

Stanford University



Asia/Pacific Research Center

The **Asia/Pacific Research Center** is part of Stanford University's Institute for International Studies. The Center focuses on contemporary economic, political, strategic, and social issues of importance to Asia and to the interaction of the United States with the nations in this region.

The Asia/Pacific Research Center is a research and training program within Stanford University's Institute for International Studies. The focus of the Center's work is contemporary economic, technological, political, strategic and social issues of importance to Asia and to the interaction of the United States with the nations in this region.

At the core of Center activity are collaborative research projects which bring together Stanford faculty members from a wide range of disciplines with business leaders, policy makers, and senior specialists on both sides of the Pacific. The goal is to gain new and useful insights into trends and issues by stimulating interaction across national boundaries between Asian specialists and experts from other fields, and between scholars and representatives of government and industry. These sustained research efforts produce studies that are published as Center occasional papers and special reports and as books. Center research often generates practical policy recommendations for the public and private sectors as well.

In addition to their research work, the Center's faculty members teach courses within the Stanford curriculum and participate in a variety of public outreach and service activities on contemporary Asia.

Asia/Pacific Research Center
Institute of International Studies
Stanford University
200 Encina Hall
Stanford, CA 94305-6055
415-723-9741

© 1995 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University
Printed in the United States of America

East Asian Military Security Dynamics

by

Allen S. Whiting

The University of Arizona

February 1995

Asia/Pacific Research Center
Encina Hall, Room 200
Stanford, CA 94305-6055

East Asian Military Security Dynamics

Allen S. Whiting

Introduction

In comparison with the postwar decades from 1945 to 1990, East Asian prospects for peaceful stability and economic growth have never been better. The Cold War confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States has ended. The arms race that flooded the Pacific region with Soviet and U.S. nuclear weapons systems has been replaced by a gradual phasing out of tactical and intermediate missiles. The navies of the two superpowers are diminishing, albeit involuntary on Russia's part. Moscow's alliances with Pyongyang and Hanoi now exist only on paper. Washington's bases in the Philippines were closed by mutual agreement.

In 1978 the People's Republic of China (PRC) embarked on a rapid and radical economic modernization program, dependent on foreign loans, aid, investment, and trade. In turn, this dependency assigned top priority to peaceful relations with China's neighbors. Détente with the former Soviet Union ended the political dispute of 1959-89 that had triggered border clashes in 1969. Border settlement resolved most of the disputed claims. Détente with the United States ended the political-military confrontation of 1949-72 and brought both parties into alignment against the former Soviet Union. By the 1990s Beijing's diplomatic and economic relations with both capitals had entered a new era of normalcy. Chinese leaders routinely reassured their counterparts elsewhere of Beijing's desire to settle all problems peacefully.

In a similar fashion, Tokyo's repeated disavowal of military ambition accompanied increasingly explicit apologies for past aggression. Nearly fifty years after its surrender in World War II, Japan has yet to acquire any

power projection beyond sea-lane defense systems. Sino-Japanese relations, after more than a half-century of recurring hostilities, annually reach new peaks in trade while Japanese investment, loans, and aid provide vital capital for China's economic growth. Meanwhile in the smaller East Asian countries economic growth has replaced political-military security as the main policy goal. Growth rates have slackened somewhat among the "four tigers"—South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore—but nonetheless promise to average 7 percent annually, at least double that of the European Community and the United States. Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia anticipate "catch-up" growth rates of an approximate amount. Even the former Indochina countries expect foreign investment to increase with the virtual end of fighting in Cambodia, major economic reforms in Vietnam, and lifting of the American trade embargo.

In November 1993 an unprecedented meeting of fifteen Pacific region leaders in Seattle gave new vitality to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Annual meetings hereafter will institutionalize the dialogue, broadening the group's focus as well as its membership. While APEC's agenda explicitly concerns economic relations, political matters will also be informally addressed during such gatherings. Concurrently, the long-established Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the emerging East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) provide additional forums for interaction.

Under these circumstances, it seems paradoxical that at a time when defense budgets of the United States, Europe, and Russia are shrinking, all governments in East Asia, except for Vietnam, are increasing their military expenditures.

Non-Communist Defense Budget Increases¹

| | 1991 % | 1992 % |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| Indonesia | 8.2 | 6.4 |
| Japan | 14.6 | 4.9 |
| Malaysia | 11.5 | 12.8 |
| Philippines | -1.08 | 4.1 |
| Singapore | 24.7 | 25 |
| South Korea | 3.1 | 14.7 |
| Taiwan | 6.9 | 4.5 |
| Thailand | 16.5 | 12.1 |

Exchange rate fluctuations may distort these calculations, inflation can account for some increases, and budgets may not be expended in a given year. And, money can support measures other than power projection. Nevertheless the trend at the start of this decade is remarkably consistent in the region.

No active conflict exists in East Asia, nor is one seen as imminent by observers inside or outside the area. No territorial dispute seriously threatens stability in the immediate future. No major military expansion abroad is foreseen on the part of any country. Economic competition, not armed confrontation, characterizes all bilateral relationships except that of North and South Korea. Yet the upgrading of military capability is virtually universal in the arc from Japan to Thailand.

Despite the data, the contemporary cliché of “arms race” may both exaggerate and simplify this phenomenon. Multiple motivations common to most governments contribute to this seeming paradox of growing military budgets in the absence of objective threat. Organizational responsibilities and goals prompt defense establishments to demand improved capability. Political rivalry drives emulation and competition between and among regimes. Status and prestige accompany modern weapons acquisition. Armed incidents can combine with border disputes to raise the military ante for bargaining purposes without necessarily escalating to genuine armed confrontation.

However, in addition to these familiar stimuli, East Asian military security dynamics include three additional factors less common or absent elsewhere. First, East Asia’s historical heritage is replete with bitter memories of past political domination and aggression. This nurtures suspicion and mistrust. Second, the post-Cold War reduction of the Russian and American military presence in East Asia encourages talk of a “power vacuum.” This in turn introduces an anxiety in the minds of defense planners. The consequent combination of mistrust and uncertainty gives rise to “worst case” tendencies in perception and threat assessment. Third, the recent availability of advanced weapons and associated technology from Russia and China, as well as the standard salesmanship of American and European sources, provides a unique opportunity for growing economies to upgrade military capability at bargain prices. Thus for decision-makers responding to regional as well as universal considerations, the question of military modernization may not be “why” but rather “why not?”

Finally, it is often the case that what provides security insurance for one country is perceived as a security threat by another. This makes for a circular interactive process—hence the image of an “arms race.” The internationally renowned journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 named East Asia

as the site of “The Next Great Arms Race.”² Indeed, given the assumption abroad of the journal’s access to U.S. government sources, its alarmist tone on actual, prospective, and speculated East Asian weapons acquisition—nuclear, chemical, and conventional—could create a self-fulfilling prophecy should local defense ministries be prompted to respond accordingly.

Fortunately the immediate prospects are not for a high-risk environment of reciprocal military increases that make conflict virtually certain, as before World War I. The rate of weapons acquisitions and their various capabilities do not yet presage a major quantitative or qualitative change in local balances of power that will destabilize the region. But neither is the present situation conducive to regional arms control measures as in post-Cold War Europe, much less collective security agreements. Both historic rivalries and new nationalistic aspirations must be overcome before East Asia can anticipate declining defense levels. In the meantime arms races of uncertain magnitude can develop with implications for confrontation threatening to long-term stability.

A fuller appreciation of these regional factors is necessary before examining the prospects for multilateral security efforts in East Asia. Constraints of space require summary statement of leadership views. Yet subjective perceptions of threat by leaders can negate the objective assessments of outside observers who see little cause for alarm.³ Indeed, perceptions, with varying degrees of validity, are a major factor in current security concerns throughout much of the region. Given this framework, definitions of military security and perceived threats to military security will be surveyed first, followed by a look at bilateral and multilateral security relationships, present and prospective. Finally, the role envisaged for the United States will be examined.

China and Military Security Perceptions

One common denominator links military security analysis in the extensive arc of Northeast to Southeast Asia: China. Either by its direct involvement in territorial disputes in the East China and South China seas or by the indirect impact on major shipping lanes transiting these waters, the People’s Republic is seen as posing a potential threat to virtually all of its neighbors other than Russia.

Uniquely candid analyses by official Japanese intelligence specialists deserve attention on three counts.⁴ First, they reflect the basis for threat assessment within the Japanese Defense Agency. Second, this assessment

serves conservative and nationalistic forces in Japan arguing for greater military capability.⁵ And third, the Japanese analyses provide credibility elsewhere in East Asia for similar local assessments of the potential Chinese threat. The degree to which these assessments converged in 1992-93 prompted Beijing to launch a propaganda campaign in domestic and foreign-directed media denying "the so-called 'China threat.'"

