign variant of colonialism resulted in external affiliations that have endured into the postcolonial phase.

The FPDA accommodated an underlying Malaysian sentiment of neutralism, which found unofficial expression as early as 1968 when both the United States and Britain’s future roles in the region looked increasingly uncertain. In the United States, the Vietnam War divided American public opinion, prompting calls for America to disengage from the conflict. In Britain, budgetary strains caused a review of the country’s East-of-Suez defense posture, casting doubt on British commitment to the region’s security. These developments led Malaysia increasingly toward regional neutralization—a concept subsequently reworked into the 1971 ASEAN declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN).

ZOPFAN notwithstanding, a regional pragmatism persists within ASEAN. Several members incline toward a balance-of-power perspective, supporting alliances, and the provision of basing facilities for external powers. Others favor regional neutrality and adopt a wary attitude toward alliances. Reconciling these two different “security paradigms” with ZOPFAN is an attempt at squaring the circle.<sup>6</sup> In one view, ZOPFAN would phase in while foreign bases (the most prominent of which were located in Thailand and the Philippines after the sizeable British presence in Singapore was wound up) are withdrawn. ASEAN’s declaratory statements have created the impression that ZOPFAN was the foreign policy “mantra”—if not the ideology—of the grouping, but the balance-of-power paradigm continues to appeal, especially to Brunei and Singapore.<sup>7</sup> The apprehensions of these two states about their immediate larger neighbors have impelled them to favor external balancing factors. For Singapore, defense networking with friendly powers remains an important aspect of its defense policy, which seeks to provide “extra strings to the bow.” Like Brunei, Singapore could support ZOPFAN so long as ZOPFAN remained an aspiration and vision, and did not develop a detailed roadmap with clear undertakings for its members.

Except perhaps for the then-North Vietnam, most regional states have traditionally been far more concerned with internal threats to their security. During the Cold War period, one internal threat took the form of insurgency by Beijing-affiliated Communist movements. Such a threat challenged the legitimacy of political regimes and underscored the importance of domestic efforts to promote socioeconomic development. For states like Malaysia, external military ties were useful in stabilizing the external security environment and in obtaining foreign military aid, thereby freeing scarce financial resources for national development.

Two other perspectives on security—one based on isolationism and the other on nonalignment—have also been part of Southeast Asia’s history. Isolationism was a hallmark of Burma’s (now Myanmar) foreign policy during the Ne Win regime from 1962 to 1988. It precluded Burmese membership in ASEAN, a grouping deemed too “pro-Western” or too “SEATO-like” during the Cold War period. This view was shared by North Vietnam as well

as the then-Prince Sihanouk, whose search for a neutral path for Cambodia eventually led to a tenuous outcome. Isolationism, however, did not deter Burma from developing what past Burmese leaders had described as a “Pauk phaw,” or “consanguineous” relationship with China. Over time, this special relationship has even enabled the Rangoon (now Yangon) regime to benefit from Chinese arms transfers.

Among the original five members of ASEAN, only Indonesia has had no formal alliance relationship with an external power. This noninvolvement influenced both its strategic outlook and its attitude to foreign bases in the region. Indonesia’s hand was evident in ASEAN’s founding declaration in 1967, which states that “all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of states in the area or prejudice the orderly process of their development.”<sup>8</sup> Although Indonesia found common ground with Malaysia on ZOPFAN, it was cool to the Malaysian idea of regional neutralization supported by intrusive external guarantees. Its declared preference was for “regional solutions to regional problems.” Though it felt entitled to play a leading regional role, Indonesia chose not to impose its views on alliances on other ASEAN members. Had it done so, the ASEAN *modus operandi* of political decision-making by consensus would have suffered a fatal blow. Given its deep-seated apprehensions over the projection of Chinese power and influence over the region, Indonesia was probably just as disposed as several ASEAN members to view the broader Asia Pacific security environment in balance-of-power terms. For Indonesia therefore, JASA was important for balancing, if not containing, Chinese power.

## JASA and KASA in Regional Perspective

For the original five ASEAN member states, the two alliances (but more especially JASA, given its maritime focus) were useful in containing Chinese, and later Soviet power projections into the South China Sea. Indonesia and Malaysia were concerned about the China threat, while Thailand and Singapore were more worried about the Soviet threat, particularly after 1978, when the Soviet Union gained access to air and naval bases in Vietnam. Despite their different threat perceptions, all the ASEAN states recognized the utility of JASA.

Apprehensive about a revival of Japanese militarism, many regional states also saw value in JASA as a constraint on Japanese power. This assessment of JASA was evident in the early 1980s, when regional concerns grew over the intensified military presence and increased naval capability of the Soviet Union, and when the protection of vital sea lanes became a major issue. Regional governments were perturbed by the prospect of a Japanese naval role in Southeast Asian waters,<sup>9</sup> but they accepted an enhanced Japanese military capability, developed in tandem with the United States.

ASEAN perceptions of KASA during the Cold War were similarly shaped by reference to threats from China and the Soviet Union and their power rivalry with the United States. In this respect, anti-Communist Southeast Asia valued the strategic significance of KASA in confining the Cold War front largely to the Korean peninsula. It also appreciated South Korea’s role in committing 50,000 troops to the Vietnam War between 1965 and 1967,<sup>10</sup> a contribution that helped America in continental Southeast Asia in a way that Japan could not contemplate. Still, it must be recognized that KASA was (and is) focused on land-based

defense, which diminishes its relevance to the maritime security interests of ASEAN. For its part, ASEAN was also more inclined to distance itself from the conflict on the Korean peninsula.

