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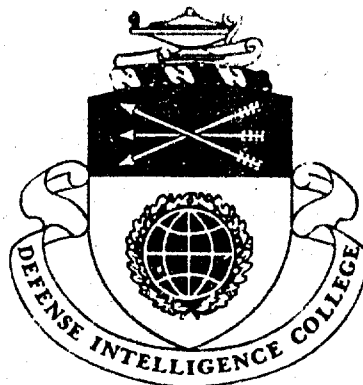


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Asia's Challenge to American Security

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FOREWORD

We are in a crucial period of transition in Asia, when the structures of the Cold War still stand largely intact and their replacements are still being debated. In this issue of *NBR Analysis*, Richard Ellings and Edward Olsen address the question of regional leadership and America's future role in Asia. They assess the likely major challenges presented by the region through the turn of the twenty-first century and systematically examine the alternative national strategies available to United States policymakers to meet those challenges.

The future of leadership in Asia will be determined significantly by the relative economic and military resources available to the great powers of the region. As the authors point out, however, leadership will also be shaped by the initiatives, or lack of initiatives, that come out of Washington, D.C. as well as by the foreign policies emanating from Tokyo, Beijing, and other Asian capitals. Decisions made in the next few years will determine whether leadership is expressed through bilateral or multilateral institutions or less formal arrangements, and whether it will continue to be based primarily on American security guarantees or a new distribution of responsibility. Doctors Ellings and Olsen argue that economic challenges have largely supplanted security ones for probably a decade or more and that United States national strategy has not made a sufficient adjustment to the new conditions.

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ASIA'S CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN STRATEGY

Richard J. Ellings

Edward A. Olsen

The post-Cold War era is being built on the ruins of the Soviet empire and on the achievements of dynamic, capitalist nations. The era is defined by new balances of power, revised perceptions of power, and far greater diplomatic complexity. The era is one in which regions have a more distinct identity within global affairs than they did during the Cold War, and international leadership is more ambiguous in structure and often in the way it is exercised. Asia epitomizes, and is largely responsible for creating, these circumstances.

As befits a region possessing enormous historical consciousness, the new era in Asia is overshadowed by continuities with the past. Contemporary Asian leaders tend to react cautiously to sudden developments that disrupt international affairs. These leaders are predisposed to search for historical precedents that may offer lessons based on past cycles of human experience. They possess a healthy skepticism about the uniqueness of post-Cold War events and display a tendency to fit them into a historical context of much greater duration than the Cold War.

Because of the dispersion of power to and within Asia during the 1970s and 1980s, a condition of "skewed multipolarity" has developed. The region is characterized today by a complex multipolar structure highlighted by Japanese industrial and American military strength. Asians have treated this dispersion of power as a precursor of a return to normalcy in world affairs. When the contest between the Soviet Union and the United States became complicated by Asian economic competition, some Asian leaders seized the opportunity to begin reasserting their geopolitical power. For example, Japanese leaders became more assertive at international fora, and other Asian leaders increased the political agendas of Asian regional economic organizations. Moreover, across Asia the recognition by Westerners of Asia's new economic prominence was used by Asian leaders as leverage with the West.

Political, economic, and military strains that predate the Cold War continue to pervade the region, and the end of the Cold War is allowing renewed expression of those strains. As is often noted, Asia is much more diverse culturally and politically than Western Europe. Mistrust characterizes most bilateral relationships within the region. Consider, for example, the Sino-

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Edward Olsen, Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, is the author of a wealth of books and articles on Asia, including *U.S.-Japan Strategic Reciprocity: A Neo-Internationalist View* and *U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*. Prior to his current position, Dr. Olsen was with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department.

Russian, Sino-Japanese, Sino-Indian, Sino-Vietnamese, Russian-Japanese, Thai-Vietnamese, and Japanese-Korean relationships. These have been marred by war or near-war in the past fifty years. The Cold War constrained some of these animosities in the guise of alliance cohesion on both sides of the East-West struggle. Now that the Cold War is past, East Asia may eventually experience unleashed tensions comparable to those in central Eurasia.

In this light, Asia in the 1990s presents a radically different challenge to America. It is a challenge born of historical legacies and contemporary dynamism. The military threat in the region that long had defined the paramount issues, and against which the United States and its allies built a network of alliances, has diminished to a level that makes the security structures of the Cold War either obsolete or in desperate need of new justification. The bilateral arrangements the United States sustained in the Pacific to counter the Soviet Union and North Korea (and earlier China and Vietnam) require complete reevaluation. The immediate challenge Asia now presents is political-economic, but at stake over the long run is America's broader security as well.

In order to assess post-Cold War Asia's challenge to American strategy through the turn of the century, the strategic environment—its structure, dynamics, and key competitors—must be better understood. Important short- and long-term threats that may develop in the region must be identified, along with U.S. interests. Finally, the goals and strategic options that are available to U.S. policymakers must be compared systematically, free from the biases and inhibitions that stem from existing American commitments.

The Asian Strategic Environment

Consequences of the End of the Cold War

With the decline of the Soviet military threat, most issues related to Russia in the Asia-Pacific region do not assume the global and crisis proportions they once did. Nonetheless, in Northeast Asia and Central Asia the consequences of the end of superpower rivalry are particularly dramatic. The ways Washington and Moscow deal with inter-Korean relations, Japan's responses to the end of the Cold War, and all countries' reactions to the emergence of newly independent states in Central Asia will influence the region as a whole for years to come.

While the focus of immediate concern throughout Asia remains the continuing military standoff on the Korean peninsula, renewed conflict between the North and South would no longer bring about virtually automatic, cataclysmic hostilities between America and Russia. The major effect of war would be regional, and the two Koreas would suffer most. China and Japan also would feel the repercussions, as well as the United States, which would be drawn into any such conflict as long as the United States-Republic of Korea (R.O.K.) security treaty is intact. Almost certainly Russia would be a bystander. Russia no longer poses a serious threat to China or Japan, and it has forged diplomatic ties with the R.O.K. China too has reached out to South Korea.

Consequently, North Korea is increasingly isolated and under pressure, forced by the economic success of the South and withdrawal of Soviet support to reconsider its economic system and its very existence. Because of its isolation, North Korea may have stepped up its nuclear weapons program. At the same time, however, North and South Korea have agreed to a nonaggression pact and made major progress toward a nuclear-free zone on the peninsula. On balance, these circumstances make war in Korea less likely in the post-Cold War era.

The end of the Cold War is causing international relations across the entire arc from Central Asia to Japan to be redefined. Foreign policies are being established by the newly inde-

pendent Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kirghizstan. Each is trying to solidify its political system and stabilize its economy. Mongolia, too, is feeling its way toward genuine independence. China and Russia are recasting their relationship in the midst of this Central Asian turmoil. Further to the east, Japan and Russia are trying to settle their territorial dispute in the Northern Territories in order to bring a formal end to World War II and prepare for the 21st century.

