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Implications of Great Power Rivalries on Regionalism in East Asia*

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Abstract

The development of regionalism in East Asia has speeded up in post-Cold War era. Nevertheless, it is limited by the legacy of political rivalry among the great regional powers. This paper intends to examine causality between such rivalries and regionalism by focusing on USA-China-Japan interactions and ASEAN's response, in order to explain why and how does rivalries affect the prospects for regionalism. First, the development of effective regional institutionalism is precluded by ideological differences, security tensions, mutual suspicion and geopolitical competition between the three powers. These rivalries have been exacerbated by American unilateralism, China's radical emergence, and Japan's redirection for a more prominent international role. Second, tension and competition between three powers, by contrast, does not mean that the region can be divided into their spheres of influence. Conversely, it has created a resurgence in the efficacy and appeal of regional institutions. As the ASEAN Plus Three and the East Asian Summit processes grow, the ASEAN states' bargaining power in dealing with great powers is greatly enhanced within their collaborative institutions. Intriguingly, third, the ASEAN states may work competitive pressures to their own

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advantage by overriding their cooperative inclinations. ASEAN has proven to be durable, but never been able to risk pushing its members in choosing between institutional effectiveness and individual state interest. Finally, any further differences in how three great powers conduct their foreign strategies will cause intra- regional cooperation to converge or diverge as time progresses.

Keywords: East Asia, regionalism, rivalry, USA-China-Japan relations, ASEAN, regional security

I. INTRODUCTION

For the past several decades, the countries of the East Asia have tried to construct multilateral institutions capable of facilitating regional economic and political interaction. While all of the regional states have jealously protected their sovereignty, they have also identified a need for larger institutional structures to help smooth inter-state relations. They have recognized their mutual dependence in the workings of the global economic and political systems. For most of the Cold War period, their efforts at institutionalized regionalism met with limited success. Throughout the 1990s, however, Asia Pacific multilateralism exploded. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) expanded its membership to encompass all of Southeast Asia; ASEAN also formed the foundation for the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the first region-wide attempt at a security dialogue. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum became active. The Asia-Europe Meetings (ASEM) became a regular part of inter-regional dialogue. All of these organizations were severely affected by the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1999 (though other factors also helped to undermine their efficacy) but in the aftermath of that crisis, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) has emerged as a new structure which - according to some analysts - shows considerable promise as a vehicle for extensive regional cooperation.[1]

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[1] For instance, Shaun Breslin, "Theorising East Asian Regionalism(s): New Regionalism and Asia's Future(s)," in Melissa G. Curley and Nicholas Thomas (eds.) *Advancing East Asian Regionalism.* (NY: Routledge, 2007), pp. 26-51; Akihiko Tanaka, "The Development of the ASEAN+3 Framework," in Melissa G. Curley and Nicholas Thomas (eds.) *Advancing East Asian Regionalism.* (NY: Routledge, 2007), pp. 53-73; Matsuo

However, despite the undeniable logic of building effective regional institutions, there are strong reasons to argue that multilateralism in the Asia Pacific is severely limited by the political, economic, and perhaps military rivalries of the great regional powers.

The key question considered by this paper is: how do great power rivalries affect the prospects for regional institutional development in the East Asia? The paper focuses on the relations between the United States (US), China and Japan. It argues that economic cooperation between these three major states is overshadowed by security rivalries. These pre-existing rivalries have, in the recent past, been greatly exacerbated by aggressive American policies. Japan lacks the capacity or the willingness to resist American influence, and even without American influence, maintains a strained relationship with China. Thus, any regional institutionalism that requires significant cooperation of the United States and/or Japan with China is doomed to failure, or at least to being seriously curtailed in what it can achieve.

In this environment, the economically and militarily weaker states of Asia Pacific, such as ASEAN countries, are caught between the tensions and ambitions of the great powers. However, weaker states are not necessarily mere pawns in the designs of the great powers. While great power rivalries may prevent the emergence of strong regional institutions, it cannot prevent weaker states from remaining neutral in the conflict between the larger powers, finding other ways to cooperate and even learning how to play the larger powers - particularly China and Japan - off against each other. The new environment may create more flexibility and freedom of movement for the smaller states of East Asia. It is certain to be a much more complex environment, however, and the flexibility of these states will be contingent on the level of hostility between the great powers. Moreover, regional institutionalism will likely be limited by competing interests between the weaker states themselves.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first section reviews the development of regionalism in East Asia and examines the emergence of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the arguments in favor of its future efficacy. Section two examines the impact and implications of recent American redirection of foreign policy on the international system as

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Watanabe, "Issues in Regional Integration of East Asia: Conflicting Priorities and Perceptions," *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2004), pp. 1-17; Richard Stubbs, "ASEAN Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2002), pp. 440-455.



well as regionalism in the Asia Pacific. Section three briefly considers the arguments for and against the emergence of a "China Threat." Section four discusses Japan's role in the strategic triangle between itself, the US, and China, and emphasizes the key factors straining Japan-China relations. Section five assesses the dynamics of the overall strategic triangle and its implication to regionalism. Section six offers a final analysis of the diverse strategies for regionalism among three great powers, as well as ASEAN countries. It argues that tensions between the great powers make formal institutionalism unlikely, but also points out that the smaller regional states may be more than just the pawns of the great powers.

II. THEORETICAL FOUDAMENTALS AND DYNAMIC OF REGIONALISM

2.1 Defining East Asian Regionalism

Regionalism is on the move in East Asia, even though defining the nature and boundary of regionalism in East Asia is not easy. Lots of initiatives and ideas were afloat in the past decade, especially in the economic dimension. However, there is still no clear blueprint as to what an East Asian community would look like, because there is no vision and consensus about the content and model of an East Asian community. As for its boundary, the idea of region as simply a geographical and territorial concept has been increasingly challenged as new definitions emerged taking into consideration of incorporating commonality, interaction, the possibility of cooperation, and even common experience and identity.[2] Louise Fawcett recites Joseph Nye's definition that a region as a group of states linked together by both geographical relationship and a degree of mutual interdependence.[3] Additionally, regions are created and recreated in the process of global transformation, or as Andrew Hurrell argues, "it is how political actors perceive and interpret the idea of a region and notions of regionness that is critical."[4] Stemming from Nye's and Hurrell's notions, regionalism is then seen as a process-oriented concept that encompasses different

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[2] Louise Fawcett, "Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism," *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3 (2004), p. 432.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Hurrell, Andrew, "Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective", in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.): *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 41.



phenomena happening at the various stages of its formation. Regionalism is therefore not only a geographical concept but a dynamic process encompassing a concentration of economic, political and socio-cultural linkages.

In the case of East Asia, the relationship between North and Southeast Asia has been strengthened through the widening forum of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) which was dysfunctional during the Asian financial crisis, the inclusion of China, Japan and Korea as dialogue partners in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and then the creation of the APT process with a rising sense of East Asian identity, particularly after the crisis. There are other paths of cooperation in different areas and sectors and among various East Asian countries such as the various bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) processes. However, East Asian cooperation essentially still depends on informal and semi-formal consensus building mechanisms.

The reason is that states in East Asia lack a record of regional consciousness. It can be explained by the following interlocking factors: the diversity of the region; the different historical backgrounds; the existence of strong extra-regional ties; the different threat perceptions; and political fragility and transition. The development of East Asian regionalism has to accommodate the diversities, differences and, more importantly, historical antagonisms. The differences within the region make it important to see cooperative development in its historical context and within the existing social and cultural frameworks. Its development would always be constrained by historical, structural, and geopolitical factors that would take a long time to change. Therefore, it is still not clear how determined East Asia is in moving toward greater integration. Optimists point to the fact that the various initiatives, whatever the bilateral and sub-regional agreements, or existed regional forums and institutions, are stepping stones leading eventually to the goal of an East Asian bloc. Skeptics wonder if such patchwork of cooperation can really be stitched together to become a nice model an East Asian community.[5]

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[5] For relevant discussions about East Asian regionalism and Asian international relations, see Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar World," *International Security* Vol. 18, No. 3 (1993/94), pp. 5-33; David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," *International Security* Vol. 27: No. 4 (2003), pp. 57-85; David C. Kang, "Hierarchy, Balancing, and Empirical Puzzles in Asian International Relations," *International Security* Vol. 28, No. 3 (2003/04), pp. 165-180; Amitav Acharya, "Will Asia's Past Be Its Future," *International Security* Vol. 28, No. 3 (2003/04), pp. 149-164.



To sum up, despite some differences and constraints, what is remarkable is that regional cooperation in East Asia is slowly taking root. Especially, the APT, a growing web of cooperative network linking both Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, is giving new underpinning to regional cooperation in East Asia. It is the first major endeavor for the region to establish a regionwide economic integration. The APT could be treated as the main container in the process of building East Asian community. The next section proceeds with a review on development of East Asian regionalism by emphasizing on the interplays of great powers and lesser states.

2.2 Development of East Asian Regionalism in the Post-Cold War Era

The abrupt end of the Cold War made it politically easier for countries in East Asia to consider institutionalizing security and economic ties to an extent unimaginable under the bipolar system. The provision of economic and security benefits remained available through the bilateral-multilateral institutional mix, but some early indications of US disengagement from the region and the stalemated Uruguay Round of GATT trade talks began to motivate East Asian countries to consider alternative intraregional options.