## **Current Regional Views of JASA and KASA**

Current regional views of JASA and KASA must be seen in the wider context of the following developments:

1. A transformed post-Cold War regional security environment, in which uncertainties have replaced the perceived overt external threats of the past, whether posed by China, the Soviet Union, or Vietnam.
2. An expanding ASEAN membership, with the inclusion of Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar (Burma) in 1997, and Cambodia in April 1999.
3. The continuing interest in “anchoring” the United States in Asia, despite the closure of U.S. bases in the Philippines in 1992.
4. The rise of Chinese power, both in military and economic terms.
5. The relative decline of Japan as an economic superpower.
6. The forging of a new Asia Pacific-wide framework for multilateral cooperative security.
7. Changed perceptions about security linkages between Northeast and Southeast Asia.

Both policymakers and scholars have traditionally treated the Northeast and Southeast Asia subregions as distinct. Their respective security agendas were deemed different, with Northeast Asia more preoccupied with external threats and Southeast Asia with internal ones. Furthermore, ASEAN was more disposed to emphasize regional separations and distinctions because it wanted to steer clear of Northeast Asia’s more overt Cold War conflicts. ASEAN’s early wariness about establishing dialogue relationships with the Republic of Korea (ROK) on one side of Asia, and with the states of the Indian subcontinent on the other, reflected a desire not to be drawn into regional conflicts and controversies. Before 1991, when the ROK became a full dialogue partner of ASEAN,<sup>11</sup> the only Northeast Asian state with which ASEAN had a formal dialogue relationship was Japan. Japan became a dialogue partner in 1977, the same year as the United States, and these two external powers have played key roles in underpinning the region’s economic growth and stability.

In the 1990s, the waning of Cold War cleavages in the region coincided with growing economic interdependence and linkages between Northeast and Southeast Asia and across the wider Asia Pacific. These linkages have been given institutional economic form by the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. The ARF and the second-track Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) institutionalized an ASEAN interest in the security of Northeast Asia. These developments reflected a desire on ASEAN’s part to influence the changing balance of forces

that affect the external security environment. Underlying this assumption is the recognition that the changed security relationships among the United States, Japan, and China have important bearings on the security environment of Southeast Asia itself. Current reviews of KASA and JASA have drawn more Southeast Asian attention to these relationships and their impact on regional security.

Regional attitudes have been more clearly articulated for JASA than for KASA.<sup>12</sup> Although both KASA and JASA have been subject to intramural strains in recent years, they do not trigger the same degree of regional concern. Both are viewed as continuing manifestations of American forward deployments, and regarded as part of the U.S. involvement in the Asia Pacific. Their role in ensuring security in the wider Asia Pacific is recognized at a time when only a residual American military presence remains in Southeast Asia. Regional states that consider the strategic landscape in balance-of-power terms<sup>13</sup> appreciate the two treaties' utility in balancing the perceived power ascendancy of China and in moderating the build up of Japanese military power.

Korean reunification could change the U.S. role on the Korean peninsula and hence, the role of KASA. If reunification leads the United States to reduce its military presence on the Korean peninsula, the triangular relationship among China, Japan, and America could become difficult, even unstable. Such a development would not be welcomed in Southeast Asia. While the long-term U.S. military presence in Korea is uncertain, it will likely remain in Japan because it serves the strategic interests of both Japan and the United States.

ASEAN states—Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia, in particular—have acknowledged the centrality of the U.S.–Japan alliance to peace, stability, and economic growth in the Asia Pacific region. ASEAN “has accepted the result of [the review of the U.S.–Japan defense guidelines announced through the Clinton–Hashimoto Joint Declaration of April 1996], and the resulting new burden-sharing by Japan because the improved alliance relationship helps strengthen the U.S. presence. It thinks that the U.S. military presence in the western Pacific is vital to the stability and peace of the region.”<sup>14</sup> As Singapore’s Foreign Minister, S. Jayakumar, has noted, “only the United States has the strategic weight, economic strength, and political clout to exercise leadership in the Asia Pacific region. . . . Without America’s involvement, the transformation of Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific as a whole could not have happened with such speed and scope.”<sup>15</sup>

Notwithstanding the United States’ perceived importance to the stability of the region, there remains considerable variation in the extensiveness of U.S. military linkages and political contacts, which the ASEAN countries are prepared to contemplate. At one end of the spectrum are Thailand and the Philippines, still the formal allies of the United States. The annual “Cobra Gold” military exercises that Thailand conducts with the United States are the largest and most extensive in the region. Since 1994, Singapore, too, has been participating in the annual combined air exercise, code-named “Exercise Cope Tiger,” together with the United States and Thailand. In January 2000, Singapore announced that it had accepted an invitation to participate in “Cobra Gold,” scheduled later in the year. Its participation effectively multilateralized these exercises, which, in the view of Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Tony Tan, “sets a new dimension in our relations with Thailand and enhances the value of [the exercises] which we believe [are] very important to the whole security architecture, particularly in the uncertain climate we have today.”<sup>16</sup> The Philippines, after a hiatus of several years following the departure of American forces from Clark air base and Subic naval base, has shown growing unease over China’s territorial ambitions in the South China Sea. In May 1999, it ratified a Visiting



Forces Agreement with the United States, paving the way for a resumption of U.S.–Philippines military exercises. The first of such large-scale exercises involving land, air and naval forces, and code-named “Balikatan 2000,” or “shoulder-to-shoulder,” was scheduled for February 2000. Singapore openly supports a strong U.S. presence and has, through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 1990, granted the United States access to military facilities. It has also allowed the United States to relocate in Singapore a small logistical presence from the Philippines.<sup>17</sup> The other small state in the region, Brunei, has a less prominent cooperation program with the United States which includes periodic exercises at Brunei’s Jungle Warfare Training School and U.S. naval, aircraft and personnel visits. Further along the political spectrum are Malaysia and Indonesia, which, despite their reservations about extraregional powers, and apprehensions of American assertiveness in a unipolar world, have quietly granted American naval vessels access to repair and servicing facilities,<sup>18</sup> and maintain unobtrusive arrangements for joint exercises with the United States. At the other end of the spectrum are Vietnam and Myanmar. Vietnam has normalized *de facto* relations with the United States. However, it remains extremely cautious about establishing political and military contacts with Washington, because of its sensitivity toward China, with which it has only recently normalized relations.<sup>19</sup> It was only in late December 1999, more than two decades after their border war in February–March 1979, that China and Vietnam concluded a treaty that settled all outstanding disputes along their common land border. With respect to Myanmar, the military regime’s suppression of the democracy movement, human rights record, and its reluctance to institute political reforms have made it a pariah state.

