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IIPS

Institute for
International Policy Studies
・Tokyo・

IIPS International Conference

"A New Horizon for Japan's Security Policy
−Basic Concept and Framework"

Tokyo, November 30 and December 1, 2004

"U.S. Security Strategy in Asia and the Prospects for an Asian Regional Security Regime"

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prepared for a conference on “A New Horizon for Japan’s Security Policy – Basic Concept and Framework” hosted by the Institute for International Policy Studies, Tokyo, Japan, Nov. 30 - Dec. 1, 2004

U.S. security strategy in Asia today is built today, as it has been for the past half century, upon the foundation of a solid U.S.-Japan alliance relationship. This foundation, which has seen its fair share of cracks and quakes, appears remarkable resilient at present. In fact, the depth and breadth of defense cooperation between Washington and Tokyo in recent years have been unprecedented. While Japan may not yet be the “U.K. of Asia,” as once envisioned by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, it is not too far a stretch to call Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro Asia’s answer to Tony Blair. Prime Minister Koizumi is one of a small, select group of Asia-Pacific leaders who have won Washington’s utmost trust and confidence (and sincere gratitude), given his unyielding support for the U.S. war on terrorism in all its manifestations and his willingness to buck domestic public opinion to provide support to the two major campaigns in Washington’s ongoing war: Afghanistan and Iraq. This has paid handsome dividends in helping to achieve what both sides generally agree are the “best relations ever.”

This paper will look first at how this “most important bilateral relationship, bar none” has evolved over the past decade and especially since Sept. 11, 2001, looking at some of the current initiatives that lie at the base of U.S.-Japan security cooperation today and in the immediate future. It will then look at Washington’s presumed future vision for East Asia under a second Bush administration and how the ongoing Defense Department Global Posture Review fits into this vision. Finally, I will discuss the prospects for broader multilateral cooperation and how any potential Asian regional security regime will impact our bilateral relationship.

Background: A Decade of Enhanced Cooperation

The unprecedented decision earlier this year by Prime Minister Koizumi to deploy Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) troops to Iraq to help in that country’s pacification and reconstruction is just the most recent in a series of adjustments that have occurred in the operational arrangements underpinning U.S.-Japan defense cooperation. And, while 9-11 and the resulting war on terrorism are pivotal in understanding and justifying the expanded defense relationship, it is important to look back to the mid-1990s when examining the current evolution of the alliance, not just to put today’s changes into perspective but because the current trend toward developing a “more equal” partnership really dates back to an earlier turning point in the relationship: the *U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security Alliance for the 21st Century* issued by then-President Bill Clinton and his Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro, during their April 1996 summit meeting in Tokyo.

The 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Summit, which signaled an official end to the “Japan-bashing” era, set the stage for the revised 1997 Defense Guidelines, which in turn set the stage for the more dramatic changes we have witnessed since 9-11. It is interesting to note that the Joint Declaration and revised Guidelines were stimulated by several events that are strangely reminiscent of more recent occurrences: a U.S.-led military campaign against Iraq and a Korean Peninsula nuclear crisis. One need only to compare and contrast Japan’s response to the previous Iraq/DPRK crises with the current ones to realize that, thankfully, it is not *deja vu* all over again. Despite justifiable criticism of President Clinton’s tendency to ignore the alliance during the closing (Japan-passing) years of his administration, his Joint Declaration with Prime Minister Hashimoto lay the initial groundwork that their successors would subsequently build upon, especially after Sept. 11th provided the political cover to move the relationship forward much faster than anyone drafting the Joint Statement or revised Defense Guidelines would have then imagined.

I begin my paper with this brief current history lesson to emphasize a too often overlooked fact; namely, that partisan election year bickering notwithstanding (and thankfully Japan was not a major issue

in the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign), there is broad-based bipartisan support for the U.S.-Japan alliance in the United States. There appeared to be great anxiety in Tokyo that, if Senator Kerry had won the race, he would have somehow been angry with Prime Minister Koizumi for Japan's outspoken support to the U.S. before, during, and after the invasion of Iraq. To the contrary, I would argue that, had Kerry won, he would have cited Japan's current support as the model that other allies (especially Europeans) should emulate. He and Prime Minister Koizumi would have quickly become the best of friends.

With President Bush's reelection, we should see a continued improvement in U.S.-Japan relations, with a high priority attached to alliance maintenance. There is one caveat, however: it appears that the only thing that has risen faster than the level of cooperation between our two nations during the Bush-Koizumi era has been the level of Washington's expectations regarding the creation of an even more "normal" defense relationship with its long-standing ally in East Asia. This may raise hopes in Washington (and in certain quarters in Tokyo) that will not be easily fulfilled as both sides strive to create a more equal partnership.

The Bush-Koizumi Era

Pre-Sept 11th. U.S.-Japan defense cooperation has clearly been taken to a higher level under President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi. While much of the progress has been attributed to Sept. 11th – and, as previously argued, the terrorist attacks on that day provided both the impetus and political cover to move the defense relationship forward at an accelerated pace – both sides had already clearly signaled their intention to create a broader, deeper security relationship.