Most notably, the rise of China and its unprecedented attempt to integrate itself into the region served as a catalyst for regional security arrangements. In response, Japan abruptly reversed its steadfast opposition to regional security multilateralism by proposing a collective security dialogue within the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in July 1991. This initiative, known as the Nakayama proposal, represented a bold departure from Japan's reactive policy toward regional collective security. Although it did not materialize as proposed, it did encourage the formation of the ARF.[6] Despite its operational feebleness as a security regime, the ARF began to bind Japan and China together into a regional institutional framework, allowing Japan to address its historical problem, China to address the fears of its neighbors, and both to avoid conspicuous balancing behavior toward each other.[7]

In the area of economic issues, ASEAN countries initiated the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) at the 4th ASEAN Summit in Singapore in 1992. This initiative laid out a

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[6] Paul Midford, "Japan's Leadership Role in East Asian Security Multilateralism: the Nakayama Proposal and the Logic of Reassurance," *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2000), pp. 367-379.

[7] Ibid., pp. 367-8.



comprehensive program for regional tariff reduction to be carried out in several phases through 2008. Moreover, the APEC forum came into being in 1989, with the US, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN countries among its founding members. In the shifting Cold War context, many in East Asia saw this institution as a means of coping with ongoing problems in their relationships with the US In the aftermath of problems with the Uruguay Round of GATT trade negotiations, the US was increasingly sympathetic to pursuing regional accords to bolster the Round. At first, APEC looked promising as a possible trade forum that might substitute for the GATT, particularly with the leaders' meeting in 1993 in Seattle.[8] Yet the Asian financial crisis and APEC's tepid response would seriously undermine this institution and foster interest in a more exclusive East Asia-based economic forum - a topic to which we now turn.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 and the debacle of the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle revealed a number of institutional weaknesses that Asia Pacific economies shared. With respect to informal market integration, the economic crisis proved that the seemingly dense networks of Japanese and overseas Chinese businesses were vulnerable. States in the region could delay the bursting of their bubble as long as they could find export markets that vastly exceeded the absorption capacity of domestic consumers. Yet the structural economic problems finally exacted a heavy toll in the closing years of the 1990s.[9]

Aside from many structural problems underlying the East Asian model of capitalism, such as cronyism, unsound investments and overcapacity, many in the region also faulted the wide practice of Western financial liberalism, which they argued reinforced credit bubbles, empowered currency speculators, and created instability. This concern was only heightened by the harsh conditionalities imposed on the crisis-ridden countries by the IMF, supported by the US and the European countries, when it came to their rescue.[10] The latest turning point came with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Among other things, the American global war on terrorism has called into question the fate of the East Asian balance-of-power system, which

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[8] John Ravenhill, *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[9] Vinod K. Aggarwal and Min Gyo Koo, "Beyond Network Power? The Dynamics of Formal Economic Integration in Northeast Asia," *The Pacific Review* Vol. 18, No. 2 (2005), pp. 189-216.

[10] See Vinod K. Aggarwal, "Exorcising Asian Debt: Lessons from Latin American Rollovers, Workouts, and Writedowns," in Deepak Dasgupta et al. (eds). *Private Capital Flows in the Age of Globalization: The Aftermath of the Asian Crisis* (New York: Edward Elgar, 2000).

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in turn has created additional incentives for Asia Pacific countries to cope with growing economic and security uncertainties through institutionalized mechanisms. An intensifying Sino-Japanese rivalry has further accelerated this trend.

2.3 Emergence of the ASEAN Plus Three and the East Asian Summit

As argued above, the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1999 seriously damaged most of the established regional multilateral institutions in East Asia. ASEAN and APEC both proved incapable of addressing the crisis; ASEM lost much of its urgency for the Europeans as Asia went into an economic tailspin. However, the APT has emerged from the rubble of the crisis with the potential to become "a vehicle for realizing the dreams of forming the East Asian Community."[11] As Fukagawa points out, regionalism embraces one major barrier which is institutionalization. "East Asian countries are too busy building the institutions of government in their own countries and have not yet grown politically beyond nationalism. This makes it difficult to create a 'deep' integration."[12] Hence, there are powerful pressures within East Asia for the creation of an effective regional mechanism. Those pressures were increased by the experience of the crisis itself.[13]

The APT got its start as preparatory meetings for the ASEM in 1996 and 1997 between the ASEAN countries and the three major economic powers of the region (China, Japan and South Korea). The first meeting of the APT heads of government took place as an informal gathering during the 1997 ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur. Japan was somewhat reluctant to become involved in the meeting, but China's willingness to participate forced Tokyo's hand. Since that initial meeting, the APT has grown by leaps and bounds, both in the extensiveness of its governmental contacts as well as the amount of energy that its participants appear willing to invest in the nascent organization. The overall goal of the APT is to coordinate and enhance regional economic cooperation with a regional identity building.

Therefore, the APT becomes a new hope to transfer the existed consensus-building and

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[11] Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's announcement at 2005 East Asian, re-cited from Mohan Malik, "The East Asia Summit: More Discord than Accord," *Yale Global Newsletter* (20 December 2005).

[12] Yukiko Fukagawa, "East Asia's New Economic Integration Strategy: Moving beyond the FTA," *Asia-Pacific Review* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2005), p. 11.

[13] Stubbs, op. cit., p. 441.

informal mode of cooperation to a viable model to conventional institution-building. Furthermore, its move to closer regional cooperation in East Asia is concentrated in the macroeconomic areas and institutionalization. Several triggering factors then contributed to increasing the APT process, including liberalization of trade and investment regimes of many Southeast Asian countries; the opening up of the Chinese economy; increasing Japanese and Newly Industrialized Countries' (NICs) FDI into Southeast Asia; inaction of a widening APEC; failure of the 1999 WTO meeting; creation of Chiang Mai initiative involving financial and monetary coordination; and an emerging perception of building regional identity.[14] As mentioned above, the need to build an effective and cohesive institution was fully demonstrated in the contagion effect of the Asian financial crisis. The crisis prompted the regional economies to undertake various initiatives for the institutionalization of such interdependence. The Asian financial crisis taught an important lesson that there is clear need for effective prevention, management and resolution of financial crises and other transnational issues. Hence, as Kawai points out, the general sentiment in East Asia has been to establish a self-help mechanism through more systematic coordination and cooperation for prevention and better management of possible crises in the future.[15]

All these have taken place relying upon the networks and connections developed through the APT process. As Kim argues, the current East Asian regionalism, embodied by the APT, is therefore based on the shared embrace of economic development (market-driven integration) and the shared sense of vulnerability associated with the processes of globalization and regionalization. He stresses that "greater regional cooperation is one of the few available instruments with which East Asian states can meet the double challenge of globalization from above and localization from below. Operating in a regional context, the East Asian states can 'Asianize' the response to globalization in a politically viable form. This is in part an insurance policy against another Asian financial crisis. Lacking the capacity to manage the challenge of globalization at the level of nation-state, governments

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[14] Matsuo Watanabe, "Issues in Regional Integration of East Asia: Conflicting Priorities and Perceptions," *Asia-Pacific Review* 1 Vol. 11, No. 2 (2004), pp. 7-10.

[15] Masahiro Kawai, "Regional Economic Integration and Cooperation in East Asia", paper presented at the Experts' Seminar on the Impact and Coherence of OECD Country Policies on Asian Developing Economies, 10-11 June 2004, Paris.

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have turned to regionalism as a response."[16] Also, Stubbs notes a number of factors that have pushed the development of the APT, including the unifying effect of Japanese investment, the incentive created by the emergence of economic blocs in other parts of the world, the appeal and influence of "East Asian capitalism," and the growing importance of intra-East Asian trade and investment. He further concludes that the APT process has gathered a great deal of momentum within East Asia that regional states will find difficult to resist.[17]

Stemming from positive analyses by Kawai, Kim and Stubb, it is fair to acknowledge a degree of the APT impressive progress in developing a effective East Asian regionalism in recent years, however, the region continues to face several sets of inter-related challenges and obstacles, including diverse/conflictual expectations of economic integration among members, the direction of US policies towards East Asia and an emerging contest for regional leadership between Japan and China.[18] In other words, the optimistic view on the APT underestimates the disruptive power of these obstacles, especially the impact of Washington-Beijing-Tokyo triangularly strategic interplays on regionalism through the development of the APT. Indeed, there are still a number of competing views about the ultimate goal of the cooperation and the nature and model of the East Asian regionalism among great regional powers. To date, we still have no blueprint for East Asia to deepen cooperation and integrate further into a strong East Asian community. The difficulties on agreeing how to proceed are rooted in diverging preferences for what regionalism should be. For instance, Japan's view of an East Asian community would like to include Australia and New Zealand, but this is not the case for countries like China.[19]

The recent East Asian Summit (EAS) process, which included nations of ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, and South Korea) as well as India, Australia, and New Zealand, demonstrates historical rivalries and conflicting geopolitical interests among the US, China and Japan. The discussion over who should be invited to the Summit is a sign of strategic competition. Countries close to the US such as Japan, Singapore and Thailand are openly supportive of Australia's and New Zealand's participation. It is also considered as

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[16] Samuel S. Kim, "Regionalization and Regionalism in East Asia," *Journal of East Asian Studies* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), p. 61.

[17] Stubbs, op. cit., pp. 440-455.

[18] Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 1-13.