None of the regional states opposes a continuing American security role in the Asia Pacific. But there is a spectrum of views among ASEAN countries with respect to the desired size, form, and duration of the U.S. presence. The catchword for a continuing American rotational presence within Southeast Asia is “places, not bases.” The provision of “places” is part of the contribution by certain regional states toward “the burden-sharing effort of maintaining U.S. forward deployment in the region, in order to make it palatable to U.S. as well as Japanese public opinion.”<sup>20</sup>

Both JASA and KASA are viewed as manifestations of the American commitment—which regional states hope will continue—to security in the wider Asia Pacific. JASA is perceived as indispensable to anchoring the United States in the region. KASA is important too, though much less critical in ASEAN’s view. If JASA were to disappear, ASEAN countries would be seriously worried. Its disappearance would unsettle Japan, perhaps prompting it to go nuclear. ASEAN countries would likely take a more sanguine view if KASA or the American military presence in the ROK were to disappear,<sup>21</sup> especially if North Korea behaves more like a “normal country,” and tensions across the DMZ diminish. President Kim Dae Jung, however, is unlikely to seek a hasty reduction of U.S. troops, even if relations between the two Koreas improve. Both the South Korean military and its U.S. counterpart are conservative institutions, and would not countenance a swift withdrawal of U.S. troops.

## **The Korean-American Alliance**

There is a range of Southeast Asian concerns pertaining to issues confronting this alliance. The first concern relates to political change and instability in North Korea and their implications for the Korean peninsula. Much media attention in Southeast Asia has focused

on the political uncertainties and economic crisis in North Korea following the death of Kim Ill Sung. ASEAN countries see the challenge to KASA in the next few years in terms of the need to engineer a “soft” landing for North Korea. Whether a “soft” landing can be engineered is far from clear.

Second, the prospect of Korean reunification raises questions about the presence of American forces in South Korea, Korea–Japan relations, the U.S.–Japan alliance, and the regional balance in Northeast Asia. Reunification, if it takes place in the next few years, would impose a great burden on South Korea, and retard the economic reforms it must make. Its likelihood, however, has receded since the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997 plunged South Korea and most East Asian countries into a severe recession, from which they are now only recovering.<sup>22</sup> But if reunification should occur suddenly, as a result of an implosion in North Korea, the United States can be expected to play a major part in stabilizing a unified Korea. For the ASEAN states, reunification will have significant strategic and economic implications because of the growing trade and investment links between them and South Korea.

Third, and of more direct bearing on the security agenda of ASEAN itself, is the danger of nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation on the Korean peninsula. Such a development would affect not only China and JASA, but also have negative effects on ASEAN. It could frustrate arms control efforts in the Asia Pacific. ASEAN’s own attempts to persuade nuclear powers to endorse its Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) would meet with more resistance. So far, neither the United States nor Japan has endorsed ASEAN’s initiative.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, China has become more receptive. Initially, it had reservations, because SEANWFZ covered the continental shelves and disputed Exclusive Economic Zones in the South China Sea. Since the July 1999 ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting, however, China has declared that it will take “concrete measures” to keep Southeast Asia free of nuclear weapons.<sup>24</sup>

In August 1999, North Korea test-fired a *Taepodong* I medium-range ballistic missile over northern Japan, into the Pacific Ocean. Its provocative act could prompt the United States and Japan to jointly develop a Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) system. Such a system could in turn trigger a spiral of retaliatory missile development and deployments by North Korea as well as China, which is particularly concerned that the TMD’s coverage might be extended to Taiwan. China’s response to a TMD system could destabilize the U.S.–Japan–China triangular equilibrium—an issue addressed below.

## The Japanese-American Alliance

Southeast Asian perceptions of the U.S.–Japan alliance’s utility and relevance in a transformed post-Cold War context can be summed up thus:

1. The alliance ensures that Japan will not be tempted to go nuclear and that it will develop only conventional military capabilities for its own defense.
2. The alliance “constrains” Japanese militarism. It reinforces pacifist pressures within Japan and so reassures the region.
3. The alliance encourages a “balanced” security role for Japan in the region, a role that emphasizes burden-sharing and consultation.

4. ASEAN supports American forward deployments in the Asia Pacific and JASA's role in facilitating such an American strategic posture. The continued availability of bases in Japan, and the extensive host-nation support of U.S. forces stationed in Japan, are important, but not sufficient *quid pro quo* for an American presence in the region. American public support is critical if the United States is to maintain a significant military presence in the region. But this support cannot be taken for granted, especially if Asia is not seen to be shouldering its fair share of the defense burden or does not open its markets fast enough to American exports. Disputes over market opening could well spill over into defense cooperation and create problems for alliance maintenance. For Japan, ASEAN political support for the alliance helps to shore up domestic Japanese support for the continuation of the alliance and the bases that come with it.

## Concerns over the Defense Guidelines and JASA

One major concern of ASEAN relates to the U.S.–Japan defense guidelines, which were first agreed in 1995 but only passed by both houses of the Japanese Diet in May 1999, after protracted internal deliberation. The guidelines allow Tokyo to render logistical support to Washington, including the use of Japanese minesweepers in international waters “in response to an armed attack against Japan,” and “in situations in areas surrounding Japan.”<sup>25</sup> The concern here is that Japan may not play its part in dealing with future crises in its neighborhood, apart from providing financial support. The United States and Japan are committed to cooperating closely on UN peacekeeping operations and international humanitarian and emergency relief operations. But as the Japanese prefer a situational to a geographic definition of the guidelines' reach, the meaning of the phrase “the areas surrounding Japan” remains ambiguous. With respect to Northeast Asia, the situational ambiguity might well be deliberate, given China's extreme sensitivity to any suggestion that the guidelines could be interpreted to cover Taiwan.