Armitage/Nye Report. Just prior to the November 2000 U.S. presidential election, the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University in Washington published a report (on Oct. 11, 2000) outlining what a more activist U.S. security policy with Japan might look like. While the report was drafted by a bipartisan team of specialists led by Republican Richard Armitage and Democrat Joseph Nye (both former Assistant Secretaries of Defense), it was generally interpreted in Tokyo as a "Republican" plan (and, to this day, is often referred to merely as "The Armitage Report"). The report called for "excellence without arrogance" from the United States while suggesting a more open door in Washington for Japanese ideas and initiatives. It also encouraged Tokyo to expand its security and diplomatic responsibilities in Asia.

The most controversial aspect of the report was the observation that Japan's decision not to exercise the right of collective defense is an obstacle to alliance cooperation. This was interpreted by many in Tokyo as an endorsement of Constitutional revision. However, the report was careful to emphasize that decisions on the Constitution must be thoroughly considered by the Japanese people themselves. For the most part, the report was well received in Japan, though many questioned whether the Japanese political system, especially under a very weak and ineffective Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro, was up to the task.

"Dynamic Approach" Initiated. This question was quickly laid to rest following the election of Prime Minister Koizumi in April, 2001. But, even before Koizumi's election, President Bush had issued a joint statement with his predecessor during Prime Minister Mori's visit to Washington that seemed to go beyond the 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Communique in pledging "a dynamic approach to bilateral defense consultation and planning." Included also was a pledge to "strengthen joint efforts to address the transnational challenges of the 21st century." (The ability of both sides to effectively handle the tragic accidental sinking of a Japanese training ship by a U.S. submarine also demonstrated that the defense and broader bilateral relationship were on solid ground.)

The selection of Koizumi Junichiro as Prime Minister dramatically increased the prospects for still deeper cooperation. Fears that Japan would prove to be a reluctant partner largely vanished amid Koizumi's talk of leading his nation toward a more "normal" role in international affairs. Seemingly taking a

page from the Armitage/Nye Report, Koizumi stated that it was desirable for Japan to be allowed to participate in collective defense activities and to help defend its allies (read: the United States) in the event of regional crisis. He also noted that Article 9 of the Japanese constitution -- which stipulates that Japan shall never maintain land, sea, or air forces -- "fails to reflect reality." Koizumi's view seems to dovetail nicely with calls for a more equal relationship coming from Washington.

Shortly after taking office, Koizumi said that definitions of "rear areas" were flexible, implying that Japan might be able to provide more support for U.S. forces in a contingency than had previously been thought. His Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda Yasuo also ordered studies on ways to lift restraints on Japanese soldiers participating in UN peacekeeping operations. Koizumi also expressed support for missile defense (telling the Diet in early June that the project deserves further study). In short, the trend toward enhanced defense cooperation had been set in motion well before the tragic events of Sept. 11th.

9-11: The Beginning of a New Era

Response to 9-11. Immediately after the attack, Prime Minister Koizumi went on record stating that Japan would "spare no effort in providing assistance and cooperation" in support of America's war on terrorism. He followed this up with even stronger commitments to provide intelligence and military logistical support during his late September visit to New York and Washington. During his meeting with President Bush, Koizumi said (in English, for emphasis): "We Japanese firmly stand behind the United States to fight terrorism." He then added, much to Washington's amazement and delight, that "It will no longer hold that the Self-Defense Forces should not be sent to danger spots. There is no such thing as a safe place."

Backing up these assertions, Koizumi quickly put together a seven-point program to respond to the crisis. It included measures allowing the Self-Defense Forces to provide logistical support to the U.S. military in the event of a retaliatory strike; strengthening security measures at important facilities in Japan; dispatching Japanese ships to gather information; strengthening international cooperation over immigration control; providing humanitarian and economic aid to affected countries; assisting refugees fleeing areas that might be hit by U.S. retaliation; and cooperating with other countries to ensure stability in the international economic system.

Enduring Freedom. Emergency legislation quickly enacted in Oct. 2001 allowed new operational arrangements to quickly evolve. In early November 2001, two Japanese destroyers and a supply ship left home port for the Indian Ocean to provide off-shore non-combat support for Operation Enduring Freedom. The only disappointment was Japan's failure, despite not-so-subtle U.S. pressure, initially to include an Aegis destroyer in its Indian Ocean task force. The Japanese Cabinet has since routinely voted to extend SDF support for the war in Afghanistan and, in a significant step forward, finally decided in December 2002 to dispatch one of its high-tech Aegis-equipped vessels to the Indian Ocean as part of that effort.