[19] Breslin, op. cit., p. 44.



confirming that ASEAN remained the hub of the regional community building. Enrolling India is a balance against China. Moreover, Indonesia, in the process of mending ties with the US and getting the US to lift the ban on military cooperation, is also favorably disposed towards Australia's and New Zealand's participation.[20] The "membership" criteria were finally settled during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in April 2005. Any country that is a dialogue partner of ASEAN and has signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) can qualify.[21] But a major debate ensued when China, wary of both India and Japan, insisted on differentiating a core group, including the original APT nations, from a peripheral group, including the three new members. A compromise after a struggle was reached: ASEAN holding all future summits alongside the ASEAN Summit and within Southeast Asian countries.

In the absence of a thaw in Sino-Japanese relations or great power cooperation, a "deepening" East Asian regionalism is unlikely to take off because multilateralism is a multi-player game. If anything, the EAS may well have had the opposite effect, as well as the APT, intensifying great rivalries. If such rivalry continues, there is every risk that community building exercise would be fatally compromised. At best, the EAS will be just another "talk shop" like the APEC or the ARF where leaders meet, declarations are made, but little institutionalization is achieved. Moreover, the APT process has to respond to similar challenges, and the regional rivalries and competition among the US, China, and Japan need to be further explored. Taking these strategic rivalries and mutual suspicion into account, as well as factoring in the further influence of the American unilateralism under the name of anti-terrorism, China's radical emergence, and Japan's redirection for a more prominent international role, this paper will argue that the prospects for the APT (or any other effective region-wide institution) is relied on the tension among three great powers in the region, whether or not it is dependent on each state's perceived national interests and regional order, and whether or not any residual differences in how each state conducts its foreign policy will cause security relations to converge or diverge as time progresses.

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[20] Barry Desker, "Why the East Asian Summit Matter," *PactNet* (Pacific Forum, CSIS) No. 55B (Dec. 19, 2005).

[21] Melissa G. Curley and Nicholas Thomas, "Advancing East Asian Regionalism," in Melissa G. Curley and Nicholas Thomas (eds.) *Advancing East Asian Regionalism*. (NY: Routledge, 2007), pp. 16-17.

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III. WASHINGTON'S CONCERNS TO THE REGION

The heart of the uncertainty about regional institutionalism lies in the foreign policy of the US, and has been greatly exacerbated by the actions and policies of the current Bush administration. The G.W. Bush administration came into office in 2001 ideologically ill-disposed toward multilateral institutions. While all American administrations in the past have used multilateralism to further American policy goals, most have also recognized the American interest in working with other states to build a relatively stable, institutionally-defined world order. The Bush administration came into office with a different mindset, however. Starting from the premise that the US is the most economically and militarily powerful country in the world, the American policy became, in effect, that the US would not allow itself to be restrained by the interests of any outside parties. Thus, the US declared that it would not be a party to the Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming. According to Bush, the costs to the American economy if it did implement the Accord would be unacceptably high.[22] Additionally, the US launched a concerted campaign to undermine and delegitimize the new International Criminal Tribunal (ICT), a body that has the power to try international criminals for egregious human rights abuses, and which represents a quantum leap forward in creating a world shaped by law. The US also abrogated the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, despite being warned not to do so by Russia and China, as the first step in its development of National Missile Defense (NMD) technology.

The war in Iraq was a cakewalk for the American military predictably, however, dealing with the aftermath has proven far more difficult. Nonetheless, despite the criticism, the US has presented its war on Iraq as a success and is doling out punishment and rewards to other states in the international community. The turn to unilateralism and militarism is explicitly stated in the US Defense Department document, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2002.[23]

In terms of regionalism in Asia Pacific, therefore, the counter-terrorism initiatives,

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[22] 周志杰（Chih-Chieh Chou），〈建構以永續發展爲核心的生態外交戰略〉（Building Strategies of Ecological Diplomacy with Core Value of Sustainable Development），《立法院院聞》（*Legislative Yuan Monthly*），第 34 卷 5 期，2006，頁 76-77。

[23] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2002* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 2002). http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/index.html.

combined with a general rethinking of US security policy underway since the end of the Cold War, have led to significant changes in traditional US policy. The US began to solicit multilateral cooperation against terrorism through APEC, ARF, and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), thus departing from its exclusive focus on bilateral arrangements in dealing with regional security matters.[24] More importantly, the US also began scaling back its forward military deployment in the region. Indeed, the issue of repositioning US forces, and possibly using these forces for intervention in hot spots in the region or elsewhere, has created diplomatic tensions between the US and its traditional ally, Japan. The US decision to move 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2012 has raised the question of financial burden-sharing, as well as the credibility and deterrence of the US presence.[25] Although a large-scale American withdrawal from the region is unlikely for the foreseeable future, these latest developments mark a significant change in America's conventional emphasis on balanced bilateral security ties with key allies.

Since the second term of President Bush, however, the expanded efforts devoted in Iraq and other regional conflicts initially diverted the US from its concern about China's rise toward collaboration on addressing terrorist threats. As Christopher Hill, the Assistant Secretary of State Department of the US, pointed out, "[the US] long-term strategic vision in East Asia will depend in large measure on China's role as an emerging regional and global power... We want to see China take on an increasing role as a responsible stakeholder in the international system, and we are working toward that end."[26] Yet Sino-US relations have again turned somewhat sour as the US trade deficit with China becomes a growing political issue and concern about China's growing military budget comes to the fore again. The April 2006 visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao to the U.S. did not resolve many of these outstanding issues.

Turning to economic relations, the US accelerated bilateral ties rather than multilateral regionalism in Asia Pacific in the post-9/11 era. The 9/11 Event spurred the US Congress in 2002 to give President Bush fast-track Trade Promotion Authority.[27] As result, President

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[24] Desker, op. cit.

[25] Aggarwal and Koo, op. cit.

[26] Christopher R. Hill. "East Asia and Pacific Affairs," in George R. Clark (ed.) *U.S. Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Regional Issues* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 2006), p. 12. http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0906/ijpe/ijpe0906.htm

[27] "Trade Promotion Authority Helps Bush Administration Get Trade Deals: Assistant USTR's June 25

Bush wasted no time in completing FTAs with Chile and Singapore in 2003. Although the U.S. was slower off the mark than countries such as Chile, Mexico, and the EU, its actions have led to fears in East Asia of a return to a bilateral world and have led East Asian governments to accelerate their own efforts at bilateral FTAs. Moreover, as the war on terrorism became one of the most important policies of the US, the US-Japan alliance was perceived as the cornerstone of East Asian security, while US bilateral relations with China also became an important, as mentioned above. However, the tendency of building an "Asian's regionalism" represents a strategic challenge for the US.[28] The East Asian Summit is a recent case. Although the US is a leading trading partner of all summit participants and has significant relations with major players, such as Japan, Washington was not able to participate in this summit. The US alliance system, APEC and the ARF are therefore currently the key institutions for Washington's interest to support a larger political and security role for the two institutions.[29] The signature of the US-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership in 2005 and the idea of an annual US-ASEAN Summit propounded in early 2006 are gestures to show American continuously significant participation in the region.

IV. DEALING WITH A RISING CHINA

Since the end of the Cold War, the US and Japan have faced a dilemma over how it should deal with China. A cottage industry has developed of academics and diplomats writing books and articles which evaluate the extent to which China is a "threat" to East Asia and the US. As Harry Harding argues, "though China is willing to join the existing international order, it wants to play a larger role – as a rule-maker, not just a rule-taker."[30] These fears are fuelled by the concern that China's phenomenal economic growth over the past fifteen years will eventually translate into military power and a desire to exert its influence on the regional and - at some point - global stages. These fears are heightened by evaluations which indicate that China has greatly increased its military spending over the

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Testimony to House Panel." http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2003&m=June&x=20030625141536euqcoral0.4408228

[28] Evelyn Goh, "China and Southeast Asia," *Foreign Policy in Focus Commentary*, Dec. 12, 2006. http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/3780.

[29] FPIF, "Bush's Asia Trip: President Attempts to Show that Asia Matters to the United States," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (Talking Points #5), November 15, 2005. http://www.fpif.org/fpiftp/2927.

[30] Harry Harding, "China: Think Again!" *PactNet* (Pacific Forum CSIS) No.17, April 5, 2007.

course of the past decade.[31] China also has active territorial disputes with several of its neighbors. China is in conflict with Japan and Taiwan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. China and several states in Southeast Asia dispute various parts of China's and Taiwan's claim to the islands chain in the South China Sea (Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands, and Macclesfeld Bank), as well as the South China Sea itself. China's continuing conflict with Taiwan is the area with the greatest potential for an outright confrontation with the US. Based on these disputes, most regional states are concerned that China will use its growing economic and military power to assert its claims at some point in the future. In this assessment, China is not satisfied with the status quo, and it will do what it can to change the status quo in the future.

Therefore, relations between China, the US, and Japan were often strained in the post-Cold War period.[32] Japanese and American actions largely confirm the outlooks of Chinese hardliners, who have long argued that Japan is inherently militaristic and looking for the opportunity to reestablish itself as an independent power. China was deeply unhappy over the consolidating US-Japan security alliance. China's standard portrayal of the US is of a declining hegemon which, nonetheless, will remain the dominant global power for the time being and must be handled carefully.[33] China remains concerned with how both the US and Japan exercise their power. the 1996 Taiwan Straits confrontation between the US and China, NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia during the 1999 Kosovo War and the collision between a US reconnaissance aircraft and a Chinese fighter in 2001 had a significant impact on China's perceptions of the US. This incident reinforced China's conviction that American global influence must be balanced and occasional operation of nationalism is benefited to the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist rule.[34]

Obviously, a rising China threatens the preeminent role of the US in East Asia, and the

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[31] Thomas J. Christensen. "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and US Policy toward East Asia," *International Security* Vol. 31, No. 1 (2006), pp. 101-105.