Japan has a vital stake in the security of sea lanes that pass through the South China Sea and choke-points in the Indonesian archipelago. But it is unclear whether the defense guidelines would apply to a Southeast Asian crisis that could jeopardize the safety of these sea lanes. This ambiguity surfaced in the wake of Indonesia's 1997 political turmoil and civil unrest. In May 1998, Taku Yamasaki, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Research Council, told Ginandjar Kartasasmita, the visiting Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Economics and Finance, that “if Indonesia's economic and political unrest affects safe navigation of the Malacca Straits, we may have to discuss the possibility that a geographic scope of the guidelines would extend to the straits.”<sup>26</sup> The position of the Japanese government, however, was unclear, and Japanese reticence on the matter was understandable. The revised guidelines were still being debated. Also, the dispatch of Japanese military personnel overseas was and remains a sensitive domestic issue. When Japan sent six C-130 military transport aircraft to Singapore and deployed two coast guard vessels near Indonesia in the same month as the Yamasaki comment, its decision provoked much domestic criticism.

Japanese sensitivity to sending its military personnel overseas for peace enforcement, as opposed to nonmilitary support duties, was again highlighted during the early phase of the East Timor crisis. Pending revision of its peacekeeping law to allow Japanese troops to

join the UN-sponsored international peacekeeping force in East Timor, Japan pledged U.S. \$100 million to the peacekeeping efforts.<sup>27</sup> But during his visit in November 1999, the Japanese government also told Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid that Japan was considering the deployment of military aircraft to help the UN transport relief supplies to East Timorese refugees stranded in West Timor. The ambiguities surrounding the Japanese security role—whether within or outside the new defense guidelines—underscore the need to clarify the relationship between existing bilateral military arrangements and concerns about multilateral security cooperation that might affect or involve third parties.

A quite different set of regional concerns relating to JASA pertains to the alliance becoming a common front to “contain” or isolate China. Such a front would undermine the U.S.–Japan–China triangular relationship, and frustrate ASEAN efforts to engage China constructively in multilateral confidence-building initiatives. Singapore’s Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew has welcomed the revised U.S.–Japan defense guidelines. But he has also said that if the guidelines covered Taiwan and its surrounding areas, they would increase tensions between Japan and China and adversely influence security perceptions in the region.<sup>28</sup> Press comments in Singapore on the TMD system suggest a similar nagging unease over the system’s possible impact on China and the equation of forces in the Asia Pacific. On 10 March 1999, a *Straits Times* editorial commented that the TMD system “will accentuate the feeling in Beijing that the United States is intent on a creeping containment of China,” and “prompt China to increase its missile deployments including multiple-warhead MIRV-ed systems.” The effects of the TMD system on regional security, the article concluded, would not be benign.<sup>29</sup> Another editorial, published on 16 August 1999, was even more critical. Under the title “Slouching towards War,” the editorial described the TMD decision as “the latest example of . . . adventurism,” and called on ASEAN countries to “ask the United States and Japan to cease their madness.”<sup>30</sup>

Across the Asia Pacific, there is no clear consensus on how far the Japanese security role should develop within the Japan–America alliance, or whether Japan should become a more “normal” country, with an autonomous security role. There is greater wariness in Northeast Asia than in Southeast Asia on this issue. ASEAN countries expect Japan’s security role to grow over time, and that Japan will play a more constructive peacekeeping role within the context of the JASA, or under the aegis of the UN. ASEAN also expects Japan to contribute toward confidence-building and preventive diplomacy within the emerging multilateral cooperative security framework in Pacific Asia.

## Emerging Post-Cold War Cooperative Security

Several conclusions can be drawn about alliances in the Asia Pacific region. First, with varying degrees of success (as in the case of AMDA) or failure (as in the case of SEATO), each of the Cold War alliances had been sustained by a hegemonic power. Second, all of the alliances reflected the conjunction of external states intrusively protecting their power with friendly local regimes seeking to augment their own limited national defense capabilities in an insecure or uncertain environment. Third, an inequality of power has characterized all these alliances. Fourth, all these security relationships have been exclusionary in character, focusing on “security against” rather than “security with” the other side. Fifth, regional attitudes toward these alliances have ranged from benign indifference to cautious distancing

and outright rejection at one end of the spectrum to quiet acquiescence and ready embrace at the other. Finally, these regional attitudes have in turn been dominated by overt or covert balance-of-power considerations and moderated by recognizably neoliberal perspectives.

Unlike the security frameworks of the Cold War era, the ARF, inaugurated in Bangkok in July 1994, operates on the fundamentally different assumption of cooperative security. Not sustained by the threat or use of force, the ARF groups together all the states (except North Korea) which had been on opposite sides of the old Cold War front in the Asia Pacific. All the ten ASEAN countries, as well as China, Russia, India, the United States and its formal allies, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, are members of the ARF. Together with the European Union, Canada, Papua New Guinea, and Mongolia, they make up a group of twenty-two. Unlike military alliances whose deterrent function (in particular, the preservation of a retaliatory capability) depends on opacity, the ARF focuses on confidence-building and transparency. It emphasizes process rather than organizational and command structures. Further, it is not sustained by a hegemonic power. The ARF's inclusionary nature means it can accommodate states, which belong to alliances. The relevance of KASA and JASA to the ARF can be viewed in this perspective.