Operation Iraqi Freedom. Immediately prior to the March 2003 Iraq invasion,Tokyo has stepped up its logistical support for the coalition forces operating in Afghanistan. In early March, JMSDF ships began refueling Italian, Spanish, French, German, New Zealand, and Dutch warships participating in Operation Enduring Freedom, in addition to the U.S. and British vessels. This freed up U.S. logistics forces for support to Operation Iraqi Freedom. While Japan did not directly participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the above measures allowed the U.S. to shift more assets to the Iraqi campaign and thus constituted significant (yet still constitutional) indirect support to the war effort. It was sufficient to have Tokyo listed on the Iraqi Freedom coalition of the willing membership list, even before Prime Minister Koizumi's politically courageous decision to put "boots on the ground" in Iraq.

Korean Crisis. Japan's support to the U.S. has not been limited to Iraq and Afghanistan. Tokyo has been a steadfast supporter of Washington's multilateral approach toward the nuclear stand-off on the Korean Peninsula. Washington, in return, continues to argue that Japanese participation is "essential," despite complaints from Pyongyang and only luke-warm initial support from Beijing and Seoul for a

Japanese seat at the table. Tokyo has also played an important role at the regular Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meetings with Washington and Seoul, urging U.S. flexibility at times, but most importantly echoing Washington's insistence that nuclear weapons cannot be tolerated in North Korea, thus providing some much-needed backbone to Seoul, which seems to have a looser definition of "will not tolerate" than its other two TCOG partners.

Seldom have Washington and Tokyo been so close together in their views of how best to deal with Pyongyang. Recall that in the closing months of the Clinton administration, there was great fear in Tokyo that Washington was going to get too far out in front of Tokyo on this issue. Following an exchange of high-level visits and amid preparations for a possible Clinton visit to Pyongyang, many were concerned that Japan would be pressured to speed up its normalization process with Pyongyang, perhaps beyond a point that was politically sustainable. Conversely, once the Sept. 2002 Koizumi visit to Pyongyang was announced, there were concerns expressed that Japan might get way out in front of a more cautious, tentative Bush administration which seemed reluctant to engage in meaningful dialogue with a member of the so-called "axis of evil."

Today, however, both Washington and Tokyo appear in lock-step, with both insisting on an immediate, verifiable halt to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs and ambitions (and an immediate full accounting and satisfactory resolution of the abductee issue). Prime Minister Koizumi's influence on President Bush was most apparent after his second visit to Pyongyang, when Koizumi's statements stressing the need for a U.S. initiative resulted in Washington finally tabling a proposal at the Six-Party Talks (following close TCOG consultation) providing a roadmap for defusing the crisis. Unfortunately, Pyongyang has been hesitant to respond, apparently hoping – as it turns out, groundlessly – for "Regime change" in Washington. At this writing, Pyongyang was still resisting returning to the talks but most analysts believed that, with the U.S. elections over, the North would eventually return to the dialogue.

Japan's clear pronouncements about its right, under the principle of self-defense, to take preemptive action in the event of an imminent DPRK missile launch, while not too credible militarily, nonetheless provides political support to the U.S. doctrine of preemption while also underscoring the need for close military-to-military cooperation between Washington and Tokyo. As a self-proclaimed member of the "coalition of the willing," Japan's seemingly unqualified support for the U.S.-led military campaign against Iraq also solidifies the alliance while sending North Korea a clear message that Tokyo would no doubt be equally, if not more, willing to support Washington in dealing with threats closer to home.

Proliferation Security Initiative. Crossing yet another threshold in military-to-military cooperation, Tokyo also became a charter member of the U.S.-instigated Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), aimed at stemming the flow of weapons of mass destruction. The PSI, first laid out by President Bush in May 2003 and formalized at a 11-nation meeting (involving Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the UK, and the U.S.) in Madrid a month later, is "a global initiative with global reach," under which coalition members agreed, in Brisbane in July, "to move quickly on direct, practical measures to impede the trafficking in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), missiles, and related items." At a third meeting, in Paris in Sept, the 11 participants also agreed on a Statement of Interdiction Principles "to establish a more coordinated and effective basis through which to impede and stop [WMD] shipments . . . consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks, including the UN Security Council." The PSI now involves 18 countries, with Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway, Singapore, Turkey, and most recently Russia joining the core group. Just last month (October 2004), Japan for the first time hosted a PSI interdiction exercise in Tokyo Bay, involving nine naval and coast guard ships from Australia, France, Japan, and the U.S., providing yet another example just how deeply involved Japan has become in bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.

Missile Defense Cooperation. From the onset, Prime Minister Koizumi has also been a supporter of U.S.-Japan missile defense joint research. A decision to develop and deploy such a system has been another issue, however, since the necessary command and control coordination necessary for a broad-based system to be most effective would appear to cross the (ever-shifting) "collective defense"

barrier. Nonetheless, in late December 2003, Tokyo announced that it will begin building a missile defense system, citing "a spread of missiles and a rise in weapons of mass destruction" as the primary reasons behind the decision. Tokyo is also reviewing its 36-year-old ban on exporting weapons, their parts, and the technology to make them, with an eye to exempting the United States. The changes now being contemplated open the door for still deeper military-to-military cooperation between Washington and Seoul.