[32] For relevant analyses, see 周志杰（Chih-Chieh Chou），〈因應東北亞地緣權力互動的新形勢：現狀的認知、界定與浮動〉，《亞洲新情勢及因應對策：台日論壇 2005 年東京會議論文集》，（台北：中華歐亞基金會；東京：日本世界和平研究所，2006），頁 423-456。

[33] Fei-Ling Wang, "Self-Image and Strategic Intentions: National Confidence and Political Insecurity," in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang (eds.), *In the Eyes of the Dragon* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), p. 38.

[34] Harry Harding, "China: Think Again!" *PactNet* (Pacific Forum CSIS) No. 17, April 5, 2007; Paul Bowles, "Asia's Post-crisis Regionalism: Bringing the State Back In, Keeping the (United) States Out," *Review of International Political Economy* Vol. 9, No.2 (2002), pp. 255-257.

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American leading role, for a long term, has permitted the US to help shape regional politics in ways that directly serve US interests. During the Clinton administration, the policy toward China was one of "strategic engagement." The Americans argued that engaging China and gradually incorporating it into the international system through membership in the World Trade Organization and other international bodies would socialize China into accepting the basic norms of international conduct. The basic strategy was one of "entangling" China in alliances and structures, thereby moderating its behavior over the long term. However, the first term of the G.W. Bush administration is inclined to see China as a "strategic competitor."[35] It is the only single country that, in the foreseeable future, could emerge to challenge the US' economic domination of the world, and this economic power could eventually become military power.[36] Following this approach, the G.W. Bush administration has also gone out of its way to antagonize China, particularly in its handling of US relations with Taiwan and its pursuit of NMD.

Nevertheless, there are many reasons to argue that interpretations of China's future intentions which depict China as a hegemon-in-waiting are premature. It is worrying that China insists that its sovereignty over disputed areas is indisputable, and it is this attitude that feeds much of the regional uncertainty around China's intentions. However, in most other respects, the evidence supporting the argument that China is a long-term regional threat is ambivalent. China itself announces that it is following a "good neighbor" policy in its regional relations and insisting the "peaceful rising" path towards a modern state.[37] China's top priority is its own economic development. For the foreseeable future, that goal requires that China have a peaceful, stable, and economically prosperous regional environment in which to develop. It is not in China's interest to antagonize its neighbors, on whom it depends for investment and technology, or to create an environment of political instability.

China's defense spending is also well within the limits of rationality. China is upgrading its military because it neglected its military throughout much of the 1970s and early 1980s. It is modernizing its forces, and re-examining its strategic doctrines to deal with the modern era. China is still at least one to two decades removed from being able to build

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[35] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2002*, op. cit.

[36] Christensen, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

[37] "Prospects on the Incoming Decade," *Xinhua News Agency*, May 4, 2005.



its own aircraft carrier. Thus, despite the size of its military, China's technical abilities remain undeveloped. In addition to these factors, China has faced a dilemma. On the one hand, China has to sustain economic development in order to offset the social and political instabilities. On the other hand, socio-political problems are the product of its rapid economic development. Moreover, China has become more restrained in response to American actions, even though some of those actions have been highly provocative. For example, the Bush administration has significantly increased US military interaction with Taiwan, including selling Taiwan the largest weapons package in Taiwanese history, strengthening its diplomatic commitment to Taiwan's defense.[38] China has objected to these developments, but in much more muted terms than has been the case in the past. China also support the US in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and has been rewarded by the American government which listed specific Islamic separatist groups in China's Xinjiang province as "terrorists."[39] Taking all of these factors into account, it is difficult to argue that China is an imminent threat to East Asia.[40]

Therefore, President Bush, since his second term, was gradually aware of China's irreplaceable status in cooperating with the US on issues as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, energy, and other transnational problems, if China keeps its promise of peaceful development.[41] The Bush Administration has adjusted its Chins policy to "return back to the normal track" through building a newly ambiguous concept of "stakeholder," rather than the existed "partner" or "competitor." [42] Accompanying with the radical growth and development of national economy, China became increasingly aware of the need for a multilateral cooperation regime in Asia Pacific so as to mitigate anxiety about the country's military build-up and economic rise, and at the same time, to check Japanese efforts on

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[38] See Chen-Shui Tsai, "The Structure of the Cross-Strait Relation" Taipei: *Issues & Studies* Vol. 42, No. 1 (2003), pp. 52-79.

[39] Soeya, et.al., op. cit., pp. 2-4.

[40] For further discussions, please see David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," *International Security* Vol.29, No. 3 (2004), pp. 64-99.

[41] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2006* (Washington, D.C.: US State Department), p.41. http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006.

[42] Ibid., the report addresses: "As China becomes a global player, it must act as a responsible stakeholder that fulfills its obligations and works with the United States and others to advance the international system that has enabled its success: enforcing the international rules that have helped China lift itself out of a century of economic deprivation, embracing the economic and political standards that go along with that system of rules, and contributing to international stability and security by working with the United States and other major powers."



remilitarization and strategy at sustaining leading status in economic integration.[43] Accordingly, China has adopted a more flexible approach to resolving relevant trade and economic issues in the region through bilateral negotiation through signature of FTA with, say, the ASEAN, and has actively participated in community building like the APT.

To sum up, Washington's attitude has shifted toward China in the past two years, simply cause the US gradually acknowledge that China's economic interdependence with East Asian countries and the rest of the world is likely to prevent Beijing from military action unless major national interests are jeopardized. For example, considering the China-Taiwan rivalry, the current US policy is more likely to take China's point that Taiwan is the one who "shanks the boat" to unilaterally change the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, the need for US to treat China as a strategic partner on some regional and global issues is also well taken by decision makers in Washington.[44] As China rises to the position of a major power in East Asia, Beijing is competing with Washington and Tokyo, the traditional regional powers, for dominance. However, the key task for the US and Japan is not "Beijing will use its military power to attack other countries, but rather that it will use its growing resources to shift the overall balance of power in China's favor."[45]

V. JAPAN'S ROLE IN THE STRATEGIC TRIANGLE

Japan occupies a precarious role in the strategic triangle that exists between itself, the US, and China. On the one hand, Japan is the major Asian economic power, despite its ongoing economic difficulties. It does aspire to be a regional leader. On the other hand, its ability to be a regional leader is compromised by a number of factors, including its own ambivalence toward leadership, its status as the "junior partner" in a security relationship with the US, and the fact that many regional states remain suspicious of Japan. All of these factors are connected in complex ways that are beyond the immediate scope of this discussion. For our purposes, it is most important to note that Japan's relations with China remain strained due to historical and strategic considerations.

History remains the single greatest factor overshadowing Japan's relations with East

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[43] Alastair Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?," *International Security* Vol. 27, No. 4 (2003), pp. 5-56.
[44] David Shambaugh, op. cit., pp. 89, 93.
[45] Harry Harding , "China: Think Again!" op. cit.

Asia. The general perception in Asia is that Japan has never adequately apologized for the atrocities it committed against other Asian nations during its imperial period (1895-1945), and has never accepted responsibility for its actions. These views are particularly strongly held in China, which suffered the most under Japanese aggression. The failure to resolve these historical tensions has meant that other regional states are often suspicious of Japanese intentions. To be a regional leader, Japan must convince its neighbors that it has come to terms with its history.

Japan's domestic political forces are producing governments more beholden to the Japanese political right wing, which rejects the notion of Japanese war guilt. Within Japan, younger political leaders and domestic constituencies are impatient with Chinese demands for Japanese contrition for the imperial period. Historical textbooks for Japanese schools remain an issue of contention between Japan and its immediate neighbors. Recently, China and South Korea protested Japanese historical textbooks that, they argued, misrepresent Japanese actions during its colonial period.[46] The former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine for few times, despite the protests of Japan's neighbors.[47] It perhaps indicates a desire to make the Yasukuni pilgrimage a regular event.[48] The popularity of nationalist politicians is increasing in Japan. Shintaro Ishihara, the Governor of Tokyo, is fast emerging as the most popular politician in Japan. Ishihara is a strong Japanese nationalist, who advocates establishing Japan as a power independent of American influence, and regards China as a threat to regional security that is using Japanese development assistance to build up its own military.[49]

Japan has undertaken a slow process of military reform. For many years, Japanese politicians have asserted their desire that Japan become a "normal" country, allowing it to possess a military commensurate to its; political/economic status and the right to enter security alliances. These associations are forbidden to Japan under Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which, ostensibly, prevents Japan from operating a military. In practice, this

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[46] BBC News Online, "Anger Deepens in History Book Row," July 10, 2004. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/1429989.stm

[47] BBC News Online, "Protests Mount Over Koimmi's Shrine Visit," August 14, 2002. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/1491091.stm.

[48] James Pryzstup, "Smoother Sailing across Occasional Rough Seas," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2002), pp.2-4. http://www.csis.org/pacfor/ccejournal.html.

[49] Lan Shuan, "Japan's Rising Son," Taipei: *China Times*, July 22, 2001, p. A5.