The ARF was not established to supplant bilateral alliances such as KASA or JASA. But as the Secretary-General of the LDP, Koichi Kato, noted in a July 1996 address to the Japan–America Society in Washington, “over time, a system of relations should be developed within Asia that does not depend so much on the U.S.” In Kato's view, “the ARF may represent the future but that future is still very distant.” Meanwhile, “the region needs a strong U.S.–Japan security treaty for many years to come.”<sup>31</sup>

The ARF can help to build trust and confidence in the region, thereby smoothing the hard edges of the alliances' deterrent function. It can also help to moderate the competitive relationships among the major external powers—namely, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia—by creating an environment for dialogue. But this aspiration could be difficult to achieve if intramural alliance issues are drawn into the ARF agenda.

For ASEAN, the cooperative security framework is a useful vehicle for engaging the major external powers, particularly China,<sup>32</sup> the United States, and Japan,<sup>33</sup> and thus facilitating a balanced relationship among them. After all, it was strategic balance among these powers that enabled the ARF to emerge in the first place. Seen from this perspective, both JASA and KASA have much to contribute to a viable multilateral framework.<sup>34</sup>

The “ARF way” (itself derived from the “ASEAN way”) of developing habits, processes of dialogue, and interaction leading to trust and confidence could have some bearing for the situation in the Korean peninsula. But if the ARF is to address the security concerns there, North Korea must be brought into the forum as well. A few non-ASEAN members feel that ASEAN—the driver of ARF—has not paid enough attention to Northeast Asian needs. Leifer has commented that the ARF has tended to treat Northeast Asian nations as “second-class citizens.”<sup>35</sup>

The four-party talks involving the United States, China, and the two Koreas could well address the Korean peninsula's specific security concerns more productively than the ARF.<sup>36</sup> The Japanese-proposed, three-power security dialogue (involving China, Japan, and the United States) could be another arena for confidence-building, and a forum for discussing Beijing's concerns about the revised U.S.–Japan security guidelines. But these forums, if effective, could also diminish the ARF's role as a mega-security grouping. Be that as it may, all of these forums, including Keizo Obuchi's proposal for

six-party talks (involving the United States, Japan, China, Russia, and the two Koreas), are either still nascent or have yet to take root.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, improvements have registered in Japan–North Korea relations toward the end of 1999, leading to renewed hopes for a normalization of relations between Tokyo and Pyongyang. At the same time, Washington lifted trade and other sanctions after Pyongyang’s September 1999 promise to refrain from further missile testing, provided that dialogue with Washington continues. Together with Kim Dae Jung’s softened policy toward North Korea, these developments could augur a climate more conducive to multilateral confidence-building processes.

On the flip side, recent developments within ASEAN—the regional financial crisis, domestic turmoil in Indonesia, and an enlarged membership—have weakened the association’s diplomatic clout. ASEAN itself was a small player in UN efforts at peace-enforcing and peacekeeping in the East Timor crisis—an event that has redefined the territory of a “core” ASEAN state. If the ASEAN-inspired ARF is to become more relevant to Northeast Asia’s security concerns, it must be related to JASA and KASA. Further, the ARF must address the issue of North Korea’s absence from its membership, and reckon with China’s persistent opposition to Taiwan (which it considers a domestic issue) being discussed in the Forum itself.

## Making the ARF More Relevant

For ASEAN, the ARF provides a multilateral framework to manage relationships between regional and extraregional powers. The strategic balance underpinned by alliances has been conducive to dialogue and confidence-building. By increasing transparency, the ARF has smoothed the sharp edges of deterrence associated with the alliances. Even so, if the ARF is to prove its utility for Northeast Asia and if ASEAN itself is to remain *a*—if not *the*—driving force of the ARF, several measures must be considered.

1. ASEAN members must set an example. They must move from conflict containment or conflict avoidance and instead help to settle longstanding residual territorial disputes, such as those over Pedra Branca (between Singapore and Malaysia) and Ligitan-Sipadan (between Malaysia and Indonesia). Leading by example, ASEAN members could encourage other states in the region to settle peacefully territorial claims in the South China Sea and elsewhere in Northeast Asia.

2. While long-term resolution of territorial disputes could be handled on a bilateral basis, multilateral approaches toward preventive diplomacy in disputed areas, which are conflict-prone, are needed to prevent Mischief Reef-type incidents from escalating into clashes at sea.<sup>38</sup> Thus far, however, the ARF has not been able to move beyond the “talkshop” phase to preventive diplomacy discussions as envisaged in the 1995 ARF concept paper,<sup>39</sup> and as accepted by the 1997 ARF annual meeting. Certain aspects of confidence-building overlap with aspects of preventive diplomacy. Even so, there are opportunities to relate bilateral security cooperation to the ARF. For instance, some aspects of the U.S.–Japan defense guidelines could be linked to the ARF agenda, thereby providing for wider functional cooperation pertaining to search-and-rescue operations, and the development of international procedures for the avoidance of incidents at sea.

3. Multilateral frameworks for cooperative security are not substitutes for alliances in the Asia Pacific region, but they can clarify alliance intentions and role redefinitions within alliances. Clarifications and other confidence-building measures (CBMs) can be pursued multilaterally, through the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence-Building (which, like the other intersessional groups, is co-chaired by both ASEAN and non-ASEAN members), or unilaterally, through the publication of Defense White Papers, and other efforts at transparency. The ARF could also endorse and thereby give wider legitimacy to other multilateral dialogue processes that focus more on Northeast Asia. In this way, the ARF remains a valuable mega-regional forum for the articulation and entrenchment of international norms of seemly behavior.

4. If the ARF were to enhance its relevance to Northeast Asia's needs and interests, ASEAN will have to share the chairmanship of the annual ARF meeting—now held by the incumbent chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee—with a non-ASEAN member.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, North Korea (which is a member of track-two CSCAP) should at least be granted observer status in the ARF, as a prelude to its being made a full member.