According to official Japanese analyses, beginning in 1989 successive double-digit increases in Beijing's official defense budget reached 14.9 percent in FY93. 1994 saw another 22 percent increase. This has been supplemented by traditional and newly developed civilian production, military sales abroad, and covert budgetary allotments. Even allowing for inflation, the cumulative defense expenditures are estimated to be at least double those contained in the official public budget.⁶

China's purchasing power is further enhanced by the use of Chinese commodity exports in exchange for Russian weapons and technology. These weapons and technology, in turn, are priced competitively lower than Western equivalents in order to meet Moscow's dire economic need for goods as well as foreign exchange. The net result cannot be confidently estimated, given the inherent secrecy of most military exchanges. However in December 1992 Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev declared that Russian industries had sold \$1.2 billion in military hardware to China, including 24 advanced Su-27 fighters.⁷ The American estimate is \$2 billion.⁸ In September 1993 a People's Liberation Army (PLA) research office reportedly recommended offering economic aid, especially in light industry, food, and meat, in exchange for sophisticated Russian naval and air force equipment.⁹ In November 1993 Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev concluded a five-year cooperation agreement in Beijing. Officials emphasized technology transfers and denied that any arms sales were discussed. Reportedly Moscow also privately promised Washington no "power projection" weapon systems would be provided under any circumstances.¹⁰

A spate of articles in the Western press and specialized journals alleged continued Chinese negotiations for Russian MiG-31 fighters, bombers with air-refueling capability, airborne warning and control aircraft systems, conventional submarines, and an aircraft carrier.¹¹ Whatever the facts of the new Sino-Russian cooperation, the perception of potential increased PLA power projection capability causes added concern in Japan and elsewhere.

This concern is expressed in Tokyo along three dimensions. One addresses the territorial dispute with Beijing, ostensibly over minuscule unpopulated rocky outcroppings northeast of Taiwan known as the Senkaku Islands in Japanese or Diaoyutai in Chinese. More broadly, however, the two countries disagree fundamentally on their respective

ownership of and mineral rights to the entire East China Sea continental shelf. The second dimension addresses the security of transport routes through the South China Sea upon which Japan depends for Middle East oil and where China claims ownership of the Spratly Islands in dispute with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. This in turn leads to the third dimension, the impact of the real and anticipated growth in PLA air and naval power projection on Southeast Asian defense postures.

The total effect on regional stability is worrisome to Japanese analysts. They calculate from published reports alone that conventional weapons imports in East Asia doubled between 1982 and 1992. Actual and contemplated acquisitions, such as submarines for Indonesia, helicopter carriers for Thailand, MiG-29s for Malaysia, and F-16s for Taiwan, are seen as prompted to varying degrees by China's anticipated military power projection capability. A further complication is raised by PLA weapons sales to the region, such as frigates to Thailand, in order to increase China's own military budget. Japanese officials have also expressed concern over Chinese military instructors based off the coast of Burma near the entrance to the Strait of Malacca through which pass Middle East oil shipments to Japan.¹²

As already noted, Beijing has publicly refuted any basis for depicting its military modernization as a threat. A Japanese analysis explained Premier Li Peng's March 1993 report to the National People's Congress as sensitive to this question, omitting key references contained in major addresses to the 1992 session and the 14th Party Congress later that year. Thus Li did not repeat such terms as "augmentation of border and coast defenses" and "defense of land, air and sea sovereignty and maritime interests." This muted military tone accompanied a marked softening of Chinese statements pertaining to the South China Sea dispute in 1993 as compared with 1992.

However, this change of posture did not change perceptions in Tokyo. In January 1994 Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata pressed his top-ranking Chinese hosts on the need for transparency in military planning in order to ease concern in East Asia.¹³ President Jiang Zemin and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen responded with standard positions, omitting any details. It remained to be seen whether the first security talks between the Japanese Defense Agency and the Chinese Defense Ministry scheduled in 1994 would prove more revealing and reassuring.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) defense analysis parallels the Japanese with respect to China. Understandably, however, it also raised the possible reciprocal interaction between Chinese and Japanese military growth.¹⁴ Beijing's "active inshore defense strategy" adopted in the late 1980s is seen

by the ROK to include not only the continental shelf and the 200-kilometer exclusive economic area but also areas adjoining the Japanese archipelago, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. This raises a prospective overlap with Japan's declared air and sea surveillance mission extending 1,000 nautical miles from Tokyo. At the same time this PRC strategy is depicted as possibly threatening the ROK's development of the continental shelf off its west coast. Beijing is also attributed the option of intervening in the unification of North and South Korea should that process appear inimical to Chinese interests.

These potential direct threats to ROK security are seen to accompany the indirect threat of a possible reciprocal Sino-Japanese military buildup. Three times in Korea's history political-military competition between neighboring powers resulted in fighting on the peninsula. Therefore, either armed confrontation or a security partnership between Beijing and Tokyo is seen to pose a major problem for Seoul. The ROK analysis rules out these dire alternatives as likely during this decade but posits them as possibilities in the next century, whether the peninsula remains divided or becomes united.

While both Japanese and South Korean analyses agree in their concern over the growth of the PLA, they also acknowledge Chinese threat perceptions as partial explanation for the expansion of military expenditures and capabilities. They call attention to Beijing's acute realization during the Gulf War of technological backwardness. They cite the increased budgetary demands of high-technology research, development, and procurement. Lagging far behind the United States and Japan in electronic warfare and C3I (command, control, communications, intelligence) threatens China's ability to use force against Taiwan independence should that development be supported by Tokyo and Washington. Taiwan's acquisition of 150 F-16s, 60 Mirage fighters, and 16 Lafayette-class French frigates underscores this obstacle to China's constantly avowed goal of national unification. Asserting claims in the East China and South China seas also requires sharply improved air and naval capabilities.

However, Western reaction to the June 1989 Tiananmen incident directly affected technology transfer as well as weapons sales. Then in 1993, the United States imposed sanctions blocking an estimated \$1 billion in high-tech exports after American intelligence detected Chinese sales of missile components and associated technology to Pakistan. Beijing's public representation of the United States as playing "world cop" casts the PLA in a defensive posture. Credible Hong Kong reports claimed the dominant Chinese military perception of the United States triggered high-level demands to the civilian leadership for a stronger stance against Washington. In response, China conducted a nuclear test on October 5, 1993,

despite President Clinton's personal appeal to the Chinese not to test because "there is no reasonable threat to China from any other nuclear power."¹⁵

Chinese military histories recall the PLA fighting US-UN forces to a stalemate in Korea, repelling what Mao Zedong and colleagues perceived as a vital threat to China. Again in 1962 Beijing's assertive military posture along the Taiwan Strait was believed, albeit erroneously, to deter a threatened invasion from Taiwan backed by the United States.¹⁶ In 1965-68, the PLA fought against U.S. air attacks on North Vietnam, contributing to Hanoi's resistance but also deterring an American invasion of North Vietnam.¹⁷ This record provides plausibility to reports of war games at the PLA Academy of Military Sciences in 1991 targeting American forces in Northeast Asia.¹⁸ More recently, a book briefly sold in Beijing before being banned by authorities reportedly identified the United States as China's main future adversary.¹⁹

In late 1993 high-level Chinese officials attended an eleven-day symposium at which nearly two dozen civilian and military research organizations analyzed current and future international relations.²⁰ The sixty papers and subsequent discussion produced a consensus: the greatest threat from now to the next century is posed by the United States. The United States will use the open door of personnel exchanges and propaganda for ideological infiltration of China's "upper strata." Furthermore, Washington will finance hostile forces inside and outside China to create turbulence. This report was authoritatively disseminated by both the Central Committee and the Central Military Commission.

In addition Chinese suspicions of future Japanese capabilities and intentions are fueled by the historic heritage of Japanese aggression. Chinese views of Japan mix anger over past injury, resentment over present dependence, and wariness over indicators of military activity.²¹ The loss of Taiwan to Japanese attack in 1894-95 and Tokyo's seizure of Manchuria in 1931-32, capped by the wholesale devastation and slaughter of 1937-45, prompt official reiteration in China of a traditional aphorism, "Remembering the past serves as a guide to the future." This received contemporary reinforcement in the 1980s when Washington encouraged Tokyo to extend air and sea surveillance 1,000 nautical miles from the capital.

Throughout the 1980s mainland media warned of incipient Japanese remilitarization. However, this theme disappeared after the Tiananmen incident, when Tokyo appeared the least critical of Beijing among the G7 powers. While this tactical adjustment of Chinese media did not wipe away past memories and future concerns, it did facilitate a historic first visit of a Japanese emperor to China in 1992. With the new positive emphasis on

relations, Beijing suppressed anti-Japanese demonstrations reacting to renewed controversy over disputed islands in the East China Sea.