In Southeast Asia the end of the Cold War is allowing local conflicts to resurface after years of suppression through "extended deterrence."¹ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has lost its quasi-strategic function of countering Indochina because of the withdrawal of Soviet support from Vietnam and the resulting withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. Tentative regional defense collaboration is being replaced by a division of roles and interests, most notably Thailand as a land power and Malaysia and Indonesia as maritime powers. Territorial claims, fishing disputes, domestic instabilities in several of the states, and relations with Japan and China are the issues most likely to confront Southeast Asia in the absence of new external challenges. Cambodia's festering problems are likely to be a source of continuing concern as well, despite the efforts of the United Nations.

Regional political integration in Asia is, at best, no more likely today than a decade or two ago, the developments of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC), ASEAN, and other organizations notwithstanding. These organizations provide vehicles for Asian states to express their views regionally and globally, but they do not assure greater unity of purpose. Indeed, a strong case can be made that the end of the Cold War makes the region much less likely to integrate because it lacks what might pass for a common adversary. Moreover, dynamic but uneven economic growth rates are apt to increase the competition among the nations there, further reducing prospects for regional political integration.

Trade issues also have been affected by the end of the Cold War. Damaging transfers of defense-related technology to the Soviet Union, leading to such scandals as the Toshiba-Kongsberg affair in 1987, are no longer salient. Nonetheless, Americans worry that Russian nuclear technologies, now suddenly subject to market forces, could cause a nuclear brain drain and otherwise contribute to proliferation. In spite of this danger, however, security-related trade issues in general have simply declined in importance to policymakers in Washington.

The critical trade issues for the United States and Asia in the 1990s are related to commercial competition, unfair trade practices, and access to technology. There are also fears about an exclusionary economic bloc forming in Asia under the control of Japan that may become a rival of the European Community and a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), if the latter is fully realized. Indeed, trade issues now pervade not only diplomacy between Washington and Tokyo, but also American national and even local politics. The outlook is for trade issues to become more contentious than ever.

In sum, with the end of the Cold War, regional dynamics within Asia have become more important than global issues; long-repressed political and economic discord has begun to resurface; and Asian trade issues have overtaken security issues as the immediate concern to American policymakers.²

¹Sheldon Simon, "The Regionalization of Defense in Southeast Asia," *NBR Analysis*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1992), p. 1. This paper was prepared for the March 1992 workshop on Asia sponsored by the Defense Intelligence College and The National Bureau of Asian Research.

²See Edward A. Olsen, "A New American Strategy in Asia?," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 12 (December 1991), pp. 1139-1154, for a discussion of the changing threat environment in Asia.

Skewed Multipolarity

In this context, international relations may become more unstable, albeit less dangerous, because of the sharply reduced risk of global nuclear war. In James Schlesinger's words, the world order will be one of "semi-chaos" and "marked by power politics, national rivalries, and ethnic tensions."³ We add that it will be just as marked by economic competition and conflict.

In a decentralized world, dominated not by two superpowers but rather by a range of powers with significant yet diverse economic, diplomatic, and military capabilities, issues will rise and fall in ways that differ from the Cold War's relative predictability. Power in international relations will be concentrated in increasingly ephemeral coalitions. The average life span of foreign policies is likely to be shortened.

With parochial national or regional interests increasingly outweighing global considerations, countries are disaggregating their policies. They will frequently choose *not* to work on issues of importance to the United States, *not* to side with the United States on some issues, and to work against America on others. In the mercurial times ahead the distinctions between good and bad, friend and enemy, and peace and war may change rapidly and often appear capricious to Americans. The nature of the post-Cold War world will frustrate U.S. politicians in need of selling policies to the American people, who have historically preferred clear moral choices. In a light-hearted section of a recent policy paper, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin tried to capture the changes in strategy and security environments in imaginary bumper stickers. "Containment" gave us clear guidance, but "less threatening, more complicated" will hardly boil the blood or crystallize what we are supposed to do.⁴

These global developments are reflected in Asia's balance of power and diplomacy. Five great powers are factors in the region: China, Japan, Russia, India, and the United States—with none in a position to dominate. Although Asia is very much part of a tenuous new world order in rapid flux, it enjoys a relatively stable, if skewed, balance of power.⁵ The balance is skewed because of the preponderance of Japanese economic power and American military power. It is relatively stable partly because four of the five powers possess some degree of nuclear deterrent, with Japan compensating for its lack of nuclear forces by its enormous potential to become a military superpower and by its beneficial (and cost-effective) alliance with the United States. Strategic stability also is enhanced by the limited offensive capability of all but one of these nations' air, sea, and ground forces. The exception is the United States, whose security roles as the ultimate guarantor for several nations' defense and "off-shore balancer" seem well understood.

Looking ahead to the year 2000 and beyond, power is likely to continue to disperse in the region. According to recent data, Japan and the United States now produce, respectively, about 16 and 24 percent of the global output of goods and services, with Japan dominating East Asia by accounting for perhaps two-thirds of its economy.⁶ In an ongoing study of the world

³James Schlesinger, "New Instabilities, New Priorities," *Foreign Policy*, 85, (Winter 1991-92), pp. 4-5.

⁴Les Aspin, *National Security in the 1990s: Defining a New Basis for U.S. Military Forces*, Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council, January 6, 1992, p. 12.

⁵The Center for Naval Analyses is taking nothing for granted about the shape of the new world order. See its report on four alternative worlds (bipolar, balance of power, condominium, and nationalistic/isolationist) in James Blaker, et al., *Implications of Alternative Worlds*, January 1991.

⁶Stephen W. Bosworth, "The United States and Asia," *Foreign Affairs, America and the World 1992*, Vol. 71, No. 1, pp. 118-119. Widely different estimations are available. The Central Intelligence Agency, in its most recent *Handbook of Economic Statistics* (1990), has a higher figure for the U.S. (26 percent) and a much lower one for Japan (ten percent). Bosworth's figures reflect the changes in growth rates and in exchange rates that have taken place since the handbook was compiled.

economy at The RAND Corporation, the respective contributions by Japan and the United States to world output are projected to be 18 and 22 percent by the turn of the century.⁷ The current size of the Chinese economy is much debated, and its future is even more disputed. According to official exchange rates and other data, China now accounts for three to four percent of global output, but its actual size is probably much larger and its rate of growth continues to exceed Japan's. By 2010-2015, China's economy may even approach the size of Japan's if it can sustain its momentum.⁸ Other East Asian economies—the new as well as “old” newly industrializing economies (NIEs)—are also expected to expand significantly faster than Japan.⁹ In the area of trade, which bears more directly on regional politics, the changes underway are moving even faster. Economist Nicholas Lardy estimates that by the turn of the century China's external trade could match Japan's.¹⁰ China's foreign investment, on the other hand, will lag considerably behind that of its major Asian competitor.

Thus two economic trends emerge as noteworthy. East Asia as a whole will continue to increase in importance relative to the rest of the world, and within the region production and trade flows will disperse through direct foreign investment, other transfers, and indigenous efforts. As the above data suggest, Japan seems to have already reached the peak of its economic dominance of East Asia as measured by relative GDPs or trade flows.