5. The ARF must take on a stronger capacity-building role if it is to be effective, even as a talk-shop. This role is critical if the ARF is to address Northeast Asian needs and to engage in preventive diplomacy. To begin with, the ARF will need to enhance its coordinating function by establishing a small secretariat. An institutional link could be developed with CSCAP, which could then serve as the idea generator driving the cooperative security process.

6. Many ASEAN states adopt a comprehensive security outlook that extends beyond conventional military concerns. Such an outlook reflects their traditional preoccupation with internal socioeconomic and political threats rather than external military ones. Japan, too, has a comprehensive security outlook, but one that is more externally directed, focusing on security of raw material and energy supplies, and of markets and lifelines of trade and communication. Post-Cold War, “soft security” concerns—illegal labor movements, transnational crime, drug trafficking, environmental threats to the environment, etc.—have also become more prominent. These concerns require multilateral as well as subregional cooperation if they are to be dealt with effectively. The track-two Working Group on Comprehensive (and Cooperative) Security addresses such issues, which cut across subregions in the Asia Pacific.

7. In considering the security interdependence between Northeast and Southeast Asia, and the linkages between bilateral defense arrangements and multilateral cooperative security, it may be useful to consider whether these arrangements are relevant to Southeast Asia. As a case in point, there is a need to explore whether certain aspects of the 1997 revised Guidelines for U.S.–Japan Defense Cooperation have a bearing on this troubled region. After all, the guidelines recognize “the importance and significance of security dialogues and defense exchanges in the region, as well as international arms control and disarmament.” They also enjoin both governments to “cooperate closely for mutual support as necessary,” when either or both of them “participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations or international humanitarian relief operations.”<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

The diversity of security interests in the Asia Pacific means that states have different political and security objectives when they take part in a mega-regional framework for cooperative security. Some states, like China, will see in such a framework an opportunity to dilute the utility or question the relevance of deterrent-based bilateral defense arrangements.<sup>42</sup> Other states may acknowledge the utility of unilateral deterrents, tacitly supporting, for example, Washington's March 1996 dispatch of two carrier battle groups to the Taiwan straits, and the August 1999 staging of naval maneuvers involving two American carrier groups in the South China Sea, against the background of rising cross-straits tensions. The United States, for its part, continues to view multilateral mechanisms such as the ARF as important and having a greater role to play in the future. But, as U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen said in a public lecture in Singapore in January 1988, "we also believe [multilateral mechanisms] will be successful only if built upon the foundation of solid bilateral relations and a continued U.S. forward presence in the region."<sup>43</sup>

Post-Cold War security management in the Asia Pacific, at least in the foreseeable future, can be seen in terms of multilayered and multifronted approaches, encompassing bilateral alliances, subregional forums, unobtrusive multilateral security arrangements, and mega-regional forums. Despite a manifestly functional agenda, even the Korean Peninsula Economic Development Organization (KEDO) could be said to have an unstated security concern shared by the United States, Japan, and South Korea (the members of the consortium that provides for the development of light-water nuclear reactors in North Korea) in averting the likelihood of Pyongyang developing nuclear weapons capability of its own. The ARF, and even APEC, could address the "soft" economic security needs of the region, while the ARF itself must accept that its ability in influencing security developments in Northeast Asia is severely limited. The direct parties are better placed to deal with these particular security challenges. In this instance, however, two developments are worth noting. First, the drive for peace and stability in the region has never been stronger. Second, China shows an increasing willingness to accept and play by international rules. The more it enmeshes itself in regional and international networks, the greater will be its contributions to regional economic progress and security. Such positive developments provide the ARF with a window of opportunity to entrench itself as a useful forum, even as JASA and KASA themselves are adjusted to meet new circumstances.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> SEATO failed singularly to meet the internal security challenge posed by Communist subversion and insurgency to the protocol states of the alliance, i.e., Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam.

<sup>2</sup> SEATO's military structure was abolished in February 1974 following the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement, which paved the way toward the termination of the Vietnam War. In September 1975, the decision was taken to disband SEATO. The 1954 treaty that gave birth to SEATO was not abrogated.



<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of this deliberate ambiguity, see Chin Kin Wah, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The Transformation of a Security System 1957-1971* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), Ch. 3.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the renewed interest in FPDA activities since the 1980s, see Chin Kin Wah, “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty Years After,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 193-203.

<sup>5</sup> These treaties have been revoked, replaced, or reviewed. Vietnam and other signatories of the October 1991 Paris Peace Agreements on Cambodia are precluded from providing military assistance to Phnom Penh. Citing Lao sources, Carlyle A. Thayer reports that considerations are being given to the implications of letting the Vietnam–Laos treaty lapse on expiry in 2002. He also cites a Russian source as saying that the 1978 Soviet–Vietnam agreement has been replaced by a new friendship treaty signed in 1994, which provides for bilateral consultations in the event of a crisis. (Carlyle A. Thayer, *Beyond Indochina*, Adelphi Paper No. 297, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for IISS, 1995), p. 46 and 60.)

<sup>6</sup> The American military presence was phased out of Thai bases following the end of the second Indochina war in 1975, but a very sizeable forward deployment remained at Clark air base and the Subic Bay naval base until 1992.

<sup>7</sup> For a critique of the neutrality component in ZOPFAN, see Muthiah Alagappa, “Regional Arrangements and International Security in Southeast Asia: Going Beyond ZOPFAN,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 12, No. 4, March 1991, pp. 269-305.

<sup>8</sup> Preamble of *The ASEAN Declaration*, Bangkok, 8 August 1967.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the then-Philippine Prime Minister, Cesar Virata, declared in early 1983 that “the ASEAN states themselves, not Japan, should be responsible for the security of the seas in Southeast Asia.” (Cited in J. Soedjati Djiwandono, “The Security of Sea Lanes in the Asia-Pacific Region: The Prospects for Regional Co-operation,” in Lau Teik Soon and Lee Lai To, *The Security of Sea Lanes in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Singapore: Heinemann, 1988), p. 112.)