Nevertheless the mutually advantageous economic tie between the two capitals remained vulnerable to domestic politics and emotions on both sides. Worst-case threat projections by the Chinese postulate the United States blocking unification with Taiwan, Japan seeking to reinstate domination in Korea, and both countries colluding against China in East Asia. In the aforementioned symposium more than sixty percent of the participants foresaw Japan as the main political and military threat to China by the year 2020, supported by the United States. One-fourth still saw Washington as the main threat at that time, in concert with Japan and South Korea. Less than ten percent viewed Russia as the future number one enemy.

Juxtaposing Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese threat perceptions illustrates the potential dynamic interaction of military expenditures and weapons acquisition in Northeast Asia. In addition the spillover effects in Southeast Asia of this interaction widen the area of security concerns related to China. Vietnam's history is almost wholly one of forcibly resisting or giving in to Chinese domination. More recently China seized the Paracel Islands in 1974, invaded Vietnam in 1979, and drove Hanoi's forces from six of the contested Spratly Islands in 1988. The two countries further struggled for mutually exclusive influence in Cambodia, the Vietnamese by invasion in 1979 and the Chinese by backing the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1992. They continue to contest oil exploration claims in the Gulf of Tonkin. For Hanoi the China threat, present and future, is an overriding concern.

Sino-Vietnamese contention in the Spratly Islands impacts all states bordering the South China Sea, whether they are direct claimants to the islands or peripheral like Indonesia. Beijing's maps ring the entire body of water with PRC boundary lines. To anticipate our more detailed examination of military acquisitions, we note here that Manila seeks multi-role jet fighter interceptors and radar systems to protect marine resources and defend the airspace over the presumably oil-rich island of Palawan. Kuala Lumpur is moving to acquire fighters from both Russia and the United States. Singapore's contingency prospectus includes armed escort to deter harassment of shipping in the South China Sea. Jakarta conducts war games exercises against fighter planes "from the enemy base in the Spratlys."²² While these moves are in part interactive within the region, the Chinese stimulus is frankly if quietly acknowledged in public comments and private interviews.

The China shadow extends further to India. For three decades Sino-Indian contention over disputed boundaries in the Himalayas prompted

endless negotiations, repeated border incidents, and one brief war. Beijing's military assistance to Pakistan added another dimension to India's concerns, heightened by intelligence reports of nuclear armed missiles in Tibet. Chinese nuclear and missile technology transfers persisted into the 1990s despite improved Sino-Indian relations.

More recently Myanmar's dependence on China for conventional weapons expanded to contracting for a naval base on the Irrawaddy Delta between the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal. New Delhi claims that Beijing will gain access or perhaps acquire a refueling facility on this base. This would increase Chinese naval capability in the Indian Ocean. In addition the PRC is reportedly building a radar facility on the Great Coco Island that could monitor Indian naval assets, especially at Port Blair, ballistic missile tests at Balasore, and the satellite launching station at Sri Hari Kota. Apparently in reaction, India invited Indonesia to joint naval exercises scheduled for 1994 in the Indian Ocean near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.²³ Jakarta's interest lay in the proximity of the Coco islands to western Sumatra. The two countries share anti-China sentiments, albeit for different reasons.

The combination of reality and rumor evokes consensual estimates of a stronger and perhaps more assertive China ten years hence. At present objective analysis offers a more mixed assessment. The vast quantitative disparity of power between China and its neighbors, both separately and collectively, extends across the entire range of conventional and unconventional weapons. Qualitatively, however, the PLA lags behind others in various capacities, most notably air and sea power projection.²⁴ This results from the cumulative effect of neglecting science and technology during the Cultural Revolution, except for nuclear missile research, and declining defense budgets in the 1980s. Deteriorating submarines, obsolescent jet fighters, and limited air-sea troop carrying capacity contrast with marked increases in defense expenditures and upgraded weaponry in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and more recently the ASEAN states.

Seen in this perspective some of the increased PLA budget may well be designed to help China catch up with its neighbors, as acknowledged by Japanese and South Korean analysts. Indeed Beijing argues as much, pointing to China's size as further justification for larger military expenditures. But the present quantitative power superiority can eventually become qualitative also. Access to foreign technology and weapons together with the anticipated growth of Chinese science and technology could radically transform the PLA by the next century.

This prospect has not yet prompted a comprehensive collective effort at political or diplomatic countermeasures in East Asia, in part because there is disagreement among China's neighbors on how best to react to this trend.

An additional constraint is the fact that many of the countries see security problems with other neighbors, distant as well as near. Three factors contribute to this perception: weapons acquisitions, territorial disputes, and armed incidents. Although separate phenomena, their occurrence in combination can lead to rising confrontation and miscalculation.

Other Military Security Concerns

Weapons acquisitions

Japan ranks second only to China in its ability to generate military security concerns throughout East Asia. This derives from its past aggression and brutal occupation of Korea, the Philippines, Indochina, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Controversy over Japanese textbooks omitting this unpleasant history and demands for compensation by women coerced into sexually serving the Japanese troops reawaken bitter feelings in these countries. Moreover, past memories are also kept alive by Japan's steady growth in military expenditures and capability, manifest in the aforementioned 1,000-nautical mile air and sea surveillance zone. Nationalistic statements by right-wing Japanese defend past aggression and call for renunciation of self-denying defense language in the constitution. These trigger Asian warnings for Tokyo to show prudence. Depending on Chinese tactics at the time, nationalistic Japanese sentiments may be subtly amplified by Beijing's propaganda.

Japanese efforts to damp down these negative feelings have had considerable success, visible in official tours of these countries and the general acceptance of non-combat Defense Agency troops in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cambodia. Gradually strengthened apologies for past aggression voiced by successive prime ministers culminated with the most fulsome and explicit statements from the reformist leader, Morihiro Hosokawa.²⁵ Thus much of the bitterness has disappeared except in Korea and China. Tokyo's increasing economic involvement through trade, investment, and aid, together with its repeated disavowal of remilitarization, has contributed to this development.

Nevertheless indicators of a sudden qualitative change in Japanese military capability, such as any further extension of air and naval projection or an incipient nuclear weapons development, will raise threat assessments of Japan throughout the region. As might be expected, defense

officials in Tokyo claim continued insecurity. In January 1994 Defense Agency Director Kazuo Aichi addressed the North Korean nuclear problem: "Considering the fact that tension exists there we must study how to respond to various situations arising from a hypothetical outbreak of conflict."²⁶ Earlier a senior military analyst at the agency claimed, "China and Southeast Asian countries are...expanding their military capabilities, along with Russia which has sufficient military forces to deal a strike...East Asia has changed politically. But almost nothing has changed militarily since the Cold War period."²⁷ As usual, both officials reiterated the standard position that "there is no immediate threat to Japan." Yet their statements alerted other East Asian analysts to contingency thinking in Tokyo.

In the absence of genuinely alarming words or actions in Japan, other sources of threat prompt concern in various East Asian countries. Foremost is the alarm aroused in South Korea and Japan by North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Throughout 1993 Pyongyang's refusal to allow completely free and repeated inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of all nuclear-related facilities preoccupied public analysis in Seoul and Tokyo. Test firing of a 1,000-kilometer missile raised further concern in Japan over North Korea's potential nuclear threat. American and Japanese defense sources claimed the missile's range would be increased to 1,300 kilometers, bringing most Japanese cities, including Tokyo, within its reach. Pyongyang's withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, proclaimed but not immediately implemented, added still another dimension of concern.

Contrary to this general attitude, some defense analysts in Japan and South Korea regarded these developments with more reserve. Differences remained on the reliability of intelligence estimates. North Korea's near-term ability to produce warheads for accurate missiles was questioned. The possible use of its nuclear potential for diplomatic bargaining won attention. None of these considerations eliminated the felt need to pressure or to persuade Pyongyang to admit IAEA inspection. They did, however, help to explain reservations in Seoul and Tokyo over more forceful immediate measures.

Meanwhile from North Korea's standpoint, its loss of support from Moscow and its alienation from Beijing coincided with both former allies finding South Korea more valuable for their own interests. In January 1994 Russia seemed ready to add injury to insult by offering Seoul military hardware and technology to repay a South Korean loan of \$3 billion of which more than \$1.5 billion remained due.²⁸ This posed a potential security threat for Pyongyang in addition to that from the United States. Russian intentions apart, South Korea's steady economic growth contrasts

with North Korea's virtual bankruptcy. The US-ROK annual Team Spirit military exercises explicitly raised the prospect of nuclear weapons being used against the North. Although the exercise ostensibly was a defensive response to attack, in its paranoia Pyongyang could readily translate this into an offensive threat. Finally, whatever the situation within the regime, outside speculation focused on a power struggle and possible fragmentation after the death of Kim Il-sung. Because the North Korean regime could anticipate planning for this contingency by Seoul and Washington, another cause for security concern was added. Under these circumstances, a minimal nuclear deterrent might plausibly be seen as worth whatever international opprobrium resulted from obstructing IAEA inspection.