Future Expectations: More Like the U.K. . . . or Germany?

What does Washington wish that Tokyo would do now? The answer seems to be: more of the same. During his June 2002 Asia Society speech, Secretary Powell not only stressed Japan's positive contribution to regional stability (a familiar refrain) but also the alliance's role in providing "a framework within which Japan can contribute more to its own defense as well as to peace and security worldwide." Clearly Washington supports, and wants to encourage, a greater regional (if not global) security role befitting a more "normal" Japan. As Secretary Armitage noted in Feb 2004, "I believe that Prime Minister Koizumi has set a new benchmark, not just in the dispatch of Japanese Self Defense Forces to Iraq, but also in redefining Japan's role in the world." But, with the decision to put boots on the ground in Iraq, it appears unlikely that Washington will be looking to Tokyo to move further forward, at least during the remainder of President Bush's first term in office.

Washington's greatest concern now will be to avoid backsliding, especially if (when) Japanese forces become targets, or worse yet suffer significant casualties, in Iraq. I for one have greater confidence in Prime Minister Koizumi's (and the Japanese public's and JDA's) resolve than many of today's pundits. But, it's clear that Tokyo is more prepared militarily than it is politically or psychologically for what appears to be an inevitable first true test under fire (notwithstanding the fact that Japanese diplomats have already been killed in Iraq and civilian peacekeepers were likewise killed in Cambodia). How Tokyo responds will determine the pace (but not the direction) of future, deeper defense cooperation.

Following President Bush's reelection to a second term, one can expect continued – hopefully subtle and politically aware – pressure on Japan to continue to find new avenues of enhanced military cooperation and involvement in security matters in East Asia and beyond. "Japan can count on America, and increasingly, America can count on Japan," Secretary Armitage noted in Tokyo in Feb 2004, "Certainly a more self-confident Japan, with its own unique style of global leadership, can only add to that equation, both in the economic opportunities for our peoples and in advancing our shared global interests."

As long as Prime Minister Koizumi remains at the helm, such gentle pressure will likely be welcome and sufficient to see continued forward progress. The big issue is a purely Japanese one: constitutional revision or further reinterpretation to allow collective defense. Since many maintain that Japan, under the UN Charter, is already permitted to exercise collective self-defense but has merely chosen not to do so, it is possible that a political decision short of reinterpretation may be the vehicle Tokyo chooses to move further forward in its quest to become a more normal nation. But, given Prime Minister Koizumi's earlier comments on the subject, one can anticipate a move toward actual constitutional revision at some point in the not-too-distant future. Washington will be cheering along the sidelines, but is likely to continue its official hands-off policy.

Will Japan become the UK of Asia? Perhaps, but it will not happen overnight, even if there is constitutional reform. The German model may (I would argue, should) first apply. During the 1992 Gulf War, Germany increased its military operations in the Mediterranean and other NATO areas to free up more non-German NATO forces to participate in Operation Desert Storm, quite similar to what Japan did, and is continuing to do, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and its aftermath. By Kosovo, Germany had taken the next step in being a full partner in a wartime coalition and few blink an eye today at Germany's active involvement in Afghanistan – it's reluctance to participate in Iraq is driven by other factors, and not by the lingering ghosts of World War II. Before Japan can become the UK of Asia in the 21st Century, it must become the Germany of the last decade and finally put its own World War II ghosts to

rest.

Future Visions: A Continuing Coincidence of Views

As a general rule, American politicians, be they Democrats or Republicans, are not famous for their ability to think long term, much less plan or act in accordance with future visions. However, the 2002 *National Security Strategy* provides a clue regarding the Bush administration's future vision (for those willing to read beyond the two pages that discuss preemptive attacks against an imminent threat involving weapons of mass destruction). The NSS, like all its earlier versions (by Republicans and Democrats alike), calls for the maintenance of the U.S. alliance structure in East Asia, centered around the U.S.-Japan alliance. The 2002 edition also puts a high premium on major power cooperation, citing both Japan and China (and, in South Asia, India) as major Asian powers.

What remains missing – and what I would argue is sorely needed today – is a new East Asia Strategy Report that lays out Washington's vision for Asian security. In the absence of such a document, allow me to speculate. I would argue that most serious American strategists see and support a continued active political, economic, and security role for the United States in Asia one to two decades from now, simply because it is in America's national security interest to remain actively engaged. I also see a continued role for current alliance relationships in this future, as part of an overlapping series of security arrangements and mechanisms aimed at promoting a peaceful, stable security environment.