<sup>10</sup> In 1965, the Tiger Infantry Division was dispatched to South Vietnam. The Ninth Infantry Division in 1966 and a marine battalion in 1967 followed this. (Byung-joon Ahn, *The Origins and Evolution of the Korean American Alliance: A Korean Perspective*, Asia/Pacific Research Center Discussion Paper, July 1998, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, p. 10.)

<sup>11</sup> The ROK became a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in November 1989. This relationship was elevated to full dialogue partnership in 1991.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Jusuf Wanandi, “Future Japan–U.S. Relations and Its [sic] Impact on the Asia Pacific Region,” *Indonesian Quarterly*, 4th Quarter 1995, pp. 308-312; and “Indonesia’s Future Strategic Environment: Relationship of the Great Powers,” *Indonesian Quarterly*, 3rd Quarter 1995, pp. 253-264.

<sup>13</sup> Since independence, Singapore has adhered to a foreign policy that is deeply influenced by balance-of-power considerations. In November 1999, Lee Kuan Yew again underscored the relevance of this perspective in an interview in Hong Kong. He said, “if we are not careful, we could get caught in a very big conflict; if there is no such thing as balance of power in the Pacific, we are very much at risk. You know the saying, big fish eat small fish, small fish eat shrimps. We are shrimps.” (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 November 1999, p. 34.) When he was vice governor of Indonesia’s National Resilience Institute, Juwono Sudarsono said that Jakarta realized that China and Japan, and eventually Russia, would become major regional players. “We would like to strike up a balance between them and the United States. What we do not want is an overwhelming presence of one power. That’s why we still need the U.S. to play a key role here.” (*Straits Times*, 8 March 1997.) Sudarsono became the first civilian defense minister since the 1950s in the new government headed by Abdurrahman Wahid.

<sup>14</sup> Jusuf Wanandi, “Time for Japan to rethink its regional and global role,” *Straits Times*, 27 August 1997.

<sup>15</sup> *Straits Times*, 20 November 1997.

<sup>16</sup> *Straits Times*, 14 January 2000.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen has described Singapore as “a very steady partner and ally. When there was a need to help maintain our presence in the region Singapore was the first country to come forward.” In January 1998, Singapore announced that it would give American aircraft carriers and other warships access to the new Changi naval base when it became operational in the year 2000. (*Straits Times*, 16 January 1998.) Among ASEAN states, Singapore also has the largest number of military personnel training in the United States.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. military contacts with and arms sales to Indonesia have fallen victim to the country’s domestic political crisis. In May 1998, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen cancelled a routine training exercise between the Green Berets and their Indonesian counterpart, Kopassus, which was headed at one time by Lieutenant General Prabowo, a son-in-law of Suharto. Following the eruption of violence in East Timor by troops and army-backed militias opposed to the 30 August East Timor vote for independence, President Clinton suspended all military programs with Indonesia. These ties were partially restored after Abdurrahman Wahid’s reform-oriented government assumed office, pending progress of military reforms and continued Indonesian cooperation with the UN vis-à-vis East Timor.

<sup>19</sup> As a case in point, twice in 1999, Vietnam called off a planned visit by the U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, setting back plans for any upgrading of military ties between the two sides. (See Nayan Chanda, “Vietnam: Pulled Two Ways,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 August 1999, p. 24.) In March 2000, Cohen finally made his visit to Vietnam.

<sup>20</sup> Jusuf Wanandi, “Future Japan–U.S. Relations and Its [sic] Impact on the Asia Pacific Region,” *op. cit.*, p. 312.

<sup>21</sup> During a visit to Seoul in October 1999, Lee Kuan Yew said that South Korea should not assume that the United States would always be on its side. He noted, “I am not saying that the Americans are going to leave the day after tomorrow, but. . .there may come a time when

the Senate and the House of Representatives say, ‘Why are we doing this? We are having trade deficits, they are enjoying surpluses.’” (*Straits Times*, 29 October 1999.)

<sup>22</sup> By mid-1999, there were clear signs of economic recovery in South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia. However, for most countries in the East Asian region, the challenge of economic reforms remains.

<sup>23</sup> Nuclear powers that endorse the SEANWFZ treaty must respect those provisions, which prohibit the treaty states from manufacturing, holding, transporting, or using nuclear weapons. The United States has objected to implementing an agreement that could impede the free travel and deployment of U.S. nuclear warships and nuclear-armed aircraft and ships in the region.

<sup>24</sup> *Straits Times*, 28 July 1999.

<sup>25</sup> See Articles IV and V of “The Guidelines for U.S.–Japan Defense Cooperation,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Winter/Spring 1998, pp. 309-315.

<sup>26</sup> *Straits Times*, 12 May 1995.

<sup>27</sup> The passage of the UN Peacekeeping legislation in June 1992 did not remove the ambiguity over the participation of Japan’s Self Defense Force (SDF) in peacekeeping. As one recent study puts it, “Despite the new law. . .the decision-making process remained contentious, as progressive political forces subjected each proposed dispatch to intense scrutiny in order to ensure that Japan could not be accused of using armed force. As a result, the prospects for expanding SDF participation remain unclear. (L. William Heinrich, Jr., Akiho Shibata, and Yoshihide Soeya, *United Nations Peace-keeping Operations: A Guide to Japanese Policies* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1999), p. 21.)

<sup>28</sup> *Straits Times*, 5 June 1999.

<sup>29</sup> The concerns over an antagonized China should also be seen against the background of a downturn in Sino-U.S. relations, which worsened following the accidental May 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and President Lee Teng Hui’s July 1999 remark that Taiwan would deal with China only on a “special state-to-state” basis.

<sup>30</sup> The Japanese Ambassador in Singapore, Hiroshi Hashimoto, was sufficiently disturbed to express his concern over the editorial. In a letter published in the paper on 21 August 1999, he pointed out that the decision on TMD was “only to start a cooperative research program with the U.S. on the technological feasibility of the system. No decision has been made at this moment to deploy the system in the future without considering how the security environment for Japan will be.”