Achievement of a North Korean operational capability would impact heavily on attitudes in Japan.²⁹ Tokyo's adamant stance against acquiring nuclear weapons has had strong public support. However, the prospect of a possible American withdrawal from the region has led to the increasing expression of once-private doubts. A history of terrorist behavior by Pyongyang has given rise to alarmist speculation in the Japanese media. Successor-designate Kim Jong-il is believed to have directed these attacks against the South, most notably the killing of many cabinet officials visiting Rangoon in 1983 and the blowing up of an ROK passenger plane in 1987. Uncertainty over regime stability in a succession crisis furthers anxiety. A known North Korean nuclear missile capability could tilt the political balance in Japan toward much greater defense expenditures, possibly including nuclear weapons. Development with American assistance of a Theater Missile Defense program (TMD) is already winning serious consideration.

For the immediate future, any image of an arms race between Japan and China is belied by Tokyo cutting year-on-year defense budget growth to the lowest point since 1963, fixed at 2 percent for FY93 and 1 percent for FY94.³⁰ Moreover the previous Mid-Term Defense Buildup Plan allocated a 7.7 percent annual growth for new frontline equipment. The present plan has reduced this to 2.3 percent. Reportedly the steady reduction of armored vehicle production since FY91 has fallen below the level necessary to keep production lines running. Meanwhile ground forces, having failed to reach their planned level of 180,000, are now scheduled at only 150,000.

Despite these developments, Asian attention to certain Japanese acquisitions, such as two airborne warning and control systems (AWACSS) and a 5,600-ton aircraft carrier for large minesweeper helicopters, may overshadow the fact of declining defense growth. Ritualistic rhetoric in Chinese and other media ranks Tokyo's defense budget as "third in the world." However, this inflates the monetary image by converting high yen to low dollars. It also omits the fact that of the top six powers under comparison

only Japan has no nuclear weapons. Finally, 42.3 percent of Japan's defense budget goes for salaries and rations and an additional 10 percent to support the American military presence. Thus, contrary to perception and propaganda, in reality Japan remains restrained in its military expenditures and weapons acquisitions.

South Korea's main modernization program is the joint ROK-US production of 120 F-16 fighters between 1994 and 1999. A second project with German participation has produced the first ROK submarine, capable of firing anti-ship missiles and laying mines. With the North Korean buildup of forces along the Demilitarized Zone, only minutes by jet from Seoul, South Korea's threat confrontation is unique in Asia, wholly apart from Pyongyang's nuclear program. The Korean peninsula retains the dubious distinction of having the greatest concentration of military force in the world.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia's air force, once the largest in the region, is being upgraded from obsolescence. Eleven F-16 fighters will be increased to sixteen, supplemented with two dozen British Hawk air-to-ground aircraft. The current air force chief aims at surpassing, over the next twenty-five years of growth, Indonesia's 1960s regional domination.³¹ Meanwhile, Malaysia's plan to acquire eighteen MiG-29 fighters and eight U.S. F/A-18 Hornets modestly parallels Jakarta's modernization moves, although this will be the first Hornet sale in Southeast Asia. Likewise Singapore's acquisition of four U.S. E-2C early warning and control aircraft will be followed by Thailand's purchase of three of the same planes.

However, Bangkok's major modernization plans focus more on the navy because, according to Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Prachet Sindet, "Our mission is to maintain power bargaining vis-à-vis our neighbors. Such power is essential in any political bargaining."³² Bangkok has already received four Chinese frigates, with another two due soon. The fleet commander noted, "At the price we pay for four Chinese frigates, we can get only one from Europe." He conceded, however, that Chinese weapons systems are inferior. In addition Chinese are training Thai naval engineers and mechanics in shipbuilding because, as the admiral said, "Having a shipbuilding capacity is a prerequisite for a strong naval force."

Meanwhile a 9,500-ton helicopter carrier is being built in Spain for Thailand for commissioning in 1997 and a second is planned although not yet ordered. Negotiations with Madrid aim at ten Harrier short takeoff and landing (STOL) jet fighters. The carrier and planes will make Thailand the first Southeast Asian country to have open ocean capability. Acquisition of U.S. Sikorsky Seahawk helicopters is also scheduled and Bangkok is expected to buy U.S. A7 strike fighters. The helicopter carrier purchase was initially intended for disaster relief after the devastating 1990 typhoon in

southern Thailand. But now it is seen as extending Bangkok's anti-submarine patrol reach in the Andaman Sea, the site of a planned naval base together with a base in the Gulf of Thailand. Finally, submarine offers from the Netherlands, Germany, and Russia prompted the admiral's comment: "With some of our neighbors already in possession of submarines, or in the process of acquiring them, we need to catch up in order to maintain a balance in defense capacity."

This growth in Thai naval capability has been encouraged by so-called "give-away" prices from Spain and the United States. Competition accelerated with Russian offers of naval weapons systems. The Thai army chief's visit to Moscow in 1993 reportedly induced a proposal to sell 200 tanks at a special price and payment arrangements, including the construction in Thailand of a maintenance and repair center. In September a 200-member Russian delegation attended the Thai air show to promote MiG-29s, and a senior Russian foreign ministry official said Moscow planned to invite all the top Thai military leaders to visit in the near future. Russian MiG sales to Malaysia began a process that enhances the bargaining ability of all regimes in the region, whether or not Moscow makes any further sales.

An additional impetus to improving defense capability is rumor. This was well illustrated by the attention given throughout East Asia and elsewhere to reports of Beijing negotiating with Ukraine and Russia for an aircraft carrier. Authoritative Chinese sources both denied the reports and stated that a carrier would eventually be acquired one way or another. With the question thus defined as "when" rather than "if," defense planners from Japan to India necessarily had to take this contingency seriously.

Most of these various military acquisitions are in their early stages, either initial deliveries or still in the planning process. Nevertheless they provoke mixed reactions in the region. Malaysian security analysts express frank concern over Thai aircraft carrier intentions.³³ Other developments appear mutually advantageous to adjoining states.³⁴ Thus Singapore's acquisition of E-2C early warning aircraft improved the Malaysia-Indonesia-Singapore air detection capability over the horizon to the South China Sea and was welcomed by the Malaysian defense chief. Reciprocally Singapore defense officials applauded Kuala Lumpur's MiG-29 and F-16 purchases. In any event these unregulated and largely independent weapons acquisitions complicate arms control arrangements. Moreover they can be misperceived by China as presaging tacit collective security ties in the South China Sea directed against Beijing's claims in the area.

Territorial disputes and incidents

The most highly publicized territorial dispute in the region, aside from the national unification questions in Korea and China, involves the South China Sea islands and underwater resources. As noted earlier, Chinese maps ring the entire area with PRC boundary lines. When questioned in 1981, Chinese foreign ministry specialists informed the author, "We do not claim all the water, only all the islands, reefs, and shoals." In February 1992 the National People's Congress passed legislation declaring the Nansha (Spratly) Islands as Chinese territory to be defended by force.

Beijing further challenged Hanoi in 1992 by awarding an oil drilling concession near the disputed area to an American firm, Crestone Energy Company. Hanoi responded by contracting for a seismic survey in the vicinity. Beijing protested, prompting the foreign survey firm to withdraw. Then in December the PRC sent a seismic research ship into waters claimed by Vietnam whereupon Hanoi protested, to no avail.

Chinese provocations and Vietnamese protests increased in 1993. In February Beijing's seismic survey ship again operated in disputed waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, triggering Hanoi's diplomatic riposte. In May a Chinese seismological ship entered a nearby area in which prospecting was underway by a British-Norwegian-Indian joint venture leased by Hanoi. Vietnam claimed this "seriously violated Vietnam's sovereignty and international law concerning continental shelves and the exclusive economic zones."³⁵ In August and September Hanoi protested another Chinese exploration attempt, accompanied by two armed helicopters, midway between Vietnam and Hainan Island. Hanoi also informed the president of Crestone that the Chinese contract violated Vietnam's sovereign rights because the exploration area belonged to Vietnam's continental shelf.³⁶

Meanwhile in June 1993 Beijing reportedly protested a visit to the Spratlys by the deputy premier and a delegation from the Vietnamese National Assembly. Hanoi persisted by building a lighthouse on one island, announcing plans to build a fishing port on another, and promising tax breaks for Vietnamese sea products ventures in the disputed area. Countering the continued intransigence on both sides, the respective deputy foreign ministers agreed in October to negotiate differences peacefully and to forswear the use of force. They also separated negotiations on the land border and the Gulf of Tonkin from the larger question of the South China Sea.