Whether or not military power becomes more dispersed in the region depends largely on Tokyo, for Japan possesses potential strength that will be unmatched in the region for at least a decade. Japan's enormous military potential is based on its current technological prowess, manufacturing base, and a host of other national attributes. To consider significant rearmament and a coercive foreign policy, however, Japan would have to solve the problem of defending its geographically concentrated population and industry against possible preemptive strikes by nuclear forces from China or Russia. Japan's continued vulnerability in the nuclear age remains a strong check on any in Japan who may harbor ambitions of traditional great-power hegemony in Asia.

Nevertheless, the interests, geography, and inequalities of the Asian powers create frequent tension among them. Cold War or not, they have often opposed each other in coalitions. China has worked with the United States and Pakistan to check India; Japan and China worked with the United States in the late Cold War years to check the Soviet Union, while India collaborated with the Soviet Union against China. At the same time, China and Russia appreciate the American alliance with Japan as a moderating force on the uncertainties of Japanese defense policy and appreciate American pressure on Japan to open its restricted markets. Below the level of major power relations, there is little harmony of strategic interests among the ASEAN states, between South Korea and Taiwan, and between Japan and either Taiwan or South Korea. Because of the lack of substantial consensus, a regional security organization like NATO has never been formed, and no threat currently exists or looms on the horizon that is likely to change this pattern.

⁷Ku Shin of RAND, in a personal memo to the authors, February 28, 1992. Dr. Shin bases his estimates on his world economy simulation, which assumes average growth rates of 3.5 percent for Japan and 2.0 percent for the U.S. In the 1990-95 period, the growth rate estimate for the U.S. is also 2.0 percent and is somewhat higher for Japan (3.9).

⁸In 1989 RAND completed a study whose results are controversial but instructive. “Long Term Economic and Military Trends, 1950-2010,” Charles Wolf, et al., *A RAND Note*, Santa Monica: RAND, April 1989. Nicholas Lardy of the University of Washington believes that RAND over-estimated the size of the contemporary Chinese economy somewhat, and therefore, questions the projection that China would approximate Japan in production by 2010.

⁹Ku Shin, *op. cit.* The average growth rate for South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong in the 1990-95 period is estimated to be 6.4 percent.

¹⁰Conversation with Nicholas Lardy, March 13, 1992. For a projection through 1995, see his paper, “China's Changing Role in Asia,” prepared for the workshop “Asian Security Issues In Transition to the Twenty-first Century,” sponsored by the National Bureau of Asian Research and the Defense Intelligence College, March 1992, p. 6.

The collapse of Soviet power and ongoing economic development in much of Asia require the states of East and Southeast Asia to adjust their national priorities and redefine their geopolitical relationships. Economic and territorial issues are likely to be more contentious within the region than they were during the Cold War. The issue of Japan's potential strategic role in the region may become more acute as Japan's political ambitions become manifest. With regard to global issues or issues in other regions, these Asian powers possess diverse options. While they may retain policies roughly similar to those they pursued during the Cold War, they may also show little interest in old policies or may oppose each other in still different alignments. The dispersion of power frees Asian states to be more flexible if they so desire.

Key Actors

In addition to these structural aspects of the region, the character of and special relationships between key actors in Asia also contribute to the strategic environment. Today, American policy in Asia is overwhelmingly dominated by its relationships with China and Japan, and not by concerns about the Soviet Union and its ability to affect Asian affairs.

U.S.-China relations have long been fraught with emotion and have been noteworthy for their wide swings between enmity and collaboration. Several features stand out to American strategists. First, China has shown a remarkable capacity to play balance-of-power politics with the "foreign devils" as it rose above seemingly crucial ideological considerations and domestic turmoil when its survival interests dictated. Second, its relationship with the United States often has been pragmatic; China has manipulated the United States to suit Chinese purposes and has displayed little of the emotional attachment toward the United States that some Americans show toward China. Although there is a small chance that a future generation of Chinese leaders, largely schooled in the universities of America, may wish to forge a special relationship with America, they are unlikely to personalize Chinese national interests vis-à-vis the United States in ways that might echo their American counterparts' Sinophile or Sinophobe attitudes. Third, China should be viewed by United States policymakers as possessing strong national pride, a sense of independence, and a powerful future. These attributes will imbue the Chinese with a consistent drive which should provide Americans with reason to minimize cyclical shifts in U.S. policy. China is developing its economy and will continue to view itself as the historic and natural hegemonic power in East Asia. Its ability to resume this role will come in steps but, unlike Japan's largely unidimensional pursuit of international power, China will feel comfortable exercising international political as well as economic influence if, and when, it restores the capacity. American policymakers must address that probability in unemotional, objective ways.

The United States has built a complex and close relationship with Japan that holds as much danger as promise. American and Japanese leaders, even in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet threat, have verbalized their commitment to the alliance, but without clarifying their reasons adequately. The alliance seems to have a revived de facto purpose: to calm the fears of other Asia-Pacific states that Japanese militarism might reappear. That was, of course, the original ulterior rationale behind the Cold War alliance between the United States and Japan.

From Washington's perspective today, several considerations merit emphasis. First, Japan is at once its greatest economic competitor and its most important (albeit not the largest in value) trading partner. The world's two biggest economies are so closely linked that a sudden disruption in bilateral economic relations would have far-reaching impact globally as well as on each other.

Second, because Japan is rapidly catching up to the United States economically (and has surpassed it in certain respects), the strategic balance between these two countries probably will have to be redefined in a formal sense soon.¹¹ The skewed security relationship no longer makes sense to many American and Japanese nationalists alike. On balance, America's bargaining leverage and credibility as a leader vis-à-vis Japan are waning, and what remains derives from being a major consumer of Japanese goods and from serving as the subsidized military guarantor of Japanese prosperity and peace. In short, the threat of increased protectionism and of ending its role as ultimate military defender of Japan may be useful levers, but they are not forms of power that can make Americans proud. They constitute residual leverage based upon growing weakness. The question increasingly asked in Tokyo and Washington is how long the world's biggest creditor and an economic dynamo (Japan) can rely for its security on the world's biggest debtor nation (the United States), a debtor that has to pass the mendicant's cup to act like a full-fledged superpower. National pride in Japan as well as budgetary considerations in the United States that provoke national doubt among Americans are chipping away at the vaunted arrangements.

Third, Japan desires to exercise an indirect form of leadership in Asia through a stratified and integrated informal regional structure that is being gradually constructed from strategic investments, aid, and trade relations. Although this structure is taking shape, it seems to lack purpose to many Japanese. Only a minority in Japan think of it as the contemporary equivalent of the "Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere." This new Japanese strategy is propelled by a perceived need to diversify trade and investments. It was given added momentum in the 1980s by the appreciation of the yen and by the fear of rival blocs forming in Europe and North America that might restrict access to critical markets and supplies. The strategy is also driven by Japan's ambiguous yearning for Asian leadership.