Article has proven remarkably easy to bypass; Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF) is the second best-funded military in the world. Calls to reform Article 9 have been growing in volume, especially as Japan has come under pressure from successive American administrations to play a larger (but subordinate to the US) role in regional security. During the first Gulf War of 1991, the US criticized Japan for not doing enough to assist in the war effort. Japan responded by increasing its involvement in peacekeeping and loosening some of the restrictions placed on its military. In 1997, the US and Japan redefined their Mutual Security Treaty, with Japan agreeing to take on more security responsibilities in the Asia Pacific, despite objections to this development from China. Through these and other incremental measures, Japan has slowly pushed back the legal and political envelopes constraining its military activities.[50]

Japan responded to the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US by further revising its rules of military engagement. The Japanese Diet passed legislative measures allowing Japan to send warships to the Indian Ocean to support the American attack on Afghanistan. The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, passed in the Diet on October29, 2001, commits Japan to assisting the international community in the eradication of terrorism. The law limits Japan to logistical support for the "war" effort, but it is an important symbolic milestone on the road to a redefined Japanese military posture. The law is rooted in Japan's commitments to the United Nations Charter and resolutions. Therefore, it sidesteps the problems of trying to reconcile it with Article 9.

Most alarmingly, Japanese political figures have begun to talk openly about the possibility of Japan becoming a nuclear power. This subject was first raised in April, 2002, by opposition politician Ichiro Ozawa, who boasted that Japan could easily produce thousands of nuclear warheads. Said Omwa: "[I]f we get serious, we will never be beaten in terms of military power."[51] Significantly, Ozawa made his comments in relation to Japanese concerns with China's military. In May, 2002, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said there was a chance that Japan would renounce its "three principles" on nuclear weapons, which prohibit Japan from possessing or producing nuclear weapons, or allowing them onto

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[50] Bin Yu, "China and Its Asian Neighbors: Implication for Sino-US Relations," in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang (eds.), *In the Eyes of the Dragon* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), pp. 200-203; Thomas J. Christensen, "China, The U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* Vol. 23, No. 4 (1999), pp. 52-69.

[51] Geoffrey York, "A Hero's Fall from Grace," Tokyo: *Japan Times*, June 3, 2004, p. A4.

its soil. This reevaluation is part of the general debate within Japan over the utility of Article 9. Fukuda also suggested that Japan could acquire intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) simply by broadening its interpretation of self-defense rather than altering the constitution. Prime Minister Koizumi immediately insisted that Japan would continue to respect its three principles and had no intention of acquiring a nuclear arsenal, and Fukuda later retracted his comments. Regional states, including South Korea, Russia, and China condemned the idea of Japanese nuclear weapons. However, some analysts have argued that there was "nothing new in (Fukuda's) comment aside from the fact it was made public."[52] Japan is recognizing its need to take greater responsibility for its own security in a volatile region. Reforming the constitution to allow Japan to undertake a stronger military role in the world may be a long-term prospect, but the process certainly seems to be underway.

There is continuing wariness of Japan across East Asia. Southeast Asia's experience of Japanese imperialism was shorter and somewhat less brutal than that of other East Asian states. Thus, despite the lingering historical issues, Southeast Asia would eventually accede to Japanese leadership if Japan displayed a genuine commitment to pursuing this goal. With China and the two Koreas, however, historical wounds and popular antipathy to Japan go far deeper than in Southeast Asia, and are easily aggravated.[53] The more Japan moves toward becoming an active military power, the more the chances that these tensions will become the source of political contention.

The tension between the two countries is getting serious since the Shinzo Abe took the position of Japanese prime minister in 2006. Even though Abe has publicly recognized the need for improved relations with China while he visited Beijing right after he took the position. However, he visited Yasukuni Shrine in August 2006 as former Prime Minister Koizumi has in the past, and both Abe and Japanese foreign minister Taro Aso have stated that any visits to Yasukuni are a domestic matter.[54] Moreover, Abe declaimed that the so-called "comfort women" during World War II was not forced to be drafted by the Japanese Imperial Army to provide sexual service. China expressed protest over the two matters. Abe also seeks to revise or broaden the interpretation of Article 9 of Japanese non-war

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[52] David Krunger, "Never Say Nuclear," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 4, 2004.

[53] Gilbert Rozman, "China's Changing Images of Japan, 1989-2001: the Struggle to Balance Partnership and Rivalry," *International Relations of the Asia Pacific* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2002), pp. 103-104.

[54] "Abe Visited Yasukuni in Mid-April," *Daily Yomiuri Online*, April 20, 2006.

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constitution in order to permit Japan to remilitarization. All this rightist-wing acts deepen the Japan-China rivalry, plus Chinese concern over potential Japanese military resurgence, and controversy regarding Japan's relations with Taiwan. Furthermore, China and Japan are both courting ASEAN states. Their recent competition for leadership in the institutionalism of APT and the negotiation of FTA may be signs of an emerging Sino-Japanese positional rivalry over the region. The China-Japan interstate relations may eventually emerge as a rivalry in strategic level.

Conversely, Abe promotes "assertive diplomacy" that Japan should take toward establishing an international order in Asia while strengthening its alliance with the US. Abe told the visiting US Vice President Dick Cheney that "Japan and the U.S. form an indispensable alliance for the benefit of Asia and the world. The alliance is now much more than a bilateral security treaty and has wider implications for Asia and the world."[55] For Abe's conservative administrations, relations with the US have been the keystone of their diplomacy. The US has played a primary role in maintaining Japan's economically leading role in East and Japan's emergence as a major international player. Japan's redirection on foreign policy might keep in line with US interest, either in the Six-Party Talk over North Korea issue or in dealing with China.

It also appears that the new policy "is likely to make coordination with the US easier and allow Tokyo to focus its efforts to compete with China for influence [in Southeast Asia]."[56] However, Japan's willingness of increasing its political role in the region depends on a clearly and irrevocably determination to cut its ties to its imperialist past and its improving sensitivity to the feelings of Asians. As for Japan, growing its role in the region requires not just an ability to contribute, but also the confidence of other states to accept its contribution. It is better for Japan to explain plans for its US ties and its defense forces to Asian neighbors and listen carefully to their feedback. Japan has been frequently considered to be different from the rest of Asia, not just in terms of its economic advancement but also in its outlook. Japan might re-balance its priorities between looking to the US and being fully a part of East Asia.

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[55] Keizo Nabeshima, "To Move without U.S. Cues," *Japan Times*, March 5, 2007.

[56] David Fouse, "Japan's New 'Values-Oriented Diplomacy': A Double Edged Sword," *PactNet* (Pacific Forum CSIS) No.12A, March 16, 2007.

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VI. TRIANGULAR INTERPLAYS, ASEAN AND REGIONALISM

6.1 China's View to the Region and Washington-Tokyo's Concern

China is willing to be a regional leader, though it is prepared to bide its time and let its strength build gradually. If China is willing to lead East Asia, however, it is not clear that its neighbors are willing to follow. Regional states remain uncertain of how to deal with China. China's unclear intentions in regard to Taiwan, military building, and territorial disputes in South China Sea have contributed to regional fears that an economically successful China will aspire to local hegemony. However, China's recent approach to ASEAN and the Southeast Asian governments seemed to fit well with ASEAN supported principles emphasizing dialogue, inclusiveness, and patience, with decisions resting on a gradual process that is comfortable for all concerned parties and that respected the primacy of noninterference in internal affairs and agreement by consensus.[57] These priorities fit well with China's emphasis on the direction of foreign policy -- "peaceful rise."

China's efforts to assuage the fears of its neighbors by adopting a foreign policy approach that is active, non-threatening, and generally aligned with the economic and security interests of the region is clearly making headway.[58] The substance underlying the positive diplomacy is most notable in the trade realm, where China is rapidly emerging as an engine of regional economic growth and integration that may well challenge Japanese and American dominance in the next three to five years. China's role as an important source of FDI for the region and player in regional currency schemes is also likely to grow rapidly.[59] During the Asian economic crisis, China's decision not to devalue its currency, the yuan, won it praise from the international community for being a responsible regional leader.[60] More recently, China has directly addressed the fears of Southeast Asian countries

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[57] David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," *International Security* Vol. 29, No. 3 (2004-2005), pp. 72-74.

[58] Evelyn Goh, "China and Southeast Asia," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, December 12, 2006. http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/3780.

[59] John Ravenhill, "Is China an Economic Threat to Southeast Asia?" *Asian Survey* Vol. 46, No. 5 (2006), pp. 653-674.

[60] Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," p. 68.

concerned about competition from China for foreign direct investment and in trade by agreeing to form a China-ASEAN free trade arrangement (FTA). This ASEAN Plus One became the base for the emerging center of regionalism, the APT. China has also specifically encouraged Chinese business to invest in Southeast Asian states. China is attempting to allay regional fears by becoming an engine of regional growth.

In the security realm, China's diplomacy, while likely rhetorically appealing to regional actors, has yet to make significant inroads in a regional security structure dominated by the US and its bilateral security relationships. Moreover, while China has signed a declaration of conduct governing the South China Sea, how the region moves forward to develop the resources of the Sea will depend significantly on the actual measures that China takes to ensure that ventures are cooperative and equally developed. Still, if anti-American sentiment within the region continues to grow, China may find more room to maneuver as it attempts to develop a regional security architecture that minimizes American influence.