There is a history of disputes over the archipelago, albeit to a much lesser degree, between Beijing and other capitals with conflicting claims in the area. In 1991 the PRC objected to Kuala Lumpur's proposed tourist project on a Malaysian occupied island. In 1993 a similar PRC protest prompted

Manila to cancel plans for developing two of its eight claimed Spratly islands into a diving resort. Manila also deferred a fishing and mineral resources survey until after President Ramos visited Beijing. At that time both sides agreed to "shelve the sovereignty issue" while moving forward on joint exploration in the disputed archipelago. A reported \$3 million loan to the Philippines from China for co-production of military hardware may have facilitated the agreement. Upon his return, Ramos ordered the marine survey to begin without any geological-type exploration.

Apart from the Spratly Islands, various low-level disputes abound among the ASEAN members. These largely result from ambiguous or unmanageable boundaries left from the colonial era. Although President Ramos has stated that the Philippines has no intention to push its claim to Sabah, the dispute with Malaysia has yet to be formally and finally resolved. Opposition in the Philippine senate perpetuates the controversy and intermittent nationalistic statements by less responsible sources continue to attract media attention. Malaysia and Brunei have agreed to negotiate overlapping claims on land as well as at sea, complicated further by conflicting 200 nautical mile economic zones. In 1992-93 Indonesia and Malaysia held unsuccessful talks over two disputed islands. Kuala Lumpur's development of tourism on one of them prompted demonstrations by a large Indonesian youth organization. Previously each side had protested naval movements around the islands. No action or negotiations followed and both sides agreed the dispute was to be resolved by diplomatic, not military, means. Meanwhile reciprocal force posturing continued around scuba diving resorts on Sipadan.³⁷

On land Cambodia's borders with both Thailand and Vietnam have been a long-standing problem. King Norodom Sihanouk is reportedly determined to recover territory allegedly taken by his neighbors in recent years. Bangkok announced that a new Thai-Cambodian border commission will be activated but little resolution is anticipated in the near future. This issue roiled Phnom Penh's relations with Bangkok, Hanoi, and Saigon before the second Vietnam War. The Pol Pot regime exacerbated the matter by aggressively pushing into disputed areas on both sides. Phnom Penh claims further territorial losses occurred subsequently. But until a strong and stable Cambodia emerges anew, neither neighbor is likely to make any significant concession or compromise.

The historic clash of Thai, Cambodian, and Vietnamese territorial expansion and contraction on land is reinforced by conflicting 200-mile economic zones overlapping at sea. In March 1994 Bangkok and Hanoi agreed to set up a joint ad hoc committee at the deputy foreign minister level to address the situation after Vietnam arrested nearly seventy Thai fisher-

men earlier that year.³⁸ Meanwhile Phnom Penh called for urgent talks with Bangkok following discovery of oil in the disputed zone.

By tacit agreement, the Sino-Japanese dispute over the Senkaku Islands is quiescent and is likely to remain so indefinitely. The mutual political, economic, and military interest in avoiding confrontation will keep it on the back burner in Beijing and Tokyo. Nevertheless the islands remain as a potential point of political friction should nationalistic Chinese passions push for resolution. A divided leadership in Beijing might be unable to curb opportunistic or genuinely felt demands that the regime stand up to Tokyo with force to back up claims. Alternatively, energy bottlenecks limiting China's economic growth could place greater pressure for exploitation of hypothesized large oil and gas reserves under the East China Sea. In 1993 two major American oil firms responded to Beijing's offer of blocs for exploratory bidding in a 700-square-mile area southeast of Shanghai. Previously, uncertainty over conflicting Sino-Japanese claims to the continental shelf had prompted Washington to caution firms against involvement. Apparently Beijing felt emboldened by winning an American contract in waters disputed by Hanoi. To complicate matters further, Beijing may conclude it cannot compromise its claim of sovereignty in one island dispute without prejudicing it in another, thereby linking the Senkakus with the Spratlys. The February 1992 legislation recognized this linkage by explicitly naming both as sovereign territory to be defended by force if necessary.

Of minimal importance in the dynamics of military security considerations but with maximum political consequences is the Kurile Islands dispute between Russia and Japan. The southernmost islands are claimed by Tokyo but have been occupied by Moscow since 1945. The larger Kurile chain was granted to the Soviet Union by the allies at Yalta while the southernmost islands arguably lie outside the territory to be ceded by Japan after World War II. The impasse has blocked negotiation of a peace treaty and limited Japanese willingness to sponsor economic development of the Russian Far East. The islands' strategic significance in closing off the Sea of Okhotsk for Soviet missile-firing submarines has all but disappeared. However, parliamentary consent for territorial changes, as required by the Russian constitution and further complicated by political disarray, has prevented their return. The issue remains hostage to Japanese politics as it has in past decades, blocking concession by Tokyo. Russian forces on the islands have been reduced and no military confrontation is likely. Nevertheless the dispute continues to exacerbate relations, embarrass summit meetings, and limit Japanese investment in Siberia.

Last and least relevant to the military security dynamics of East Asia but still an irritant to relations is the South Korean-Japanese dispute over Tok

Do, or Takeshima. The two small islands and surrounding reefs totaling 0.23 square kilometers have been patrolled by the South Korean navy since 1953, but Japan has also posted a patrol just outside the so-called "Rhee Line." Tense confrontations in nighttime encounters continue to occur after forty years.³⁹ Tokyo raises the issue regularly at the annual foreign ministers conference although foreign ministry officials admit frankly that there is no prospect of a peaceful solution. Yet there is obviously no prospect of Japanese armed force either, given the U.S. defense commitment to both sides. Although the dispute poses no threat to stability, it impedes any public move toward military cooperation. Nationalistic and opportunistic political capital would be made out of the issue in both capitals.

Armed incidents

Armed incidents contribute to security concerns. For the most part these have disappeared in East Asia as relations have eased and border disputes have been negotiated, if not fully resolved. The region's waters have a long-standing tradition of piracy, however. In addition fishermen are notoriously prone to poaching while professing ignorance of boundary lines and formal agreements. To the extent that incidents may be attributed to another government, properly or not, they contribute to threat perception when combined with military acquisitions and territorial differences.

Sino-Japanese relations in particular have been plagued by incidents of firing on Japanese ships. Those involving fishing boats numbered nine in 1991, eleven in 1992, and seventeen in January-August 1993.⁴⁰ Another 41 cases arose where no shots occurred. The majority of these incidents involved unidentified attackers. However, Japanese officials reportedly believed all were Chinese; in four cases Tokyo was able to seize or to photograph evidence implicating Beijing's Ministry of Public Security. Formal protests resulted in apology in some instances, with explanations of PRC anti-smuggling efforts causing mistakes. Nevertheless some of the attacks hit cargo ships ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 tons, lessening credibility for this explanation in Tokyo. Moreover the gradual spread of the incidents toward Okinawa raised questions about Beijing's motivation. Finally in mid-1993 the two sides agreed to exchange information and meet again in one year. Tokyo's proposal for joint efforts "to secure safe navigation in the East China Sea" won Beijing's concurrence "in principle" but without any announced implementation.

The problem of piracy is serious and complicated by difficulty in identifying its cause. Blaming piracy for attacks on ROK freighters, the ROK defense ministry announced stepped-up patrols in the Yellow, East

China, and South China seas in mid-1993. However it also pledged it would protest incidents “to the relevant country through diplomatic channels” if appropriate evidence of responsibility could be obtained. Meanwhile Hanoi laid responsibility on Beijing in protests over stoppage of Vietnamese vessels en route to Hong Kong, ostensibly for anti-smuggling examination. It also announced measures against piracy in the South China Sea. Elsewhere the Philippines Coast Guard reported attacks by an armed group dressed similarly to PLA naval personnel. Further south the Singapore National Shipping Association claimed more than eighty piracy cases occurred during 1991-93 in the Philip Channel. This prompted Indonesia and Malaysia to set up a committee for navigation safety in the Straits of Malacca. A joint patrol by the two navies began operations in December 1993.

According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in London, two-thirds of all piracy reported worldwide in 1993 occurred in the South China Sea, with 33 attacks in the area between Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Hainan Island.⁴¹ In August 1993 Moscow moved a Kara class cruiser armed with missiles into the area, officially to protect Russian ships from piracy. The IMB claimed this sharply reduced attacks which had hit some 27 Russian freighters in 1992, more than of any other nationality.

The IMB alleged that photographs of the vessels, the crew uniforms, and the flags identified the aggressors in this vicinity as Chinese naval vessels. However it could not be determined whether these actions were officially authorized or were undertaken by criminal elements utilizing official equipment. Confidential Hong Kong official reports allegedly determined that of nearly one hundred attacks on shipping around the South China Sea from September 1991 to March 1994, half involved Chinese officials with police, naval and army, and customs officers on patrol ships with serial numbers.⁴² Many of the attacks included rockets, grenades, and gunfire on ships leaving Hong Kong.