Fourth, Japan is an unpredictable actor in international political affairs because of its near total dedication to economic goals since World War II and its current incapacity to pursue coordinated political goals. Japan's Foreign Ministry is hampered by a reactive approach to international issues that has been cultivated throughout the postwar period. It has yet to develop an effective foreign policy decision-making apparatus geared toward proactive goals and is unable to determine to what ends it will apply its nation's burgeoning power. Time probably will see the correction of these deficiencies, but in the interim the "Japanese question," as Kenneth Pyle termed it, weighs on the region.¹² There is no certainty that Tokyo will formulate either its goals or a bureaucracy capable of providing leadership before Japan is thrust onto center stage in world affairs by events beyond its control.

A resurgent Russia also may be a factor in the region when successful political and economic structures are put in place in that country. Such success, however, appears to be many years away from producing the kind of results necessary to make Russia a Pacific power on the level of Japan, or even China, except in purely military terms. If, for the remainder of the century, the United States and Japan are first-tier states in the Asia-Pacific hierarchy, and China is a second-tier state, Russia will be an even more distant third. Russia is almost certain to be consumed by the enormous domestic challenges of the transition from imperial communism to some form of political pluralism and market economy. The possibility exists that internal

¹¹This situation was predicted in the late 1960s by Herman Kahn and his associates at the Hudson Institute who worked on the prospects for Japan. "... If I had to choose a best estimate, I would choose the medium one. In that scenario Japan probably passes the United States in per capita income around 1990 and probably equals the U.S. in Gross National Product by about the year 2000." Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate: Challenges and Response*, Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970, p. 130.

¹²Kenneth B. Pyle, "The Japanese Question," in Pyle, et al, "Japan and the World: Considerations for U.S. Policymakers," Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, *NBR Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 1990), pp. 5-12.

chaos in Russia might induce the Russian Far East to break away once more, perhaps leading the Chinese to try to reestablish control over contemporary Russian territories that historically were controlled by China. Today that threat seems remote; but it could happen. If it does, Japan might not stand by idly. The possible disintegration of Russia also might send shock waves through China's own domestic "empire" that harbors many non-Han minorities. The rise of a Russia: Napoleon, riding a wave of xenophobia following years of economic ruin and national humiliation, could eventually threaten peace in Asia, but such a development would most likely be felt primarily in Europe. These kinds of contingencies cannot be ignored by defense planners in Asia or the United States. Whether Americans would have vital reasons to become entangled in any contingencies of these sorts would naturally depend on the circumstances and our perceptions and capabilities.

Because of the ambitions and potential for growth of China, Japan, and several other states in the western Pacific, competition for influence in the region will expand. When China will be able to assert itself is difficult to estimate, but assuming a strong pace of economic development and the successful absorption of Hong Kong, between 2000 and 2010 we may see a confident China which has turned its attention significantly to regional affairs and which feels no special need to work closely with the United States. At that time, the United States and Japan may once again have a clear strategic basis for cooperation. If China flounders, on the other hand, its weakness also could have major consequences for regional harmony. Americans should consider how the United States might cope with an Asia over the next twenty to thirty years in which China either stagnates or for other reasons falls further behind, leaving Japan in a completely dominant position.

U.S. Strategy

Samuel Huntington recently reminded us that national strategy combines domestic and foreign policies to achieve a set of goals against a competitor.¹³ Economic, political, and military factors are integrated into the effort, which was exemplified in NSC-68, the document that defined American national strategy in the immediate post-World War II period. NSC-68, Huntington points out, is dominated by economic and political analysis.

Two components of strategy need to be stressed. The first is that strategy is developed to deal with a perceived threat, such as the challenge the Soviet empire posed to the West during the Cold War or Nazi Germany posed to the rest of Europe in the 1930s. A threat may be multidimensional—economic, political, ideological, and military. The Cold War, for example, was fought on many fronts: laboratories and factories, West European elections, the air waves, proxy wars, covert actions, and direct confrontations. While the Soviet threat came in different forms, each was understood by U.S. policymakers in the framework of containment strategy. Threats also are likely to shift over time, and thus strategy must simultaneously try to serve long- and short-term purposes. U.S. strategy in the Cold War aimed to wear down Soviet resolve and reduce Soviet economic and military power over the long haul, and to counter immediate challenges to American or Allied security.

National purposes comprise the second component of strategy. Economic, political, and military objectives, to be useful, must support a defined national objective. When objectives

¹³Samuel Huntington, "The Evolution of U.S. National Strategy," in Daniel Kaufman, et al, *U.S. National Strategy for the 1990s*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1991, pp. 11-18.

are ill defined or not supportive of each other, then strategy is not likely to be very effective.¹⁴ If the objective in responding to an overseas threat is to destroy it, then information can be obtained and policies can be developed accordingly. If America's purpose today is to out-produce its competitors to ensure U.S. security in the decades to come, then the nation's leaders must similarly identify the issues and put together an appropriate strategy. Before a strategy can be developed properly, threats and purposes must be perceived accurately and carefully defined.

American military strategy in Asia should be part of an overall national strategy that aims to advance American interests vis-à-vis its key competitors and that draws appropriately on the tools of policy. Superficially, Americans pursue peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia. There is some disagreement among American leaders and analysts, however, about what specific U.S. economic and political goals in the Asia-Pacific region should be. Analysts tend to disagree about the relative importance of these U.S. interests, the efficacy and legitimacy of policy tools, the purposes of policy, and how international relations operate. Naturally, these varying perceptions lead to divergent proposals for national strategy.

Strategy is also driven by domestic politics—from ideology to logrolling—which must be kept in mind as contemporary U.S. options are considered. Generational change in American leadership could have important consequences, as the “can-do” internationalists of the World War II era are replaced by those whose views were formed during the Vietnam War. Some of the latter are skeptical of the preceding generation's commitments, while others of this generation want to reinforce the lessons of the Second World War. Beyond those considerations, economic uncertainty, malaise, and fear are forcing contemporary U.S. decision-makers to concentrate on competitiveness issues in both the domestic and foreign policy spheres, including of course, policy toward Asia.¹⁵

Finally, pressure continues to mount on the U.S. defense budget—so much so that President Bush and Congress have revised projected defense expenditures sharply downward several times since 1989. The cumulative decline in defense expenditures (in constant dollars) from fiscal year 1985 to the president's proposed budget for FY1993 is 29 percent, and by 1997 is projected to be 37 percent. Actual decline is likely to be even greater barring the emergence of a major new threat. Similarly, should a new administration take office in January 1993, it is likely to reinforce the downsizing of the U.S. defense establishment.

U.S. Options

Against this backdrop, what options now exist for Americans as they devise an appropriate strategy for the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific region? The strategies described below are politically and operationally feasible approaches available to the United States in mid-1992. Each of these options posits that American involvement in Asia will be reduced in part due to domestic political and economic considerations.

¹⁴Poorly conceived, inconsistent, and unpopular objectives undermined the American effort in the Vietnam War, according to Colonel Harry Summers, when “there were changes in both the strategic and tactical definitions of *The Objective*. What had been a clear relationship between military strategy and political objectives was lost in an abstruse discussion. . . .” We failed to focus on the threat “and turned our attention to the symptoms—the guerrilla war in the south.” Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1984, pp. 135, 145.