<sup>31</sup> *Straits Times*, 26 July 1996.

<sup>32</sup> See Michael Antolik, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: The Spirit of Constructive Engagement,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 16, No. 2, September 1994, pp. 117-136.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Ralph Cossa sees the ARF as a useful mechanism that creates room for Japan “to play a greater leadership role in security affairs in Asia in a manner which is nonthreatening to its neighbors.” (Ralph Cossa, *Korea: The Achilles’ Heel of the U.S.–Japan Alliance*, Asia/Pacific Research Center Discussion Paper, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, May 1977, p. 4.)

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the balance of power rationalization of the ARF, see Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN’s Model of Regional Security*, IISS, Adelphi Paper No. 302, (London, Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>35</sup> This comment, attributed to a permanent secretary of a non-ASEAN foreign ministry was expressed before a meeting of senior officials in May 1995. (Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, *op.cit.*, p. 41.)

<sup>36</sup> These talks have progressed slowly and, by one account, ran out of steam by mid-1999 (see Amitav Acharya, *Reordering Asia: “Cooperative Security” or Concert of Powers?*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Working Paper No. 3, July 1999, p. 17, footnote 29.)

<sup>37</sup> The following month, this situation led Kim Dae Jung to observe during a visit to China that, “Northeast Asia remains the only region in the world where there is no regional cooperative system for the maintenance of peace.” (*Straits Times*, 13 November 1998) One could point to the existence of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), as being at least “in part a political tactic meant to deal with the sensitivities of North-South distrust in particular.” (Bates Gill, *Proliferation and the U.S. Alliances in Northeast Asia*, Asia/Pacific Research Center Discussion Paper, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, September 1997, p. 5.) However, though largely backed by the United States, Japan, and the ROK, KEDO is essentially a functional international consortium.

<sup>38</sup> The Philippines’ discovery in February 1995 of Chinese-built structures (complete with a PRC flag) on Mischief Reef—which Manila claims is part of its South China Sea territory—led to mounting tensions between China and the Philippines, an ASEAN member.

<sup>39</sup> ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper*, paper circulated at the Second ARF Meeting, Brunei, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> In July 1998, Stanley Roth, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, expressed the view that ASEAN should relinquish some of its control over the ARF, because non-ASEAN members now outnumbered its ASEAN creators. As he saw it, “some means must be devised to reflect this, perhaps by permitting an equitable sharing of the privileges and responsibilities of the chairmanship.” (*Straits Times*, 27 July 1998) From an ASEAN point of view, sharing the ARF chairmanship may also mean that ASEAN would not always be blamed for ARF inaction.

<sup>41</sup> For the text of the revised guidelines, see *Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Winter/Spring 1998, appendix, pp. 307-320. It should also be noted that the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement signed by the United States and Japan in 1996 has specific provisions for

the supply of fuel, spare parts, and logistical assistance by their respective forces in connection with UN peacekeeping operations.

<sup>42</sup> See Jianwei Wang and Xinbo Wu, *Against Us or with Us? The Chinese Perspective of America's Alliances with Japan and Korea*, Asia/Pacific Research Center Discussion Paper, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, May 1998.

<sup>43</sup> *Straits Times*, 16 January 1998.

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You know, we say that Japan is the cornerstone of security in the Indo-Pacific and our relationship with Korea is the linchpin. The bilateral alliance with both of these countries is important to us, and deeper trilateral cooperation has allowed our three countries to take on the most challenging national security issues since World War II, from the challenges presented by the Soviet Union during the Cold War to the threat posed by North Korea to the emerging challenges that China presents as a global competitor. We emphasize the only winners when Japan and Korea feud are our competitors. In Northeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region and the world will be safer when the United States, Japan, and South Korea work together in solidarity. Over time, South Korea will provide the United States with a potential operational strongpoint with myriad options for a widely distributed Joint Force enabling grid. The ROK provides for US presence on the Asian mainland, and it is well within the PRC's anti-access/area-denial umbrella. Alliance transformation is complicated by this divide. During a July 22 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, "Advancing Effective U.S. Competition with China," Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun remarked that the near-term priority should be to settle the ongoing cost-sharing dispute with Seoul, fund the alliance, and have a "strategic discussion" about its long-term future. South Korea Talks With China, Japan, and US in Flurry of Diplomacy. Southeast Asia in US-China Strategic Rivalry. Wang Gungwu's Long View of ASEAN. Taking Stock of ASEAN-ROK Relations. ASEANFocus is published by the ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute and available electronically at [www.iseas.edu.sg](http://www.iseas.edu.sg) If you wish to receive an electronic copy of ASEANFocus, please email us at [asc@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:asc@iseas.edu.sg) Published on 23 December 2019. EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN. Choi Shing Kwok. The US pivot to Asia and China's taking more traditional realpolitik approach to security issues in the region reflect an ambivalent view of both US and China over the role of ASEAN-centred multilateral processes and platforms for regional security and for the potential security scenarios in the years to come. This diversification in the processes, mechanisms and platforms for regional security and the new strategic posture of US and China, have "shrunk" the institutional and material basis for ASEAN to be effective in the shaping of regional security. The US-China relations might be first and The problems of ASEAN-centred mechanisms are not unique to multilateral diplomacy and, of course, do not diminish the significance of the EAS for Russia. The East Asia Summit is important as a vanity project for ASEAN, a living embodiment of the principle of ASEAN centrality, when all the great powers in the Asia-Pacific Region come together under ASEAN convening power to discuss regional issues. Perhaps it is image of relative harmony that makes the topic of Asian multilateral. When Russian officials speak of the country's Asia policy, they usually start with Russia's bilateral relations with regional leaders "China, Japan, South Korea and India" before turning to the Korean nuclear problem.