This development illustrates how a correlation between territorial disputes and armed incidents can contribute to security concerns. Beijing's strengthening of its power projection capability steadily expanded its air and naval presence in the South China Sea, with air strips in the Paracel and Spratly islands and support bases for maritime patrols. Yet China seemed either unwilling or unable to take adequate unilateral action. Neither has it agreed to multilateral measures to halt interference with maritime commerce in its immediate vicinity. Regardless of whether this passivity is by default or by design, the impact on neighboring governments may stimulate greater defense efforts.

Strengthening Security by Words and Actions

Only recently have various bilateral and multilateral efforts, formal and informal, begun to address military security issues in East Asia. In contrast with Europe, where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) confronted the Warsaw Pact, the Cold War did not spawn confrontation throughout the region between two collective security organizations. To the extent such confrontation existed it was between bilateral alliances emanating from Washington and Moscow. Despite its similar name, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) never became a comparable entity. Moreover most regimes had internal security concerns that were not amenable to external amelioration, at least through formal alliance.

Coincident with the expansion of military budgets and arms acquisitions, however, two approaches have emerged to the problem of security. One emphasizes discussion; another utilizes military exercises. While both processes deserve brief summary, in no instance do they as yet provide a complete framework for comprehensive solution of security problems.

The most systematic discussion effort has been a series of unofficial multilateral meetings on South China Sea problems. The Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea is hosted and co-chaired by Jakarta's foreign ministry and financially supported by the Canadian International Development Agency. The first meeting in 1990 had ASEAN attendance. The second in 1991 was joined by senior officials from the PRC foreign ministry. The workshop now includes officials and academics acting in a personal capacity from the ASEAN states, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, and Laos. Cambodia is to be invited in 1994.

The basic idea of the Indonesian initiators was to advance joint development of the South China Sea as a means of defusing rival claims there. Combating pollution, preserving the marine environment, developing fisheries, and improving navigation safety are addressed along the model of the Indonesian-Australian Treaty for the Joint Development of the Seabed South of East Timor.⁴³ But while the workshop agenda is broad, outside attention inevitably focuses on the disputed islands. In August 1993 after its fourth meeting, differences arose over raising this problem, hence the workshop communiqué stating that "no debate took place on this issue."⁴⁴ The PRC Director General for Treaty and Law said the workshop was "not the right place" to discuss the issue. In support a Taiwan professor declared that cooperation should be the focus, not "sovereignty and politics." A Singapore academic responded, however, that regardless of whether the workshop was the proper forum to discuss the disputed islands, "it is already an issue." The Director General of the

Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs agreed, "Without the Spratlys, without the Paracels, there is no South China Sea...[we] must discuss these issues as well."

Discussion alone, of course, is not enough. The workshop produces predictable admonitions to the relevant governments not to use force and to cooperate for mutual benefit. It engages the respective disputants in off-the-record exchanges and invites others to attempt imaginative win-win proposals. It also permits Jakarta to assume the dual role of disinterested sponsor and regional leader while giving Beijing an opportunity to show a willingness to talk. But whatever expectations may have been entertained at the outset, there seems little likelihood of anything substantive on the Spratlys emerging through this forum.

Other forums have also addressed the islands dispute. After Beijing awarded the American oil company contract in 1992, the ASEAN foreign ministers gave considerable time and attention to the dispute, issuing a separate statement on the South China Sea. ASEAN spokesmen, especially the Malaysian foreign minister, expressed concern over Chinese moves characterized as provocative. Beijing responded by starting talks with Hanoi and reiterating its earlier desire for joint development without, however, conceding China's claim of sovereignty over the islands. As described above, Beijing's assertive moves did not stop but instead accelerated in 1993.

In July 1993 a UN-ASEAN workshop explored ways of greater cooperation between the global and the regional organizations. It brought together senior officials from the foreign ministries of ASEAN, Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and the United States. The delegates reportedly urged that disinterested parties such as Japan, Singapore, Laos, and Indonesia seek confidence-building measures on the Spratlys. However it is unlikely that this was a unanimous view, China having previously made clear its opposition to any outside involvement.

Less ambitious bilateral efforts to defuse or to settle low-level disputes within ASEAN have been more successful. In mid-1993 Malaysia and Singapore resolved their territorial water boundary differences in the Johor Strait. Likewise Malaysia and Thailand pledged to cooperate in joint development where their exclusive economic zones overlap in the Gulf of Thailand. Bangkok then advanced this model to Hanoi for similar Thai-Vietnamese differences.

Moving from words to action, bilateral and multilateral military exercises can build mutual confidence without necessarily raising threat perception on the part of outsiders. As such, these drills pose the possibility of incremental advancement toward wider collective efforts to address

security problems and concerns. At a minimum, they offer an opportunity for communication and confidence building between sets of states with some overlap interlocking different groups. The most active Asian participant in such activity is Singapore. During 1992-93 it had bilateral military exercises with Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines, as well as a one-day, two-ship workout with an Indian counterpart. Singapore also has engaged in a major 19-day air defense exercise with Australia and the United States. Indonesia and Australia jointly exercise air and sea forces every two years. Thailand and the United States regularly practice naval and air deployments in support of amphibious maneuvers.

The longest established and largest effort is under the Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA) involving Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. This offers the basis for an integrated air defense system within the region. In addition, in 1993 a six-nation naval exercise for four weeks included these five plus Thailand, with the Indonesian and Philippine navies as observers. Going beyond exercises, in 1992 Indonesia and Singapore agreed to coordinate patrols in the Philip Channel as an anti-piracy measure. Similarly Indonesia and Malaysia established a planning group and all three parties began discussions on the problem in mid-1993. Finally, Malaysia and the Philippines have agreed to joint fishing cooperation in the disputed Spratly Islands in an area not claimed by the other four countries.

But military exercises and joint efforts may not be viewed favorably by non-participants. Although Chinese media express no concern, Beijing may well consider some of the foregoing activities as providing a potential anti-China coalition at some future time. Should Vietnam take part this fear would increase.

Even more worrisome would be any indication of Japanese involvement. In May 1993 the head of Japan's Marine Self-Defense Force said his agency was considering joint drills with selected ASEAN states that had requested them, namely Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia.⁴⁵ He acknowledged the constitutional ban on "the use of force for collective security." However, he saw such exercises as legal "if they were conducted within the scope of friendship exercises" when the Japanese training fleet visited these ports. "Friendship exercises" have taken place with some Latin American navies and Australia. Defense Agency guidelines include "political propriety" along with legal bases for "case-by-case" decisions, so Southeast Asian joint drills may not involve Japan. Nevertheless merely voicing the idea gave grounds for some apprehension in Beijing.

Greater grounds for Chinese apprehension emerged in February 1994 when a "Tripolar Forum for North Pacific Security" brought together Russian, American, and Japanese official and private foreign policy and

military specialists.⁴⁶ As reported by a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry source, discussion of a “strategic partnership” between the United States and Russia raised prospects of joint military exercises including Japan. The Japanese hosts protested that the forum was not to counter other countries, but apparently did not rule out this future possibility. The level of participation assured attention in Beijing.⁴⁷ The group was scheduled to meet in Moscow the following September. As a further spur to Beijing’s suspicions, separately the Japanese foreign minister reportedly agreed with the American defense secretary on joint monitoring of Chinese military expansion.⁴⁸

Pyongyang’s consistent attack on annual US-ROK Team Spirit exercises has often included establishing a “semi-war” alert in North Korea. While the attack has focused mainly on calls for greater productivity, it also articulates concern over the massive engagement of combined air, naval, and ground forces hypothetically defending against attack from the North. The US-ROK invitation to attend the exercises as observer failed as a confidence-building measure, Pyongyang steadfastly declining the bid. Instead its propaganda emphasizes the nuclear capable components in Team Spirit, implicitly justifying its own obdurate nuclear weapons development program.

Other examples of claimed disturbance from military exercises include Hanoi protesting Bangkok’s 12-day drill near the Cambodian border, ostensibly an exercise against a hypothetical return of Vietnamese forces into Cambodia. Meanwhile unconfirmed reports of Sino-Burmese army exercises increased Indian and Thai attention to close cooperation between the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) junta in Rangoon and the PLA. On balance, however, the joint military activities in East Asia provide more reassurance than anxiety.

As yet no pattern of collaboration in forums or military exercises in East Asia seems likely to affect the dynamics of military security, positively or negatively. In the absence of a commonly perceived imminent threat, indigenous or exogenous, the various states are not predisposed to collective statements or actions that address regional security except in the most general terms of “peace and stability.” The 1976 ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation articulates these sentiments.