Few believe that current force levels could or should be sustained, absent a dramatic change in the threat environment in East Asia post-Korean reunification or reconciliation. But the network of alliances that have served U.S. interests so well for the past half century – and that have provided the bases which make a continued force presence or even power projection from remote bases possible – will remain useful, even if "lily pads" and operational or logistical "hubs"replace larger facilities as the future bases of choice. Ironically, one of the driving rationales behind the current U.S. force restructuring or Future of the Alliance (FOTA) talks is to create a force posture that is sustainable into the future, based on the shared understanding that the current footprint is too intrusive and thus not sustainable. As will be discussed in more detail later, the problem today is not so much what is being done or why, but how it is being accomplished.

The U.S.-Japan defense alliance maintains an important role in my vision of a stable future East Asia, as does enhanced cooperation among the U.S., Japan, and an eventually reunified Korea, in what I have described in earlier writings as a "virtual alliance." While a formal trilateral alliance appears unnecessary and could even prove counterproductive, the U.S., Japan, and ROK should work toward the development of such a virtual alliance, achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-Korea security relationship post reunification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul. From a U.S. perspective – and one would hope from a Korean perspective as well – an openly antagonistic relationship between Seoul and Tokyo or, worse yet, a reunified Korea that saw Japan as its primary adversary would be extremely destabilizing. (So too, as I will soon address, would be a U.S.-Korea-Japan alliance aimed at China.) Washington's "best case" vision for a peaceful, prosperous Asia is one in which the "end of history" has occurred (at least as far as Korea and Japan are concerned), and both are working closely with the U.S. to promote a stable, secure Asia. This does not require transforming the current separate bilateral alliances into a trilateral one but does require a continuation of today's alliances and a deepening of the "weakest link."

As regards the Korean Peninsula itself, I would argue that it is the common vision of the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea that one day in the future there be a single Korean nation inhabiting the entire Peninsula, living securely in an area that encompasses the current recognized boundaries of the North and South, under the political and economic systems and way of life that exist today in the South. Such an outcome is in the national security interest of Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul and in the best interest of the Korean people, North and South. For the purposes of this paper, we will

leave how we get to such a state to others to debate; the only thing required here is to accept that this is a common vision. It is – or should be – a vision acceptable to, and consistent wit the national security interests of, Korea's other neighbors as well.

This brings us to the most contentious aspect of America's future vision of Asia; namely how to deal with a rising China. Here, it is a lot easier to agree on the type of China we would like to see than it is to agree on the type China we are likely to see. Even the most avid members of the contain China crowd (the infamous "blue team" in Washington) would acknowledge that the preferred outcome would be a peaceful, prosperous, stable China that is more tolerant both of its neighbors and of the aspirations of its own people; a China that has reached a peaceful accommodation with Taiwan that is acceptable to the people on both sides of the Strait. While some fear that China's current commitment to "peaceful rise" will change once it has risen, most would agree that it would be easier to deal with (i.e., contain) a powerful, antagonistic China than to deal with the consequences of a failed China. – one only need recall the political and economic consequences of South Vietnam's collapse to imagine the impact that a ten- (or hundred-) fold increase in Chinese boat people would have on East Asia and beyond.

I would argue that it is in our mutual long-term interest to see the peaceful rise of China and that embracing China and wrapping it in a web of multilateral economic, political, and security relationships is the best way of assuring, or at least increasing the prospects of, a peaceful risen China as well. But I would also argue that a strong U.S. alliance network, not specifically aimed at China but at promoting regional stability and enhanced crisis response capabilities wherever trouble may occur, also helps present realistic boundaries that will help channel or guide China's rise in the most beneficial direction.

For true stability to occur in East Asia, the four major powers – the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia – must all maintain cordial, cooperative relations both with one another and, of equal importance, with Korea. As noted earlier, this simple fact is underscored in the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy*, as it was in the Clinton administration's earlier versions of this document. Past Korean leaders have also recognized this simple fact, and the role a continuation of the U.S.-ROK alliance plays in permitting simultaneous good relations with all four powers. It is the sense of security provided by the alliance – Washington's role as the "outside balancer" – that permits Seoul to maintain simultaneous good relations with all of its powerful neighbors. The absence of the alliance would create a vacuum that the ROK would either have to fill itself by considerable (including possible nuclear) military expansion or by linking itself to one of the other nearby giants. Whichever one Korea choose – and China would be the most likely but not only conceivable choice – the other would feel threatened and likely respond in ways that could be even more destabilizing. For this reason, at least from this American's perspective, a continuation of the U.S.-ROK alliance provides Seoul with the best opportunity to maintain good relations with all four of its neighbors.

While one could argue that this future vision does not challenge China's national security interests, since it channels but does not seek to prevent or delay China's peaceful rise, it is doubtful that such a scenario is China's first choice of potential outcomes. No doubt, China would prefer an East Asia 20 years hence in which it, rather than Washington, was the "balancer" and where Seoul looked first to Beijing rather than to Washington (or Tokyo, or Moscow, or to itself) as the primary guarantor of Peninsula stability. The question, which only Seoul can answer, is "what does Korea prefer?"