However, China has also displayed considerable diplomatic skill to the security issue. It has addressed the issue of South China Sea outside the ARF, agreeing in November 2002 to an ASEAN-sponsored, non-binding code of conduct for regional states in the Islands.[61] This move mitigated regional tensions on the issue without compromising China's claims. China argues that its economic success can act to buoy the economies of its smaller neighbors rather than undercut them. While it is not clear that this strategy can work, China's awareness of its neighbors' concerns, and its willingness to address these problems, says much about its political acumen.[62] The basic dynamic of China's approach has been to identify its regional security outlook more closely with that of other regional actors. For example, in October 2003, China signed on to ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the essence of which is a set of commitments to respect the ideals of sovereignty and non-interference in others' internal affairs, and to settle disputes peacefully.[63]

In terms of the community building, nevertheless, the question is how active China should be in promoting its values and priorities that seemed generally in line with the so-

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[61] Acharya, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

[62] Lyall Breckon, "Former Tigers under the Dragon's Spell," *Comparative Connections* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2002), pp. 2-3. http://www.csis.org/pacfor/ccejournal.html

[63] Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," p. 88.

called ASEAN way toward regionalism, which considering the ASEAN is the center for any initiatives and efforts on regional community building. Part of the problem was said to be pressures the Chinese leadership was feeling from the US, Japan and the ASEAN itself. They require China to do more to abide by international norms. The Chinese leaders wanted to be seen as a responsible actor in regional affairs while China pursued its growing economic and other interests in Southeast Asia. Some argue that Beijing sought closer cooperation and partnership with the U.S. in dealing with Southeast Asian development.[64] Japan seemed to be placed in a different category. China's rise in Southeast Asia was undermining Japan's position in the region and that the two powers were showing signs of rivalry in trying to influence in the APT.

But some assess that China's rise in East Asia reflects the emergence of a China-centric order and the decline of US influence.[65] While acknowledging the advances in Chinese economic and diplomatic relations with the region, ASEAN's economic ties to the US, Japan, and the European Union in sum "far outweigh" those of China. China's rapidly growing trade will soon surpass that of the US and ASEAN's leading trading partner, The U.S., Japan, and other powers are seen as playing catch up in response to recent Chinese initiatives in Southeast Asia and regionalism. These powers' efforts are encouraged by regional governments that seek to create a "hub and spoke" system of multiple ASEAN Plus One connections in which both Washington and Beijing are important in a regional distribution of power that can promote the interests of China, the US, and ASEAN. Moreover, China's current restraint is based on a clear-headed recognition of its own relative weakness in comparison to the US and Japan. China is following the advice of Deng Xiaoping, who instructed Chinese leaders to bide their time. China needs the economic support and political goodwill of the US and Japan, if it is to eventually emerge as a global power. It will not threaten its own development by provoking unnecessary and unwinnable conflicts with its major rivals.[66]

Despite its less confrontational stance, it is important not to mistake China's restraint

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[64] Ibid., p. 68; Harding, "China: Think Again!" op. cit.

[65] For further discussions, see Desker, op. cit.; Kang "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," op. cit; Kang, "Hierarchy, Balancing, and Empirical Puzzles in Asian International Relations," op. cit.

[66] Peter Van Ness, "Hegemony, Not Anarchy: Why China and Japan Are Not Balancing US Unipolar Power," *International Relation of the Asia Pacific*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2002), pp. 139-143.



as a fundamental shift in outlook. There are outstanding issues between the US and China that have the potential to fundamentally undermine China's security.[67] Chinese practices show that despite declarations to the contrary, China could seek dominance in Southeast Asia that marginalizes the US and neutralizes Japan, once China consolidated its powerful status in the region. As Harding points out, "the rise of Chinese power...will deter China's neighbors from threatening its core interests."[68] The challenge for the US policy is to come up with a comprehensive security strategy that deals with China's challenges on leading community building in the region, US approach on China that continues cooperation while broadening a variety of hedging initiatives to preserve and strengthen the US position in Southeast Asia in the face of China's rise.

6.2 Japan and China: Competing with the Leading Status in the Region

There are many examples of China and Japan competing for regional influence. China's FTA discussions with ASEAN prompted Japan to pursue its own ASEAN FTA. The rivalry is particularly obvious in the efforts of both China and Japan to blame each other for causing or exacerbating the Asian crisis. Japan was deeply upset over interpretations of the Asian economic crisis advanced by Western commentators that pinned much of the blame for the crisis on the failures of the Japanese economy while praising China for its constructive role during the crisis and its decision not to devalue the yuan. Japan responded to these criticisms by arguing that China's undercutting of Southeast Asian goods in world markets laid the foundations for the decline in trade that made the crisis possible. In this way, Japan was trying to counteract China's regional influence. The Japanese are also deeply concerned about the possibility of China eclipsing Japanese economic power and causing a "hollowing out" of the Japanese economy.[69]

With Chinese and Japanese leadership, the region has moved forward to develop a range of regionally-based currency arrangements that exclude the US. Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are exchanging data on short-term capital flows. The regional economies are attempting to establish an early warning system that would involve monitoring balance of payments, exchange rate regimes, and levels of foreign

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[67] Marvin Ott, *Strategic Forum* (US National Defense University) No. 222 (October 2006).

[68] Harry Harding, "China: Think Again!"

[69] James Brooke, "Tokyo Fear China May Put an End to 'Made in Japan,'" *New York Times*, November 20, 2001, p. A3.

borrowing.[70] At the same time, the Chiang Mai Initiative, launched in 1999, as contributed to a flurry of bilateral swaps, worth $17 billion dollars. Despite objections by the IMF and the US, in June, 2003, "China and 10 other Asia-Pacific countries, including five ASEAN members, agreed...to establish an Asian Bond Fund worth more than $1 billion" to help "bail out economies in crisis." This was followed by a second bond fund initiative announced in December 2004 for an additional $2 billion fund to invest in Asian currency-denominated government bonds.[71]

Considering Sino-Japanese interactions, mutual economic tie does not mean China has forgotten its grievances against Japan. China reacted strongly to Koizumi's surprise second visit to the Yasukuni Shrine by postponing a scheduled visit of the Japanese Defense Minister and delaying a visit to Japan by Chinese naval vessels.[72] In April 2005, the atmosphere of hostility between China and Japan has sharply increased. Simmering tensions came to a boiling point when a series of sometimes violent anti-Japanese rallies broke out in major Chinese cities, damaging the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and consulates elsewhere. Conservative politicians and nationalist groups on both sides have exerted considerable pressure for more assertive foreign policies. As a result, there have been no state visits between the two since October 2001. As a result of Koizumi's controversial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, President Hu has refused to schedule a summit meeting. As mentioned above, moreover, Sino-Japan relationship is less likely to improve during the Abe Administration.

Ironically, the rivalry between China and Japan also has served as a catalyst for the proliferation of preferential agreements in East Asia. In response to the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA) signed in October 2001, China signed a surprise agreement in 2003 with the ten ASEAN countries pledging free trade by 2010. Challenged to do the same and to demonstrate its continued leadership role, Japan began negotiating its own FTA with ASEAN. Moreover, Japan and South Korea have been negotiating a bilateral FTA since December 2003, while a China-South Korea FTA is being jointly studied.[73] Furthermore, the two countries' competition within the multilateral APT system is as the

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[70] Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

[71] "Asia Pacific Central Banks to Launch New Fund for Regional Bond." *Japan Economic Newswire*, December 16, 2004.

[72] Desker, op. cit.; Pryzstup op. cit., p. 3.

[73] See Aggarwal and Koo, op. cit.



same as bilateral FTA agreements. Such developments strengthen the sense of an Asia for Asians, and an Asia that does not necessarily involve the US. While Japan has played a leadership role in developing these new currency arrangements, China will likely become an increasingly important force. As China takes steps to make its currency convertible, it may well emerge as the dominant regional currency. According to one analysis, Japan's banking and debt crisis makes the yen less suitable as a vehicle for wider Asian monetary integration and the US dollar may not retain its dominance in a trade regime dominated by links with China.[74]

The reality, then, is that China is assuming a leadership role in the regional economy and aggressively pursuing an ASEAN Plus one (China) free trade agreement. However, Japan remains the predominant source of investment, retains a larger trade relationship, and drives the currency negotiations within the region. The US continues to be the region's most important trading partner, but the stagnant trade suggests that the US may be finding other markets, such as China, more attractive; unless greater attention is paid to contributing to Southeast Asia's continued economic growth, the US will rapidly lose its stature as the region's key trading partner. There are signs of Japan-China tension over the future leadership of the region. The renewed US-Japan alliance is not only aimed at dealing with North Korea or global issues in general. They see it as aiming to contain China's rise and increasing influence. If tensions rise in the China-Japan-US triangle, the region will feel the impacts.

6.3 US-Japan Gap between Regional Security and Economic Cooperation

During the Cold War era, the US provides the fundamental framework of security for the region as a whole. This is carried out through its longstanding alliance with Japan. It has been upgraded since the end of the cold war, but US-Japan alliance is subject to stresses and strains that could weaken the effectiveness of the system as a whole. Accompanying with China's rise and radical dynamic of regional economic interdependence, Washington's and Tokyo's concerns sometimes are more likely to diverge in economic regionalism. In the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, many states in the region saw US pressure behind APEC's very slow to reaction to the crisis. At the November 1997 APEC summit meeting,

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[74] Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 11-12.



US President Bill Clinton described the Thai and Malaysian currency crises as "a few small glitches in the road."[75] But America's initial nonchalance appeared to backfire almost immediately, as the crisis spread beyond Thailand and Malaysia. In response, Japan took the lead in September 1997 with a proposal for an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF), to be backed by US$100 billion that it had lined up in commitments in the region. However, the IMF, supported by the US and European countries, resisted any effort to find an "Asian" solution to the crisis. In particular, the US viewed such a fund as undercutting its preferred approach using IMF loans accompanied by strict conditionalities.[76] Under growing US pressure, APEC members, who gathered for a summit meeting in Vancouver in November 1997, chose to take only a secondary role, if necessary, to supplement IMF resources on a standby basis without any formal commitment of funds. With the APEC action providing a seal of approval for the US-IMF backed plan, the idea of establishing an AMF was put on hold.