¹⁵The issue is addressed in Selig S. Harrison, and Clyde V. Prestowitz, Jr., “Pacific Agenda: Defense or Economics?” *Foreign Policy*, 79 (Summer 1990), pp. 56-76.

1. *Extended Deterrence: retain a military strategy based on the bilateral arrangements left over from the Cold War*

Current American strategy in Asia and the Pacific is primarily a military effort to maintain stability in the region. Plans call for the retention "of forward deployed forces [in Japan and the Republic of Korea] for the foreseeable future," albeit reducing them in three phases.¹⁶ Phase I is to be completed on December 31, 1992; Phases II and III are estimated to last until 1995 and 2000, respectively. With the Soviet threat diminished, extended deterrence is regionalized and U.S. nuclear forces are reduced and retargeted to meet new contingencies.

In one sense, this "strategy" is a patchwork of policies, for other than residual Russian and North Korean military threats, the major challenges are held to be ideological and systemic. Warnings about potential instabilities in and among various actors in Asia and a reminder of the size of our Pacific trade serve as the primary bases for this policy. Concern is centered on ethnic tensions, nationalism, and political issues that were repressed during the Cold War and that have been given impetus by economic dynamism in Asia. The primary security challenges in Asia, as noted by Secretary of State James Baker in a recent, major article in *Foreign Affairs*, are the "heavily armed standoff on the Korean Peninsula," dictatorship in Burma, resistance to political reform by "residual communist regimes" (China, North Korea, and Vietnam), and the dispute between Japan and Russia over four Kurile Islands northeast of Hokkaido. Secondly, America is challenged by bilateral trade issues and the need to work cooperatively with Japan on a host of economic, environmental, and other regional and global problems.¹⁷

The Department of Defense views American objectives in Asia to be "similar to the past:"

protecting the United States from attack; supporting our global deterrence policy, preserving our political and economic access; maintaining the balance of power to prevent the rise of any regional hegemony; strengthening the western orientation of the Asian nations; fostering the growth of democracy and human rights; deterring nuclear proliferation; and ensuring freedom of navigation.¹⁸

Implicit in this strategy is concern about Japan and a perception that regional stability depends upon an American military presence that quells the fears many Asians hold of a resurgence of Japanese military power. Because it is an explicitly military strategy, it is not consciously integrated with economic policy, although it is concerned with cost-sharing and technology transfer. In keeping with the Cold War precedents, the United States actively and purposely separates defense and economic policies. Nonetheless, as part of economically induced burden-sharing arrangements, between 1991 and 1995 the United States expects to receive \$17 billion for support of base operations (for example, labor and utilities) from Japan. The R.O.K. will also be making a significant contribution, especially in proportion to its economy. The Department of Defense's plans also call for encouraging sales of U.S. weapons and other defense systems to Asian allies and for boosting the flow of defense-related technology back to the United States from Japan. While not tied with any American economic strategy, the military framework of this strategic option is part of an agreed-upon international division of labor in which the United States provides security through military and political leadership and Japan provides economic aid. Japan is seen by Washington as a quiet but hard-working partner that contributes to stability by integrating Asian economies with its own.

¹⁶"A Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century," Report to Congress by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region), February 28, 1991, p. 2.

¹⁷James A. Baker, III., "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 5 (Winter 1991/92), p. 3. Security issues are listed first throughout the article, in sections dealing with the region as a whole as well as sections devoted to bilateral issues.

¹⁸"Strategic Framework," *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Because the existing framework assumes lasting U.S. interests in the region and chooses an internationalist approach, it conserves U.S. assets in Asia, including the most valuable military bases and roles. Furthermore, given the unpredictable nature of the region, it continues to rely on strong bilateral ties so new threats can be dealt with flexibly. In that sense, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon perceived the U.S. role in the Asia-Pacific region to be that of a "balance wheel," drawing on unique assets of the sole superpower.¹⁹

There are two main lines of argument against continued adherence to the current strategy. Many fellow internationalists argue that it fails to deal adequately with the fundamental change in threat that has occurred in Asia. A military strategy is simply not appropriate (or enough) for a mostly economic or political-economic problem. Those in favor of substantial or total disengagement from the Asia-western Pacific region assert that the Cold War is over, the region is stable, and by staying Americans are asking for trouble in places like Korea and wasting taxpayers' money. The positions they advocate are assessed below.

2. *Engaged Balancer: integrate economic, political, and military components of strategy; build on special relationship with Japan, but simultaneously develop relationships with other states in the region to maximize long-term flexibility as a balancer*

This internationalist strategy assumes America's vital interests are and will continue to be at stake in East Asia. These interests could be compromised by nuclear proliferation, runaway arms races, war, or the establishment of a closed trading bloc. This strategy also assumes that the immediate challenge from Asia is political-economic and that our competitors are Japan, China, and to a lesser extent the other major nations there. Japan and China are increasing their power and may at times work with or against American interests. This strategy posits that U.S. goals should go beyond defending against current threats by preparing for future ones, in part by utilizing foreign policy to assist the national economy's technological and industrial competitiveness. It assumes that U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region are diverse and that regional institutions, even if established, will be overshadowed by traditional interstate relations and ad hoc coalitions. It assumes that moderate expenditures by the United States to maintain a reduced military presence in the region are politically feasible at home, that there are vital links between American domestic and foreign policy concerns, and that disengagement from Asia would leave the United States dangerously subject to the vicissitudes of events there. By being engaged, Washington would retain vital leverage with regard to Japan, China, and others in the rough and tumble balance-of-power politics of the future.

The central tenet of the Engaged Balancer strategy is that U.S. national interests in Asia can be best protected by remaining a leader—usually in coalitions—in matters of security, politics, and economic relations. A special value is placed on the relationship with Japan because of its tremendous economic power and the probability of the two nations sharing long-term strategic interests. Because of irksome bilateral issues and the shift in relative power between the two countries that are more in Japan's favor, firm and positive steps with Japan now are recommended before circumstances arise in which Japan may sense no compulsion to cooperate. The primary aims of these U.S. initiatives would be to improve the trade balance and flow of technology to the United States. Secondary aims might be to enlist Japan in the effort to see the new states of Asia and Eastern Europe through the crisis of transition from communism and to handle other international crises.

According to this strategic option, the U.S.-Japan alliance would be given new life through modifications that would make it more reciprocal—modifications that would address issues of

¹⁹Quoted in *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1991, p. 6. The metaphor of a "balancing wheel" as well as a fan was used by Secretary of State Baker in his recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, "America in Asia," *op. cit.*

pride in Japan and of practical value and fairness in the United States. Both nations acknowledge the common interest in Asian stability to which the alliance contributes. Advocates of this strategic option differ over the steps Japan might take to demonstrate reciprocity. Many see those steps largely in economic terms; others envision Japan undertaking greater military responsibilities. For progress to be made, Stephen Bosworth, for example, asserts "Japan needs to build a domestic consensus to support its constructive engagement in the international security and economic systems from which it derives such obvious benefits."²⁰

Underlying any continuation of the alliance on these terms, however, would be its contribution to stability by conveying the message that Japan is checked through this partnership. How long the partnership could be sustained depends on the maintenance of American will and relative capability, the reciprocal nature of the alliance, and Japanese acceptance.