The newly created ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on security issues opens the door to more comprehensive discussion with Cambodia, China, and Russia as guests in addition to ASEAN’s seven “dialogue partners” of Japan, South Korea, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union. But this gathering of more than two dozen security officials from countries widely divergent in power and politics does not hold much promise for frank discussion, much less substantive

agreement. Slightly better prospects are raised by the Special Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials (Special SOM). The first such gathering in June 1992 achieved little beyond establishing a precedent for ASEAN openly seeking security cooperation. After two years' delay, the second Special SOM in March 1994 served to prepare the participants for the much larger ARF in July. Within ASEAN, intelligence and defense plans are already shared. But internal rivalry among Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia for status and roles hampers further progress toward collective security measures. In addition the maritime regimes differ from land-oriented ones in security needs and threat perceptions. Finally, contradictory calculations of China's potential threat separate conciliatory Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur from more wary Jakarta.

For the larger region greater attention has been given to the ASEAN post-ministers conference (ASEAN-PMC). This annual meeting expands ASEAN with the aforementioned "dialogue partners," plus China and Russia as guests with Vietnam and Laos as observers. Cambodia will join in 1994. The group is scheduled to address the Spratly Islands issue, although it lacks any power to force a settlement on the disputants. It is difficult to see how dialogue alone will alter China's adamant stance on sovereignty or how it can resolve, once and for all, Sino-Vietnamese confrontation in the area. Moreover as the group expands in membership it may reach a point of diminishing return in decision-making.

Separately, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), as its name implies, does not address military security as such. The interaction of economics and security is multifaceted, ranging from the impact of GNP growth on defense budget options to the drive for resources and the management of population pressures. So far, however, APEC has restricted its formal agenda to its stated purpose. It remains to be seen whether the organization will expand its focus, given the unprecedented meeting of high-level leaders from the entire region (Malaysia excepted) in Seattle in November 1993.

The United States Role

On one point all East Asian states agree: the United States presence helps stability and this strengthens military security. The minimum basis of this agreement is the perception that a total American withdrawal would prompt Japan to rearm rapidly. Logically even Pyongyang must privately

subscribe to this view although its virulent anti-imperialist propaganda cannot admit it. Japanese support for the Mutual Defense Treaty now includes the socialists, long opposed on principle, who now feel that it is better to accept the American shield than to provide an excuse for a military comeback. Chinese analysts see stability on the Korean peninsula guaranteed by American forces, in addition to the constraint on Japanese rearmament. ASEAN members interact positively with the United States in various military ways, including port facilities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia; the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) in the Philippines, Korea, and Singapore; and the aforementioned joint exercises.

Yet anxiety over an eventual American withdrawal remains, despite the U.S. East Asian Strategic Initiative (EASI) emphasis on continued military presence manifest in three tiers of concentration: (1) forward-stationed forces in Japan and Korea plus maritime units continuously in the West Pacific, (2) forward forces deployed rotationally, as with Marines to Okinawa and Air Force units to Singapore, and (3) forces temporarily deployed from forward bases in Hawaii, Alaska, and U.S. territories as well as from the continental United States.⁴⁹ This total assemblage is impressive in firepower, technology, and mobility. Finally, the United States remains formally committed to defense of the Philippines (1951, 1954), Australia and New Zealand (1951, 1954), South Korea (1953), Thailand (1954 and 1962), and Japan (1960).

Asian skeptics nonetheless fear a gradual long-run erosion of the American will and capacity to take military action in the region. They point to the reduction of the total American defense establishment and anticipated cuts in defense allocations driven by Congressional and public opinion. Although the Korean withdrawal has been suspended pending resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem, Asians expect it to resume. U.S. bases in the Philippines shut down when Manila refused to renew the agreement. Overall, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union removed the rationale for much of the American military deployment in East Asia. Russian force reductions, most notably in Cam Ranh Bay, together with severe cutbacks in weapons procurement and maintenance, are not likely to be reversed in the near future.

More particularly, despite the Gulf War some Asians question what circumstances would prompt the White House to put American lives at risk.⁵⁰ Apart from South Korea where 37,000 troops and air units remain, no trip wire exists. Washington would seem unlikely to fight Beijing in any of the disputes around the periphery of China, except possibly over Taiwan.⁵¹ Even there, however, the absence of a formal commitment and the costs of engaging the PLA across the Pacific Ocean might encourage

Beijing to dismiss American warnings as bluff. Thus challenged, the American response seems uncertain.

Because perception counts, the image projected by force deployments may reassure Asians that there is no reality to the much discussed "power vacuum." Intensive dialogue can help to clarify confusion on U.S. policy ends and means. In addition the state of Japanese-American relations affects perceptions of how both powers will relate to the region as well as to each other. But this latter variable is subject to the political winds and economic currents. In 1993-94 the sudden change of leadership in Japan together with the relatively new administration in Washington contributed to short-run crises and diminished confidence in long-run forecasts.

Underlying these problems is a gap between East Asian and American self-images and styles of decision-making. Consensus, ambiguity, and tacit understanding confront majority vote, ringing rhetoric, and legalistic formulations. Newly independent regimes and ancient cultures with painful memories of domination by Asian as well as European powers tend to resist assertive leadership that limits their options. Americans accustomed to a half-century of global superpower status and a century or more of benign paternalism—expressed or real—in Asia tend to see the expansion of democracy, human rights, and free trade as essential goals in foreign policy. These values are variously shared in East Asia, though nowhere embraced so fulsomely as in the United States.

Fortunately there is no urgent need to resolve these differences. It is true that the largest state, China, and one of the smallest, North Korea, pose the two most serious imponderables in forecasting stability for the region. Nevertheless the dynamics of military security in East Asia offer ample opportunity for a wide range of discussions and actions, driven by Asians and facilitated by Americans. Seen in this perspective, the 1993 APEC summit meeting in Seattle may prove to be the historic benchmark that it is claimed to be by White House spokespersons. In any event, it is a beginning at least of consultation, if not of genuine Pacific Community.

The prospects of such consultation achieving concrete results in the security area are enhanced by several congruent phenomena. First and foremost, the end of the Cold War followed by collapse of the Soviet Union removed superpower competition that polarized East Asia. This freed weaker states to act independently or collectively without an overriding concern for the reactions of Moscow or Washington. Second, the virtual resolution of the Cambodian conflict removed external military linkages from Indochina after nearly forty years of recurring warfare there. This allowed ASEAN, the first functioning regional organization, to expand its membership and to address longer-term issues. Third, the entire area, with the exception of North Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines, has experi-

enced the most rapid economic growth in the world. This raised living standards, thereby reducing domestic discontent that might be exploited externally. Additionally it has raised economic security above military security in policy priority.

Last but not least important, the United States abandoned its preoccupation with managing regional security unilaterally and bilaterally. Instead it is welcoming and even sponsoring multilateral arrangements without directing them. This final factor has long-term implications for the dynamics of military security. It facilitates Asian states moving at their own pace in their own manner toward management regimes that will conform with indigenous patterns of conflict resolution. The “resolution” may be more in fact than in formality, as characterized by the gradual evolution of mainland-Taiwan relations since 1978. Yet the process may resolve problems sufficiently to avoid arms races and worst-case threat perceptions triggering a dynamic that ends with war.

In sum, while there is ample cause for military security to be addressed regionally in East Asia by all of the resident states, there is ample time to reduce extant concerns and correct misperceptions. At no point since World War II have the domestic and international politics of these countries been more favorable to such an effort. The political, economic, and military uncertainties, however—domestic and international—call for accelerating this effort.

Notes

¹ D. Fisher and William J. Bonde, eds., *U.S. and Asia Statistical Handbook*, 1992 Edition (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1992); Richard D. Fisher and Jason E. Buzdzinski, eds., *U.S. and Asia Statistical Handbook*, 1993 Edition (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1993).

² Michael T. Klare, "The Next Great Arms Race," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 136-152.

³ For an excellent analysis by two eminent American scholars see Donald K. Emmerson and Sheldon W. Simon, *Regional Issues in Southeast Asian Security: Scenarios and Regimes*, National Bureau of Asian Research, July 1993, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 1-36. This effectively refutes the existence of an arms race in East Asia, in marked contrast with the *Foreign Affairs* article, op. cit.

⁴ See Ikuo Kayahara, 3rd Research Office, 2nd Research Department, National Institute for Defense Studies, "China's Post-Cold War Defense Policy," *Securitan*, June 1, 1993, pp. 12-17, and Tsutomu Saito, chief, 2d Intelligence Division, Bureau of Defense Policy, Japan Defense Agency, "On China's FY93 Defense Expenditures," *ibid.*, pp. 18-21.

⁵ For media reflection of these viewpoints, see a five-part series in *Sankei Shimbun*, October 13-16 and 22, 1993; *Mainichi Shimbun*, January 20, 1994; and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 20, 1994.

⁶ This accords with American estimates. See Robert G. Sutter and Shirley Kan, *China As A Security Concern in Asia: Perceptions, Assessment, and U.S. Options* (Washington: CRS Report For Congress, 94-32 S, January 5, 1994), p. 8.