More importantly, Japan concluded its first post-World War II bilateral FTA with Singapore. The resultant JSEPA sparked region-wide interest in FTAs, thus undermining East Asia's traditional commitment to the WTO. Thus, the increasing interaction between Northeast and Southeast Asian countries also fostered the creation of an APT forum in November 1997 and promoted an East Asian identity, particularly in the context of the failure of the US-led APEC to take any significant initiatives in resolving the financial crisis.[77] It is obviously not in line with US policy in bolstering an institutionalizing APEC and opposing any other regional structures without participation of the US.

Alliance difficulties are also evident in the case of security issue. Japan has occupied an ambiguous security position between China and the US. Japan has been a strong American ally; however, it has maintained the illusion that it might not participate in any conflict between the US and China over Taiwan. This political fiction, already challenged by the 1997 revisions of the US-Japan MST, may no longer be sustainable as Japan begins to participate in American efforts to create a nuclear missile defense (NMD) shield.[78] The

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[75] *The New York Times* (July 5, 1998), p. A1.

[76] Jennifer Amyx, "Japan and the Evolution of Regional Financial Arrangements in East Asia," in Ellis Krauss and T. J. Pempel (eds.) *Beyond Bilateralism: US-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[77] Aggarwal and Koo, op. cit., pp. 210-216.

[78] Qingxin Ken Wang, "Taiwan in Japan's Relations with China and the United States after the Cold War," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (2000), p. 367.



public opinion manifests themselves in opposition to the terms by which American forces are located at particular bases (notably Okinawa), but also in opinion polls which register a majority in support of withdrawing the contingent of Self Defense Forces from Iraq.

No doubt, there is less of an immediate problem as the government has decided to pursue the course of strengthening its military capabilities by deepening its alliance with the US.[79] Nevertheless, in contrast to the cold war period, Japan no longer enjoys American backing in dealing with Russia and it is doubtful how much active support it would receive from the US in the event of hostilities with China or South Korea over disputed islands or maritime claims. In fact, there is greater evidence of Japanese official support for America's global strategic concerns than there is of American support for Japan's own parochial security problems. There is doubt as to how far there would be a willingness to come to American aid in the event of conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

This is not to suggest that the Washington-Tokyo partnership are about to crumble. But the partnership requires careful management if it are to be sustained in the longer term. If it argues that the American strategic presence in the region has continued to provide a sufficient degree of stability to allow the region to prosper and to accommodate China's rise, then a disruption of the US-Japan alliance would be damaging and the current strains and tensions would be to increase uncertainty would also increase. That would not bode well for the conditions that have facilitated the phenomenal economic growth and currently promote community building of the region.

6.4 ASEAN's Response to the Great Rivalries

The ASEAN states have come to recognize the potential of using regionalism as a means to constrain the potentially disruptive effects of unequal power. As Hurrell pointed out, while the existence of a powerful hegemon within a region may undermine efforts to construct inclusive regional arrangements, experience also shows that the existence of a powerful hegemon in the region may act as a powerful stimulus to regionalism, for instance, the creation of the European Community in the effort to restrict Germany.[80] Hence, in early

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[79] Simon S. C. Tay, "Aim for lasting ties, Japan," *Today* (Singapore: SIIA), 07 July 2006.

[80] Andrew Hurrell, "Regionalism in theoretical perspective," in Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.) ***Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order.*** (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 41.

and mid 1990s before the Asian crisis, an increasingly confident ASEAN took on new initiatives such as the formation of ARF, the launch of ASEM to engage China in multilateral frameworks. Unfortunately, the economic crisis and the rise of radical political Islam have impacted negatively on ASEAN's confidence and unity and its capacity to act.

Moreover, in many respects, Southeast Asian leaders appear eager to maintain an identity independent of China, Japan, and the United States. While western analysts sometimes dismiss ASEAN as primarily a forum for discussion, officials from member states repeatedly indicate that ASEAN offers them an opportunity to negotiate on more equal footing with the potential regional hegemons.[81] During the Cold War, ASEAN was clearly identified with the West although nominally nonaligned. Today, as sophisticated Chinese diplomacy leads to the establishment of multiple regional organizations, ASEAN is developing closer linkages with China. These relationships are perceived as a balance against US strategic dominance.[82] Some of the newer members of ASEAN such as Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia have benefited from Chinese largesse and are supportive of Chinese concerns within ASEAN. Older members such as Malaysia and Thailand are beginning to bandwagon with China. However, some members feel China as presenting a huge challenge to Southeast Asia, such as the Vietnamese and the Indonesians is that there is need to move quickly to integrate ASEAN so that Southeast Asia will not be completely overshadowed by Northeast Asia.[83]

Indeed, there is continued reluctance of several Southeast Asians to fold themselves into a larger East Asia where they might be overshadowed by China or Japan. For both historical reasons and inherent structural disparities, the ASEAN countries would remain a little uneasy with regional arrangements dominated by either Japan or China. In the security realm, for ASEAN states that prefer a regional balance of power, a regional security architecture that is outward-looking and promotes the observance of international norms and codes of conduct is preferable to one dominated by a single power. An active US presence enables this vision of the region's future to be sustained.

Therefore, the US has enjoyed its status in East Asia because regional states viewed it as an outside power without direct interests in the region. The 9/11 terrorist attack on the US

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[81] Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," op. cit., pp. 165-180.

[82] Goh, op. cit., p. 3.

[83] Ibid.



altered that equation. Southeast Asia has become one of the most active new battlegrounds in the "war on terrorism."[84] The US is assisting the government of the Philippines against Abu Sayyaf, an Islamic resistance group based in Mindanao. The US is also interested in Islamic resistance in Indonesia and the presence of Islamic fundamentalists in Malaysia. While the Philippines have welcomed American involvement, Indonesia and Malaysia have been less receptive to American overtures. The more active American security role in the region, combined with American mishandling of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is fuelling perceptions in the Islamic world that the war on terrorism is a war against Islam. However, as a significant regional institution with a forum for security dialogue besides ARF, the ASEAN is a container in bringing together East Asian states to address common concerns. The US proposed a new US-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership to decrease suspicion resulted from Bush's offensive anti-terror strategy.[85] Moreover, US continue to promote democratic building or democratic reforms in the region. Considering the development of regionalism, the US tends to consolidate "bilateral relations with key states," rather than institutionalize the existed APEC forum.[86]

Actually, in terms of economic cooperation, the ASEAN countries share the similar perception and it can be traced back to the establishment of the WTO. The WTO-based effort to promote multilateral trade liberalization has increasingly encountered problems. This trend began in 1999 when WTO participants in Seattle unsuccessfully attempted to launch a new trade round. Furthermore, APEC failed to provide an alternative forum to deal with trade issues. For instance, in 1996 in Manila, the US pressed to use APEC to leverage trade liberalization in the WTO. Specifically, the US sought to push negotiations forward on a scheme called Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization (EVSL), a package deal that covered nine economic sectors. This strategy initially appeared viable, but quickly ran into difficulties. At the Leaders' Summit in Kuala Lumpur in November 1998, Japan - with support from other East Asian countries - refused to liberalize trade in fishing and forestry products and the EVSL package was deferred to the WTO for further debate. With deep distrust of the IMF and doubts about the route to trade liberalization through the WTO and APEC, East Asian countries came to recognize that greater institutionalization of

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[84] Sheldon Simon, "The War on Terrorism: Collaboration and Hesitation," *Comparative Connections* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2002), pp. 1-8, online at http://www.csis.org/pacfor/.

[85] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2006*, p. 40.

[86] Ibid, p. 41.

intraregional financial and commercial ties might offer a better mechanism for providing economic security. They quickly turned to weaving a web of currency swap agreements and bilateral/multilateral FTAs within the APT processes.

To sum up, on the one hand, the financial crisis of 1997-1998 had the salutary effect of stimulating new thinking on the part of East Asians with regards to regionalism. The crisis demonstrated clearly the interdependencies in the region. Hence, the region will continue to feel relatively comfortable with China's rise if Beijing continues its policy of benignity and mutual benefit but only if ASEAN's strategy of diversification continues to work. On the other hand, the ASEAN states is less likely to lean to any sides among China, the US, and Japan. Thus "the region engages China [and Japan] politically and economically. At the same time, it buys a strategic insurance policy mainly by facilitating US forward military deployment in the region to deter Chinese possible aggression."[87] Under the great rivalry, a consolidated ASEAN can serve a core of the East Asian regionalism and enhance bargaining power against the regional powers through the APT and other regional initiatives and processes. It benefits to the ASEAN rather than regional community building.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS: CONTINUOUS RIVALRIES AND FURTHER COOPERATION

7.1 Continuity of Great Rivalries and ASEAN's Tasks

The picture of East Asia that has been painted above indicates that great power tensions in the region - while they should not be exaggerated - are significant enough to make it highly unlikely that regional states will be able to create strong multilateral institutions in the short term. The creation of truly effective regional institutions in the East Asia - be it in the security, political, or economic realms - requires cooperation among the US, Japan and China as the key regional powers. However, the great rivalries hamper regionalism, simply because they are able to cooperate to a certain point before beginning to compete for influence.