From a U.S. perspective, it would be particularly unsettling if a future (unified) Korea looked to China as its primary security partner, especially if they both looked toward Japan as the primary future threat or enemy. It is an unfortunate fact that one of the few things that the people of North and South Korea have in common today is an historical sense of distrust for their Japanese neighbors; a distrust shared, and all-too-frequently played upon, by the Chinese. If future South-North or Korea-China ties are built on this factor, however, with Japan emerging as the common concern today and future threat tomorrow, this will put Korea on a collision course with the United States, whose national security strategy rests upon the foundation of close U.S.-Japan relations and greater Japanese participation in regional security affairs.

There appears to be a certain fascination with China on the Peninsula and a tendency to give China a free ride on sensitive issues, even while refusing to ignore any slight, real or imagined, that comes from Washington or Tokyo. Could you imagine, for example, what the response in Seoul would be if the U.S. or Japan or almost anyone else tried to prevent Seoul from inviting a recognized international religious leader to Korea? Yet, China has successfully pressured Seoul from inviting the Dalai Lama to visit for years. Likewise, Beijing continues to argue against direct air links between Seoul and Taipei and plays hardball on a number of other issues. It has only been the most recent controversy over the ancient kingdom of Koguryo that has gotten the attention of the Korean people and perhaps somewhat lessened China's teflon.

Again, from an admittedly biased U.S. perspective, a continued alliance relationship with Washington, even after reunification or reconciliation, provides Seoul with its best chance of being an in dependent, self-sustaining actor among the proverbial whales that surround the Peninsula. President Ron Moo-hyun, like Kim Dae-jung and others before him, professes to agree with this assertion, but on a day-to-day basis does little to make this case to the Korean public, which in a democracy will ultimately decide the future viability of the alliance. Likewise, U.S. leaders have been remiss in making the case for a future security relationship, letting a sense of anti-Koreaness, while modest, continue to fester in the United States. This, in my view, serves neither country's long-term national security interests.

In summary, the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances and the broader U.S. East Asia bilateral alliance structure that served well the cause of regional peace and stability during the Cold War can similarly help promote future peace and stability if properly maintained and focused on regional stability rather than deterrence or containment, once the North Korean threat subsides.

Of course, deterrence remains the order of the day on the Peninsula as long as North Korea remains a separate entity with a separate military. But the U.S., Japan, and ROK should begin now to develop the rationale and lay the groundwork for future trilateral security cooperation post-reunification. While a formal trilateral alliance appears unnecessary and could even prove counterproductive, all three should work toward the development of a virtual alliance, achieved through the continuation of a U.S.-Korea security relationship post reunification, the continued revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the strengthening of bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul. This arrangement should not be aimed at China and should not been seen as trying to prevent its peaceful rise, but should help channel China's emergence in a way that remains non-threatening to the Korean Peninsula and to Korea's neighbors or the broader international community. The two bilateral security alliances and the trilateral virtual alliance should be part of an overlapping mosaic of cooperative security mechanisms aimed at promoting a true concert of powers in East Asia.

U.S. Military Transformation: What it Means for Asia

Before discussing multilateralism in Asia, a few more words appear in order regarding Washington's ongoing Global Posture Review (GPR). One must assume that the Bush administration, with reelection now accomplished, will energetically move ahead with its post-Cold War military transformation. In mid-August 2004, President Bush announced significant planned cuts in the number of American forces based overseas. Over the next ten years, President Bush told the U.S. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), 60-70,000 U.S. forces (and some 100,000 military family members and civilian Defense Department employees) currently based in Europe and Asia would be brought home. Increased U.S. mobility and force projection capabilities and dramatic changes in the nature of the post-Cold War threat would allow such reductions without any lessening of U.S. combat capability or Washington's commitment to its overseas allies. The force reductions, President Bush asserted, would make the U.S. military "more effective at projecting [its] strength and spreading freedom and peace." They would allow U.S. troops to "surge quickly to deal with unexpected threats."

Such assurances aside, the President's announcement has created undue anxiety in some corners (and perhaps unrealistic expectations in others). Despite its obvious domestic political motivation

– presented during a heated presidential campaign to an influential veterans group – the announcement actually reflects the culmination of three years of careful analysis by a Pentagon team which continues to attach high priority to "military transformation." This was one of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's top objectives, before Sept. 11, 2001 and the self-inflicted distraction of the Iraq War and its messy aftermath caused Pentagon priorities to shift elsewhere. With President Bush's first term drawing to a close, there is a sense of urgency in the White House and Pentagon to get the new post-Cold War military framework firmly in place, even if its implementation is years away (and no doubt subject to further negotiation and adjustment).

While details regarding the planned reductions are still sketchy, White House and Pentagon officials have assured their overseas partners that the effort has been and will continue to be closely coordinated with "all affected countries." As one administration spokesperson proclaimed, "This is something we're doing with allies, not that we're doing to allies." Based on information received thus far, the planned reductions appear to impact Europe much more than Asia. Two U.S. Army heavy divisions will be brought home from Germany; a move that was long overdue. Keeping forces in place that were originally deployed to fight a now nonexistent Soviet Union "would be a victory for inertia over strategic rationality," said one of the plan's chief architects, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith.