This strategy might seek the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea if stability in the region would not be placed at risk, and if American credibility could be sustained through other guarantees and commitments elsewhere in Asia. America's military stakes in Korea have declined precipitously due to the collapse of Soviet power, while the danger of becoming involved in an expensive land war persists.

Under this strategy a new, more limited form of extended deterrence would be the centerpiece of the *military* component. Greater reliance would be placed on security partners such as Singapore and Thailand, in addition to Japan and Korea. American forces would remain in Guam, have regular access to repair and other facilities in Singapore and elsewhere, and still patrol the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), cooperating with local forces when possible. Diplomatic and trade relations throughout the region would be encouraged. Due to the unpredictability of developments in the region, long-term commitments that entail obligations for substantial U.S. involvement would be eschewed. Instead, ad hoc multilateral efforts would be used to address a variety of issues. Cooperation in multilateral organizations would be encouraged, but this activity would not be central to the strategy nor would it support the development of foreign military forces. Military assistance would remain bilateral.

Different iterations of this strategy call for various appraisals of when and how to deal with Japan, of the priority accorded to trade issues, of the disposition of forward deployments, etc. Sure to be debated continuously is the question of utilizing political power in trade relations. For example, how can the United States simultaneously expect to bolster the global free trade regime and practice managed trade with major partners?

Those who favor an Engaged Balancer strategy vary in their enthusiasm for industrial policy and managed trade. Conservative "free traders" emphasize the need for addressing monetary, fiscal, educational, and fair-trade issues. President Bush seems to be moving in this direction, accepting the need for concerted foreign and domestic policy in increasing American competitiveness versus Asia; but his administration is deeply divided on the economic management issues this movement raises. It is difficult to be a stick-to-your-guns free trader and connect economic and national security policy in peacetime. Many conservatives, however, take a practical approach. Senators Robert Dole and John Danforth are leading voices in the Senate for raising the priority of trade on the American foreign and defense policy agendas. In contrast, recent presidential candidate Pat Buchanan questioned whether this sort of "free trade" is genuinely conservative.

There is an easier fit between American liberal politics and aggressive industrial and trade policy. Congressman Richard Gephardt argues that the nation's economic performance can be

²⁰Stephen W. Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

enhanced—indeed can only be assured—in part by well-coordinated, interventionist foreign and domestic economic policies. William Dietrich, author of *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun*, argues that Japan and Germany both owe their success to a strong “policy-making administrative structure peopled by a self-confident and capable bureaucracy” that is given “broad democratic mandate.”²¹ Japan specialist Chalmers Johnson is also a fervent believer in the role of national institutions. He has long favored industrial policy for the United States combined with coordinated fiscal and trade policies between Tokyo and Washington.²² These revisionist positions on U.S.-Japan economic relations have ironic similarity to the “trade hawk” approach of the Republican right wing.

Some opposed to the Engaged Balancer strategy argue that even this reduced involvement is unnecessary, costly, and politically unsustainable. Others opposed to the strategy argue that its traditional conception of contemporary and future international relations precludes the development or application of new international or regional organizations to replace, or at least facilitate, these relations. Defenders of existing policy tend to treat this strategic option as the lesser of several evils, but not as worthwhile as the status quo.

3. *Multilateralism: build new or modify existing institutions in Asia to integrate Japan's and others' military forces in the region*

The assumptions of this strategy are, like the first two presented, that America must stay engaged in Asia due to a host of vital interests, that it has to adapt to increased Japanese power and greater limitations to its own, and that Japan as well as China is a competitor. In contrast to the first two options, it assumes a sufficient level of leadership and coincidence of interests among the actors in the region to warrant the creation of a multilateral “constabulary”²³ force to patrol the SLOCs and otherwise serve a stabilizing function.

The underlying purpose of this strategy is to regularize and legitimize a benign Japanese participation in a new security order in the Pacific. Japan is seen as an economic juggernaut that poses the chief challenge to the United States in Asia. Proponents of this strategy are fearful that unless the Japanese are brought into a multilateral arrangement they will be less likely to coordinate defense policy with the United States, more likely to rearm at a much higher level, and perhaps attempt to limit American involvement of all kinds in the region. They suggest that an institutionalized multilateral arrangement also would be more sustainable domestically among the American people (where the commitment would have a clear moral foundation), involve equitable cost-sharing, and avoid the appearance of relegating U.S. forces to the status of mercenaries in the employ of the Japanese.

Like the previous two strategies, this one would reduce American forces, but it would augment them with Japanese, perhaps Russian, and others brought together (in various mixes) to patrol the Strait of Malacca, the Lombok and Sunda Straits, the South and East China Seas, and the Sea of Japan. It is unclear how air and ground forces would be integrated, or what kind of command system they would utilize. A variant of this strategy would make the force binational (United States and Japan) if others balked at joining. Still another approach would have the United Nations serve as the sponsor of such a standing force.

²¹William S. Dietrich, *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: The Political Roots of American Economic Decline*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991, p. 284.

²²Chalmers Johnson, “How to Think About Economic Competition from Japan,” in Kenneth B. Pyle (ed.), *The Trade Crisis: How Will Japan Respond*, Seattle: Society for Japanese Studies, 1987, pp. 71-83.

²³Donald C. Hellmann, “America and Asia in the Twilight of the Cold War: The Alliance Dividend and Constabulary Security,” Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, *NBR Briefing*, No. 1 (October 1990).

The Japanese might well learn to like the idea of multilateral forces in the region, both from a cost standpoint and as a means of rearming and playing a wider regional role in a manner acceptable to some, if not all, of the nations of the region. Kenneth Pyle, whose thinking bridges the Engaged Balancer and Multilateralist approaches, suggests that the Japanese could be persuaded to participate in a new "organization of Pacific nations, of which a revised U.S.-Japan alliance would serve as the core."²⁴

Some opponents of multilateralism argue that, like the first two strategies, the effort would be too costly and probably ineffective. Many argue that it is not feasible to establish a multilateral security organization in the absence of a clear threat, especially when power is so widely dispersed in Asia. If it could not be accomplished with a relatively clear Soviet threat during the Cold War, what more nebulous threat in the post-Cold War era would be capable of generating regional cohesion and military cooperation? Moreover, what would be the purpose of fostering regional multilateral forces when the United Nations already offers the option of multilateral forces where sufficient need and agreement on use exist? In addition, some opponents suggest that already diminished American leverage will be insufficient to control any regional organization and that Japan might assume *de facto* command. China, for one, would likely protest loudly any major role by Japan in a multilateral force. Further, in a multipolar system maximum leverage can be exercised with greatest flexibility via the role of a balancer unobligated by complex international agreements. Flexibility in policy is especially important in a diverse region undergoing profound change, these critics stress.²⁵ From the American standpoint, an institutionalized multilateral arrangement could actually *encourage* the development of Japanese technologies and forces that could later come to haunt the United States. Moreover, U.S. forces might well move from being mercenaries for the Japanese to being mercenaries for several Asian powers indirectly led by Japan.