⁷ *The New York Times*, November 9, 1993.

⁸ Sutter and Kan, op. cit., p. 9.

⁹ "Proposals To Build a New Type of Friendly and Cooperative Relations with Russia Under the New International Environment," CPC Central Military Commission Policy Research Office, *Cheng Ming*, November 1, 1993 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, China (hereafter FBIS-China), November 5, 1993, p. 1. Although *Cheng Ming* is a Hong Kong journal, it has a good track record of acquiring authentic PRC classified documents.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Sutter and Kan, op. cit., p. 10.

¹² *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 23, 1993, p. 26.

¹³ KYODO in English, January 9, 1994 in FBIS-Chi, January 10, 1994, p. 11.

¹⁴ Hwang Pyong-mu, National Defense College, in *Wolgan Chungang*, July 1993, p. 518-529, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, East Asia (hereafter FBIS-EAS), September 29, 1993, pp. 28-33.

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, September 18, 1993.

¹⁶ See Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 71-85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 6.

¹⁸ Personal communication from a reliable source to the author.

¹⁹ *The New York Times*, November 15, 1993. Reportedly titled *Can The Chinese Army Win The Next War?*, the book offered eight war scenarios, including seizure of Taiwan, conflict in Korea, and securing South China Sea oil fields.

²⁰ Tsung Lan-hai, "CPC Decides on Its International Archenemy," *Cheng Ming*, January 1, 1994 in FBIS-Chi, January 25, 1994, pp. 4-6.

²¹ See Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989).

²² *The Jakarta Post*, December 18, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, December 28, 1993, p. 51.

²³ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 16, 1993, p. 26.

²⁴ This paragraph draws on Sutter and Kan, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

²⁵ See, for instance, his press conference statement in Seoul: "I deeply repent and express a wholehearted apology for the unbearable sadness and pain of various forms the people on the Korean peninsula suffered from the colonial rule of our country in the past—deprived of their opportunity for the education of their mother tongue and forced to change their names into a Japanese style." Seoul KBS-1 Television Network in Korea, November 6, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, November 8, 1993, p. 25. Earlier at his summit meeting with President Kim Yong-sam, Hosokawa reportedly detailed Japanese atrocities, including forcing Korean women to serve Japanese troops sexually and Korean men into forced labor camps during the war; *ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁶ KYODO in English, January 21, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, January 21, 1994, p. 3.

²⁷ KYODO in English, December 22, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, December 22, 1993, p. 4.

²⁸ Yonhap in English, January 21, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, January 21, 1994, p. 28; according to *Choson Ilbo* in Korean, January 21, 1994, in FBIS-EAS, *ibid.*, the Russian government proposed joint development and production of weapons, including missiles, submarines, tanks, and fighter planes.

²⁹ See Hideo Takesada, director, research office, National Institute for Defense Studies, "The Threat to Japan Is Precisely North Korea's Nuclear Weapons," *Shukan Toyo Keizai*, July 10, 1993, pp. 162-165.

- ³⁰ Tokyo KYODO in English, November 4, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, November 4, 1993, p. 4. These steps taken by the Finance Ministry reduced the Defense Agency request of 1.95 percent growth for FY94.
- ³¹ Singapore, *The Straits Times*, April 1993 in FBIS-EAS, April 19, 1993, pp. 57-58.
- ³² *The Nation* in English, December 26, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, December 27, 1993, p. 49.
- ³³ J. N. Mak and B. A. Hamzah, "Navy Blues," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 17, 1994, p. 30.
- ³⁴ This paragraph draws on Simon, op. cit., p. 9.
- ³⁵ Hong Kong AFP, May 11, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, May 12, 1993, p. 50.
- ³⁶ Hanoi VNA in English, December 18, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, December 20, 1993, p. 54, reporting discussions between the Vietnam Oil and Gas Corporation (Petrovietnam) and Crestone Energy Company.
- ³⁷ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 17, 1994, p. 32.
- ³⁸ *The Nation*, March 18, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, March 18, 1994, pp. 55-56.
- ³⁹ Details appear in *Sankei Shimbun*, October 14, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, January 26, 1994, pp. 18-20.
- ⁴⁰ Tokyo KYODO in English, October 19, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, October 20, 1993, p. 8.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² *South China Morning Post*, March 16, 1994 in FBIS-China, May 16, 1994, p. 71.
- ⁴³ Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, "Defusing Tensions in the South China Sea," *Singapore Business Times*, June 9, 1993 in FBIS-EA, June 10, 1993, p. 29. Mochtar was former Indonesian Foreign Minister.
- ⁴⁴ Hong Kong AFP in English, August 25, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, August 26, 1993, p. 1.
- ⁴⁵ Tokyo KYODO in English, May 18, 1993 in FBIS-EAS, May 19, 1993, p. 3.
- ⁴⁶ KYODO in English, February 2, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, February 9, 1994; also *Tokyo Shimbun*, February 3, 1994.
- ⁴⁷ U.S. participants included Assistant Defense Secretary Graham Allison and Admiral Frank Bowman, deputy director for political and military affairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov, General Andrey Nikolayev, head of the Russian Federal Border Service and commander-in-chief of the border forces, and Colonel General Vladimir Zhurbenko, deputy chief of staff of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces; also Yoshiji Nogami, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry's Foreign Policy Bureau and Major General Toshimasa Fujiwara, member of Self Defense Forces' Joint Staff Office in charge of plans and policies.

⁴⁸ KYODO in English, February 11, 1994 in FBIS-EAS, February 14, 1994, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Admiral Charles R. Larson, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, United States Pacific Command Posture Statement 1993, May 1993, p. 17.

⁵⁰ Much of this section draws on Paul H. Kreisberg, Daniel Y. Chiu, and Jerome H. Kahan, *Threat Perceptions In Asia And The Role Of The Major Powers* (Honolulu: East-West Center and The Center For Naval Analysis, 1993).

⁵¹ For a cogent analysis of this situation, see Richard K. Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States After The Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1994), pp. 34-77.

About the Author

Allen S. Whiting is Regents Professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona, where he has taught since 1982. He also has taught at the University of Michigan (1968-82), and served in the U.S. Department of State (1961-68).

Professor Whiting is the author of numerous books and articles on China and security relations in East Asia, including *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision To Enter the Korean War* (1960), *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (1975), *Siberian Development and East Asia: Threat or Promise?* (1981), and *China Eyes Japan* (1989).

THE ASIA/PACIFIC RESEARCH CENTER PUBLICATIONS LIST

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Fumio Kodama and Takao Kiba. *The Emerging Trajectory of International Technology Transfer*. 1994.

Ronald I. McKinnon. *Dollar and Yen: The Problem of Financial Adjustment Between the United States and Japan*. 1993.

Daniel I. Okimoto, Sheridan M. Tatsuno, Floyd Kvamme, Yoshio Nishi and Edward J. DeWath. *U.S.-Japan Strategic Alliances in the Semiconductor Industry: Technology Transfer, Competition, and Public Policy*. Reprint of a National Research Council Report. 1992.

Matthew Holt, Koichi B. Ishikawa, Shigekoto Kaihara, Aki Yoshikawa, with David S. P. Hopkins, Margaret Mason, Mari Shimizu. *Medical Ivory Towers and the High Cost of Health Care: A Comparison of Teaching Hospitals in the United States and Japan*. Comparative Health Care Research Series of the Asia/Pacific Research Center. 1992.

John A. Blair. *Proprietary Technology and Industrial Structure: The Semiconductor, Computer and Consumer Electronics Industries*. 1991.

Daniel I. Okimoto, Henry S. Rowen, and Michael J. Dahl. *The Semiconductor Competition and National Security*. 1987.

John Wilson Lewis. *Political Networks and the Chinese Policy Process*. 1986 (out of print).

David C. Mowery and Nathan Rosenberg. *The Japanese Commercial Aircraft Industry Since 1945: Government Policy, Technical Development, and Industrial Structure*. 1985.

WORKING PAPER SERIES and SPECIAL REPORTS

Scott Callon. *Turf Wars: Bureaucratic Conflict in Japanese High Technology Consortia*. 1994.

Lawrence J. Lau. *The Chinese Economy in the Twenty-First Century*. 1994.

Lawrence J. Lau. *Macroeconomic Policies for Short-term Stabilization and Long-term Growth of the Chinese Economy*. 1993.

Lawrence J. Lau. *Poverty Alleviation in Taiwan*. 1993.

Aki Yoshikawa, Norkhiko Shirouzu, and Matthew Holt. *How Does Japan Do It? Doctors and Hospitals in a Universal Health Care System*. 1992 (out of print).

Occasional Papers currently in print may be ordered at \$5.00 per copy (including postage and handling) and Working Papers at \$3.00 per copy through the Asia/Pacific Research Center. For further information, call (415) 723-9741 or fax (415) 723-6530.