Feith laid out some basic principles underlying the Global Posture Review in Congressional testimony in late June, by describing what the GPR is not about:

-- "We are not aiming at retrenchment, curtailing US commitments, isolationism or unilateralism."
-- "We are not focused on maintaining numbers of troops overseas. Instead we are focused on increasing the capabilities of our forces and those of our friends."
-- "We are not talking about fighting in place, but on our ability to move to the fight."

Anticipated changes in Asia, beyond those already announced for the Korean Peninsula, would be "not very dramatic." Feith argued (in an Aug. 19 Washington Post editorial) that there was a "compelling rationale" for some modest East Asia redeployments, focusing on the need to move ROK-based forces out of downtown Seoul – "plucking a thorn out of South Korea's flesh" – and into more efficient "hubs" to allow them to better respond to threats "from North Korea or anyone else."

As part of the GPR, some 12,500 troops (out of 37,500 Korea-based forces) are scheduled to depart the Peninsula over the next few years; 3,600 have already left for duty in Iraq. It should be noted that the ROK government is in agreement with the redeployments. Its current complaint is not over how many or where, but when – South Korean authorities have asked (repeatedly and publicly) that the timetable be extended until the security situation on the Peninsula is further clarified. While the need to look at a post-Cold War (and post-9/11) military structure is readily apparent, it is important to remember that the Cold War has not yet ended on the Korean Peninsula; North Korea's current nuclear saber-rattling provides an all too obvious reminder of this fact. After some foot-dragging, the Pentagon finally saw the wisdom in showing some flexibility, indicating the redeployment of some key weapons systems would be delayed while agreeing to stretch out the troop cuts over the next four years, rather than by the end of 2005, as originally planned.

President Bush noted that even after the redeployments, "we'll still have a significant presence overseas." Today, over 230,000 U.S. troops are stationed abroad, not counting the 150,000 additional troops "temporarily" deployed to Iraq (which are not included in or affected by the broader plan). Roughly 25,000 appear destined to remain on the Korean Peninsula, serving a vital "reassurance" mission – the term "tripwire" is no longer in vogue.

While not yet specified, only modest adjustments are expected in Japan, where more mobile U.S. forces (mostly naval, air, and marine) already have a regional response mission. In fact, most of the rumors associated with Japan troop realignment suggest mere shifting of forces from one location (Okinawa) to another (Japanese Self Defense Force bases on the main islands) or headquarters' swaps:

there is talk of moving the Army's I Corp Headquarters to Camp Zama from Washington State while the Fifth Air Force Headquarters at Yokota may be combined with the Thirteenth Air Force Headquarters in Guam. All this remains extremely tentative, however. Negotiations – not only between Washington and Tokyo, but also within the Pentagon and between the administration and the Congress – are far from completed.

U.S. Not "Marching Out of Asia." Alarmist headlines aside – the *Far Eastern Economic Review* headline regarding Bush's VFW speech read "Marching Out Of Asia" while its cover proclaimed "America Pulls Back its Troops"– it is the intrusive American military footprint and not regional capability or commitment that is being reduced. Nor is the GPR intended to be the "beginnings of the end of the [U.S.-ROK] alliance," as a recent IISS *Strategic Comments* analytical article speculated. The GPR's overriding objective is to sustain, not devalue, existing alliances, in order to lay the groundwork for a sustained overseas military presence, albeit at reduced levels and with more flexible, rapid response forces.

While bases in Guam and Hawaii are likely to play an increasingly more important role as the "hub" or "lily pad" strategy unfolds, so too will current bases in Asia. Okinawa is particularly important, for three reasons: location, location, location. While some efforts will no doubt be made to reduce the defensive burden of the Okinawan people – as noted, some modest relocations from Okinawa to existing Japan Self Defense Force bases on mainland Japan are reportedly being considered and the move from Futenma Airbase to a less populated area on Okinawa has long been approved and (one hopes) will eventually occur – U.S. Japan-based forces (like those operating out of Singapore) are already better situated to support the new strategy than those located in Europe or the Korean Peninsula. This is why the changes in Korea will be aimed at creating a more flexible, less intrusive, more sustainable presence, and changes elsewhere in Asia will be "not very dramatic."

Multilateral Security Cooperation: An Important Supplement to Bilateral Alliances

Washington's long-standing emphasis on maintaining its bilateral alliances (including a forward military presence), and the Bush administration's somewhat overstated but all-too-frequently earned reputation for unilateralism has resulted in the perception – largely erroneous, I would argue – that Washington is against multilateral institutions or forms of cooperation. I believe this is particularly untrue when it comes to East Asia. If anything, the Bush administration has renewed and reinvigorated U.S. interest in the region's two primary standing multilateral institutions – the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) "gathering of economies" – and, against some initial regional resistance and criticism, insisted on a multilateral approach, under the Six-Party Talks, for dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem. And, as already documented, it places a great deal of importance in the TCOG, although some would argue that trilateral or "mini-lateral" mechanisms fall short of the true definition of multilateralism.