4. *Distant Balancer: withdraw forces from the region and behave in a noninterventionist manner*

The chief assumption of this strategy is that a new and sufficiently stable balance of power either already exists or can be readily achieved in the region if U.S. forces are skillfully withdrawn. Advocates of this strategy suggest that forward-deployed U.S. forces in Asia are no longer required due to the end of the Cold War. Some advocates of this approach address the problem of instabilities inherent in rapid withdrawal; others leave them for regional powers to cope with. One way or another, these destabilizing effects would have to be addressed by establishing substitutes for U.S. forces, solving key issues, and phasing the withdrawal.

Proponents of this strategy often argue that the stalemate on the Korean Peninsula is no longer a serious problem for Americans or is nearing a solution anyway, and that Japan is simply no longer a threat to the rest of Asia. Furthermore, many proponents argue that the balance of power in the region is inherently stable without direct U.S. participation both because of the character and interests of the particular actors involved and because of the number of those actors.²⁶ According to this line of thinking, several factors should be considered. China is likely to be secure with a credible nuclear deterrent and to be inwardly focused on its economic development for a decade or more. Japan lacks interest in military adventures of any kind and is highly integrated into the international economy. Russia is incapable of mounting

²⁴Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan's Pacific Overtures," *The American Enterprise*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November/December 1991), p. 37.

²⁵William Odom argues that "The strategic structure, especially in Northeast Asia, is not analogous to Europe, and to impose a multilateral arrangement could seriously complicate the U.S. security arrangements. . . ." "East Asia Transformed," San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, Center for Asian Pacific Affairs, No. 4 (November 1991), p. 6.

²⁶Eari R. Ravenal, *Designing Defense for a New World Order: The Military Budget in 1992 and Beyond*, Washington, DC: The CATO Institute, 1991. Ravenal believes the triangular balance among Russia, China, and Japan is stable. See pp. 21-27. Also see Alan Tonelson and Ronald A. Morse, "Outdated Alliance Strategies," in Clyde Prestowitz, et al., *Poweromics: Economics and Strategy After the Cold War*, Washington, DC: Economic Strategy Institute, 1991, pp. 241-256.

a credible threat in the region for the foreseeable future and by necessity is obsessed with its internal challenges. The capacity for mischief by Southeast Asian countries or India is sharply limited by geographic factors and military potential, with Indochina a modest question mark. In addition, the region is further protected from major conflict by the availability of the off-shore balancer, the United States, to combine with present or future allies in the region against any states that appear bent on aggression. In other words, the United States could easily reengage in the region if it determined that vital interests were at stake. The costs and risks of internationalist approaches are simply not necessary to bear in the post-Cold War years.

A variant of the Distant Balancer/noninterventionist strategy is based on the perception that the United States must reduce foreign commitments and operations to focus on the more important priority of strengthening American society as a whole and especially its economic prowess. The "America first" strategy of liberals and conservatives is pushed by a domestic agenda and rejects the notion that so much attention needs to be paid by Americans to international affairs now that there is no immediate threat to U.S. security. It suggests that the solutions to American problems must be found in America. In comparison with the more cautious "phased withdrawal" approach, it calls for an accelerated timetable for pulling back forward-deployed U.S. forces. It would emphasize a quasi-"fortress America" military strategy, supplemented by major elements of sea power, air power, and nuclear forces to deter foreign adversaries. A version of the Strategic Defense Initiative also is frequently emphasized. For its conservative advocates such as Pat Buchanan, this is an effort to revive the old "mainstream." Its liberal advocates are more influenced by the post-Vietnam impulse to disengage abroad. Both are drawn to the verities of Presidents Washington and Jefferson that for so many years successfully guided U.S. foreign policy and kept the United States out of entangling obligations and unnecessary wars.

Critics of both withdrawal strategies cry out that their advocates have forgotten the lessons of the 1930s and 1940s. The critics see a failure to consider America's vulnerability to events overseas due to global economic and strategic interdependence, a failure to appreciate that the international economy operates successfully because of a regime that requires the authority of United States leadership, and a failure to recognize the political nature of trade relations, which includes using leverage selectively to gain access to markets or protect our markets from unfair trade competition, or to rebuild or nurture industry. Finally, they charge that American credibility as an international actor would be undercut by withdrawing so massively, even in a phased effort. The proponents reject such criticism as too tied to obsolete Cold War priorities, and as based on false stereotypes of prewar U.S. policy. The proponents maintain that the United States can safely return to its foreign-policy roots.

The essential elements and assumptions of the four strategies are outlined in the chart on the following pages.

Conclusion

The strategy that America adopts should be based on an accurate assessment of the international environment, the threats, and the competitors. It should also be clear about its goals, which will surely include, at a minimum, deterring enemies and improving the rules of international economic behavior. In addition, as is the case with any strategy, a central aim should be to protect and build upon the country's repertoire of capabilities, especially its economic assets that sustain its military power.

This analysis finds that the critical immediate challenge for America in Asia (and elsewhere in the world) is to the nation's industrial and technological base. There appears to be a breath-

U.S. STRATEGIC OPTIONS IN ASIA

	Extended Deterrence	Engaged Balancer
Global/ Regional Context	Unstable multipolar system without the U.S. Economic interdependence National rivalries Economic competition Power politics pervasive Domestic instabilities	Unstable multipolar system without the U.S. Economic interdependence National rivalries Economic competition Power politics pervasive Domestic instabilities
Competitors/ Opponents	Russia, North Korea, China, Japan, "New Japans"	Japan, China, North Korea, Russia, "New Japans"
Threats	<i>Short Term :</i> War on Korean Peninsula Russian aggression <i>Long Term:</i> Japanese rearmament Chinese aggression China-Japan rivalry Small-power aggression	<i>Short Term :</i> Economic/technological dominance by Japan Japanese rearmament War on Korean Peninsula Trade bloc <i>Long Term:</i> China-Japan rivalry
Interests/Goals	Deter/defeat threats to U.S. territory, SLOCs, key allies Regional peace Political leadership Burden-sharing Flow of military-related technology to U.S.	Economic/technological growth to exceed/keep pace with Asia Deter/defeat threats to U.S. territory, SLOCs, key allies Regional peace Political and economic leadership, shared when necessary
Strategic Approach	Internationalist/realist Extended deterrence Bilateral alliances (with Japan, et al.) Co-lead ad hoc coalitions Premier navy, RDFs, and strategic forces Conserve U.S. bases	Internationalist/realist Political-economic Limited extended deterrence Bilateral alliances/ relationships (with Japan, et al.) Co-lead ad hoc coalitions Premier navy, RDFs and strategic forces