In the security front, Beijing-Tokyo relationship is further complicated by the role of

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[87] Goh, op. cit., p. 4.



the US. It further agitates mutual suspicion among the three powers. Japan's deference to the US, particularly in security matters, means that Japan can be expected to block China's efforts at building regional influence, both for its own reasons and as a faithful American ally. Japan's willingness to collaborate with the US on projects that could pose a direct threat to important Chinese interests further increases the areas of friction between the major Asian powers. North Korea's nuclear game convinced Japan that it had a vested interest in acquiring ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology. BMD technology will require Japan to be closely integrated into a unified American military command. This development has the potential to radically alter the security relations of East Asia. China has generally acquiesced to an American-dominated international system. However, the development of NMD, and its implications for the Taiwan situation, is a serious attack on China's security. Significantly, the American hegemon has changed the rules of the system in a way that China cannot afford to ignore.[88]

Stemming from the previous analysis, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the security tensions, mutual suspicion and competition between the US, China, and Japan are sufficiently great to preclude the development of effective regional institutionalism in East Asia, at least for now. The US and Japan are, over the long term, arrayed against China's efforts to expand its political and economic influence in East Asia. Competition between the great powers, however, does not automatically mean that they can divide the East Asian region into spheres of influence. The ASEAN do have their own interests and may be able to work the competitive pressures to their own advantage. The ASEAN may also be able to play the great powers off against each other. This is particularly the case with Japan and China, both of which continue to try to win regional allies through traditional diplomatic and economic means as analyzed above. As analyzed above, the ASEAN states will not simply fall into line behind one or the other of the major powers.[89] In other words, the concern of ASEAN countries within the APT framework about possible dominance by China or Japan has led to an approach where ASEAN seeks to "play" one big power against the other. Japan's response to China's offer to ASEAN of an FTA was to offer a similar Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement with ASEAN, a typically knee jerk response after several years of dismissing the need for an ASEAN-Japan FTA.

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[88] Van Ness, 2002, pp. 143-146.

[89] Also see Breslin, op. cit.; Goh, op. cit.; Watanabe, op. cit.; Desker, op. cit.



Indeed, China's rise and activism within the region suggests a larger, longer-term struggle to define the nature of Asian relations. Many of China's initiatives promote a far more integrated Asia than currently exists. Such a future may seem unlikely; simply causing American strategic concerns and Japan's antagonism. Moreover, East Asia marked by disparate geography, languages, political systems, standards of living and degrees of integration with the outside world. In addition, if China and Japan were to assert a collective leadership role, it would necessitate a far more cooperative relationship between the two countries than is the case today. Furthermore, unlike in the case of European integration, there is no single, agreed-upon threat in Asia. Southeast Asian leaders appear torn between their long-term concerns over a bullying US, a hegemonic China and a resurgent Japan; as Muthaih Alagappa has argued, "the primary purpose of the state-centered regional security order in Asia is to consolidate the nation-state, enhance its international power and influence, and create a safe and predictable environment."[90]

7.2 Impacts on the APT Process and Regionalism

The leading norms within the APT framework are about autonomy (principle of non-interference in each other's affairs), security, balance of power and national interests, not of pooled sovereignty, constructing new norms, new institutions and a collective regional identity. While at a rhetorical level, and within some in the policy community, there is a desire to go beyond balance of power to create binding institutions and work towards a collective identity, the road ahead is fraught with obstacles. *US presence in the region is one of those obstacles.* Thus, US remains hostile towards the formation of an exclusive East Asian region, there are signs that its view on a more open regionalism in East Asia is softening. This in part has to do with its general acceptance of regionalism as a new trend in international politics and economics. Several Asian-Pacific scholars such as Drysdale, Elek and Soesastro, have argued that regionalism in East Asia and the Pacific would be guided by three important principles: openness, equality and evolution. Openness required non-discrimination and transparency in trade and economic policy, as well as in diplomatic stance. Equality implied that activities needed to be of mutual benefit to all participants and recognized the rapid transformation in the structure of economic and political power taking

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[90] Muthaih Alagappa, "Constructing Security Order in Asia," in Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 79.



place in the region. And the evolution of the process of regional cooperation recognized the importance to success of a gradual, step-by-step, pragmatic and sustained approach to economic cooperation based on consensus-building and voluntary participation.[18]

Economic linkages, much they have grown, have yet to overcome problems that are at their root, non-economic in nature. East Asian regionalism will thus continue to be constrained by the lack of historical reconciliation between the two big powers, China and Japan, and other political and strategic obstacles. Deeply established regional norms against formal institutionalization will make pooled sovereignty or a more structured community difficult in the foreseeable future. Also, despite their problems, wider Asia-Pacific institutions such as APEC and ARF remain attractive and useful for many East Asian states. In particular, trans-pacific multilateral institutions will retain their comparative advantage in the area of security. e is still no vision and consensus about the content and model of an East Asian community, East Asian cooperation now essentially depends on informal and semi-formal consensus building mechanisms. Institutionalization of deepening economic interdependence is only in its infancy stage. There is still a high degree of reliance on informal modes of cooperation and organization rather than formalized structures and rules. The question is whether such consensus-building is a viable alternative to conventional institution-building. It is still not clear how determined East Asia is in moving beyond informal mechanisms to creating its own formal regional institutions to take the process of East Asian cooperation further.

7.3 Significance of the ASEAN

However, a strong ASEAN united in its purpose to create a zone of peace and prosperity can compensate for this weakness by serving as the driving force for the community and maintaining a balanced approach to mitigate tensions between China and Japan. To do so, ASEAN must be an honest broker and not resort to the classical realist thinking of balancing and playing China against Japan. ASEAN needs to overcome its own narrow self-interested approach towards region-building, and recognize that integrating into a larger Asian bloc is perhaps its best way to compete and survive in an increasingly competitive and uncertain global environment. ASEAN therefore has to work hard not only in maintaining its own unity but also works hard to bring Japan and China together to work for the region.

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Unfortunately, ASEAN has not fully recovered its strength and unity following the havoc wrecked by the Asian financial crisis, and the rush to enlarge the organization to include Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. In fact, ASEAN risks irrelevance if it continues on the trajectory of rhetoric but no real action, long on declarations but short in deeds. As Christofferson argues, tensions between the great powers can actually create a resurgence in the efficacy and appeal of regional institutions in East Asia. This is because the smaller states will find that their bargaining power in dealing with the larger states is greatly enhanced within their collaborative institutions.[91] As mentioned above, most multilateral efforts in the region depend/based on the platform offered by the ASEAN, either APT or ARF. However, it may underestimate the extent to which the ASEAN lack common interests, or have competing interests that may override their cooperative inclinations. The history of ASEAN, for example, has been one of institutional development constrained by, and built around, the competing interests and perspectives of its member states. ASEAN has proven to be very durable, but it has never been able to risk pushing its members into making a choice between institutional effectiveness and individual state interest.

7.4 Prospects of East Asian Regionalism

In the future, one of the possible scenarios in regionalism is one where despite the linkages in trade and investment, the governments of the region are unable to overcome their historical animosities, differences and rivalries, and hence remain unprepared for any long-term commitment towards East Asian regionalism. The vestiges of the Cold War and hard-nosed realism continue to plague the region. Governments would continue to cooperate as long as it was beneficial to do so and no breakthrough would be attained. East Asian regionalism would in reality remain open and flexible with no fixed membership and formal institutions. The framework for cooperation would remain essentially one that resembles a "coalition of the willing." Moreover, if we look to traditional models of regionalism, central leadership seems critical, like the Franco-German agreement in European Union. Without the historical reconciliation between China and Japan, and their leadership, we have to look to newer and more limited forms of leadership in the region. This could be offered by having leaders on different issues at different leaders rather than deferring to a fixed leader or

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[91] Gaye Christofferson, "The Role of East Asia in Sino-American Relations," *Asia Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2000), pp. 369-396.



leaders.

Finally, only with rapprochement and reconciliation among the US, China, and Japan or the joint leadership of these East Asian powers would East Asian regionalism really take off. If so, the possible scenario is one where continued economic regionalization and sustained effort in economic cooperation would permeate to more and wider levels of society. As useful results are produced and anxieties are allayed, and as more and more groups of people become entrenched in the process and begin to enjoy benefits in the process, a snowballing effect would naturally propel the process forward. As mutual trust and a sense of community develop in the region, shared by the general public, a long-term vision of an economic and security community in East Asia would become viable. The questions of how, when and what model of an East Asian community would come to fruition are of regional and global significance.

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強權敵對關係對東亞區域主義之影響

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摘 要

冷戰後東亞區域主義的發展迅速，但其深化程度仍深受區域強權之間敵對關係遺緒的影響。本文藉分析近來美、中、日三國的互動以及東協的對策，勾勒出政治敵對影響東亞區域主義發展的動因及途徑。首先，美國的單邊主義、中國崛起與日本因「正常化」而漸右傾之外交策略，使原即因意識形態、區域安全觀、相互投射的認知與權力競逐等歧異，而影響三者實質合作以深化區域制度的可能性更低。其次，小國不會因強權間的敵對與競爭而往任一方靠攏，反而促其更重視區域多邊制度及其效用。尤其是東協加三與東亞高峰會進程的發展，強化小國集體合作對大國的議價能力。第三，小國仍選擇性地在群體合作與個別利益間尋求平衡。故東協的存續即植基於不強迫其成員在制度化與國家利益之間作選擇。最後，三強權外交戰略操作的方向，將持續影響區域主義的發展，無論導向匯合深化或更加分歧。

關鍵詞：東亞、區域主義、敵對關係、美中日關係、東南亞國協、區域安全

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