Multilateralism	Distant Balancer
<p>Unstable multipolar system without the U.S. Economic interdependence National rivalries Economic competition International organization Domestic instabilities</p>	<p>Stable multipolar system without the U.S. Economic interdependence, partially offset by economic nationalism Economic competition Power politics avoidable Domestic instabilities</p>
<p>Japan, China, North Korea, Russia, "New Japans"</p>	<p>Japan, "New Japans," China, North Korea, Russia</p>
<p><i>Short Term :</i> Japanese rearmament Economic/technological dominance by Japan War on the Korean Peninsula Trade bloc <i>Long Term:</i> China-Japan rivalry</p>	<p><i>Short Term :</i> Economic/technological dominance by Japan <i>Long Term :</i> Major-power aggression across the Pacific</p>
<p>Economic/technological growth to exceed/keep pace with Asia Deter/defeat threats to U.S. territory, SLOCs, key allies Regional peace Shared political and economic leadership</p>	<p>Deter/defeat threats to U.S. territory, vital SLOCs Technological and economic leadership Minimize unnecessary and entangling obligations and risks</p>
<p><i>Internationalist</i> International organization Political-economic Multilateral force Co-lead regional organization Premier navy, RDFs and strategic forces</p>	<p><i>America first</i> Traditionalist/realist/ noninterventionalist; join ad hoc coalitions as last resort No forward-deployed forces Premier navy, air power, SDI, nuclear forces</p>

ing spell for Americans of perhaps a decade in which the Asia-Pacific region's major actors will remain relatively passive internationally. Their political ambitions may be postponed during and even beyond that time frame at modest cost to American taxpayers through continuation of a U.S. military presence in Asia. That period will be a time when American industry will need to sharpen its competitiveness, when America will have to solve its fiscal and balance-of-payments deficits, and address training and other work-force issues. No less than dramatic results in investment, technological development, and industrial growth are required if the United States is going to cope with East Asia's economic challenge. However, just as there was a cost-benefit ratio for American policymakers during the Cold War, so too is there one for the United States in the post-Cold War era. The American people must decide whether the costs of staying committed strategically to the defense of their key competitors in the Asia-Pacific region are worth the putative benefits.

Moreover, the period in which Americans can adjust to new realities in Asia and at home will not last indefinitely, in part because a difficult era may loom in Asia. This era is likely to be characterized by a challenge that has struck this (and other) regions in the past. The challenge is that of leadership in an age of rapid change. As Robert Gilpin has pointed out, "The fundamental problem of international relations . . . is the problem of peaceful adjustment to the consequences of uneven growth. . . ." Nowhere has there been more dramatic growth and vast restructuring of economic and political power than in Asia over the last several decades. The architecture of power both within Asia and between Asia and the rest of the world has changed radically. If insufficiently addressed, this challenge could undermine the bright hopes and promises that spring from much of the region today.

By the early 21st century a shadow may be cast over international relations in Asia by the Japan-China relationship. It is similar to the historic British relationship with France, or later Germany, between the nearby island sea power and the land power on the continent. However, in Asia the situation is compounded by Chinese expectations aroused by a "Middle Kingdom" heritage. Japan's links with Southeast Asia, Korea, Russia, Kazakhstan, or India may be seen as threats by China, while Chinese links with those areas—particularly Korea, Russia, and Southeast Asia—may be perceived as threats by Japan. The politics of the region may become dominated by the interaction of these two powers, and the role of the United States (and to a lesser extent Russia and India) as a balancer may become key to peace between them. This is, of course, predicated on assumptions that China does not seriously falter and that the United States will want to ameliorate relations between East Asia's two largest powers.

Looking toward Asia's future, the most desirable options for the United States may evolve with changes in the structure of power and in U.S. interests. The concern with American competitiveness emphasized most strongly in the Distant Balancer strategy is attractive, but the strategic assumption about America's ability to retrench immediately from Asian-Pacific defense commitments seems wishful. At the same time, the conditions for institutionalized multilateralism are not extant in the region. Should a constabulary force be somehow established, merging forces and missions could very well assist in legitimizing a strong Japanese military presence and in creating an even more formidable competitor while reducing America's flexibility to deal with Japan and other nations of the region. Likewise, continuation of current U.S. policy misjudges the nature of the strategic environment, in particular the economic challenge posed by Japan and the need to integrate economic, political, and military components in U.S. strategy. Thus, the Engaged Balancer option is most compelling now. This strat-

²⁷Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 230.

egy requires firm and prompt action in a set of coordinated foreign and domestic policies to strengthen the American economy and make the alliance with Japan more durable.

The Engaged Balancer option may be either a long-term or interim solution. If the United States and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region can create a viable security system in which the United States is not called upon to bear disproportionate costs, risks, or obligations, then this option may prove both feasible and durable. If so, it could form the basis of a genuine "new Asian order." The main problem with the Engaged Balancer strategy, however, is the possibility that the United States will continue to fully engage itself while its partners restrain *their* enthusiasm for being engaged. That is precisely the problem with existing extended deterrence strategy. The United States is comparatively overextended. Enunciating a U.S. policy of "engaged balance" does not guarantee that the United States will free itself from disproportionate burdens. Consequently, at some point a hybrid of the Engaged and Distant Balancer options may be advantageous for the United States. America might well remain heavily involved in Asian affairs but with few (or no) formal defense obligations. It will be necessary for Americans to pay attention to Asia (and other parts of the world), but increasingly on a selective basis and on their own terms to the degree possible. Americans need to be in the driver's seat of their country's destiny, less dependent upon the vagaries of partners and freer of unwanted risks, costs, and liabilities. Claims that one is either engaged or disengaged fail to appreciate fully the means by which great powers will maximize their effectiveness in the new strategic environment. Like champion athletes in an endurance race, great powers need to choose wisely when they draft their competitors and when they lead—when they let others assume primary responsibility and costs and when they assume these themselves.

The window of policy opportunity afforded by the new post-Cold War strategic environment will not remain open forever. Will momentum continue to propel U.S. foreign and defense policy along a track created for the very different circumstances of the Cold War? Probably not, as Americans recognize and accept the anachronisms in existing U.S. strategy, together with paramount economic issues. The popular debate on U.S. national strategy has accelerated amidst the 1992 presidential campaign, but neither policymakers nor the American public seem on the verge of settling on answers to the momentous questions raised by the new challenges abroad. This is worrisome, for not since the 1940s has the need for strategic revision been more acute.

In this new global environment, where circumstances may shift unexpectedly, prudent policymakers in the United States should shun (except in rare instances) entangling commitments from which it may be difficult to withdraw. Rarely will it be desirable for the United States to maintain or build costly new overseas bases, maintain or enter into rigid alliances, or integrate forces internationally and share exclusive technologies with countries whose reliability can never be assured. Instead, bilateral relationships and flexible international arrangements need to be nurtured. As potential or immediate threats develop, the most prudent approach will be to respond by building effective coalitions in which burdens are shared equitably. If those arrangements cannot be achieved, Americans must defend U.S. interests unilaterally. This remains the ultimate constant in U.S. foreign policy. Pursuit of that core policy requires that Americans keep their defense industrial base strong and dynamic in the face of post-Cold War challenges. □