Pro-Multilateralism, with Caveats. As a general rule, I believe Washington has historically viewed Asia Pacific multilateral organizations as useful vehicles both for promoting greater political and economic cooperation and for enhancing regional security. In fact, Washington has taken an active hand in establishing some regional institutions and its concurrence and active participation have been instrumental to the success of many of those proposed by others. This support for multilateral institutions in the Asia Pacific has one important caveat, however: No U.S. administration, be it Republican or Democrat, is like to allow such institutions to be seen as substitutes for or as threats to U.S. bilateral efforts and arrangements. This is especially so in the security field. But, like the Clinton administration before it, the Bush administration does not see bilateral and multilateral efforts as being in tension; rather, they complement one another. As a general rule, East Asian multilateral organizations are seen as useful tools in pursuing U.S. national security objectives. The Bush administration has also been cautiously supportive of multilateral organizations, such as ASEAN Plus Three and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which do not include the U.S., although it appears the Bush administration is starting to cast a more watchful eye, especially on those organizations established and/or dominated by China, to ensure

that these do not represent efforts to diminish Washington's involvement or interests in the region. And, as the post September 11th, 2001 U.S.-led international war on terrorism demonstrates, while Washington is willing -- indeed eager -- to develop a multilateral approach in combating global terrorism, it has made it clear that this will not deter America from pursuing its objectives unilaterally if necessary.

The ARF: "Very, Very Useful" but Limited

The ARF brings together foreign ministers from the ten ASEAN states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) plus Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Korea, North Korea, New Zealand, the United States, Vietnam, and for the first time in 2004, Pakistan, for annual security-oriented discussions. Secretary of State Colin Powell has been to every ARF meeting held during his tenure in office, something that neither of his Clinton administration predecessors accomplished. He pronounced the ARF as "very, very useful" after his first meeting.

Various ARF study groups (called Inter-sessional Support Groups or ISGs) have also provided a vehicle for the U.S. to move the multilateral process along in areas important to Washington, such as preventive diplomacy, enhanced confidence building, and maritime (including search and rescue) cooperation; all of which help promote greater transparency and military-to-military cooperation. Most importantly, since Sept. 11, 2001, the ARF has helped focus regional attention on – and has served as an important vehicle for practical cooperating in – fighting terrorism. At the most recent ARF meeting in Jakarta in July 2004, the assembled ARF Ministers repeated annual pledges to fight terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction through ARF Statements on "Strengthening Transport Security Against International Terrorism" and a "Statement on Non-Proliferation." (They also confirmed their intentions to further institutionalize the ARF process through the establishment of "an ARF Unit" within the ASEAN Secretariat to serve as a *de facto* ARF Secretariat, to assist "in carrying out the mandates outlined in the paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair" and to support the Experts and Eminent Persons Group.)

[The ARF's research efforts have been supported, and occasionally prodded, by the parallel efforts of non-governmental (so-called "track two") organizations such as the multinational Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), which has helped to tackle more contentious issues, such as the development of both a Working Definition and Statement of Principles of Preventive Diplomacy and Guidelines for Maritime Cooperation. CSCAP links regional security-oriented institutes and, through them, broad-based member committees comprised of academicians, security specialists, and former and current foreign ministry and defense officials; all participate in their private capacities. CSCAP committees have been established in Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, South and North Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. Taiwan scholars participate in their private capacities.]

While the ARF seemed well-suited to serve as the consolidating and validating instrument behind many security initiatives proposed by governments and at non-official gatherings, and has become an important vehicle in the war on terrorism, from a U.S. perspective its contribution to the regional security order remains somewhat constrained. For example, Taiwan has not been permitted to participate and the PRC has insisted that "internal Chinese affairs" not be on the agenda, effectively blocking ARF discussion of cross-Strait tensions despite their obvious broad regional implications. The Chinese have even been reluctant to address conflicting claims in the South China Sea at the ARF, insisting instead on separate talks with ASEAN or with the other claimants on an individual basis. The agreement to "move at a pace comfortable to all participants" was aimed at tempering the desire of more Western-oriented members for immediate results in favor of the "evolutionary" approach preferred by the ASEAN states, which see the process as being as important as its eventual substantive products. The Asian preference for "noninterference in internal affairs" also has placed some important topics essentially off limits. This suggested that the evolution of the ARF from a

confidence building measures "talk shop" to a true preventive diplomacy mechanism (as called for in its 1995 Concept Paper) will be a long and difficult one.

APEC: Cautiously Testing the Security Waters

APEC is first and foremost a “gathering of regional economies” – it is not referred to as a gathering of states or governments due to the presence in its ranks of Hong Kong and Taiwan which members have agreed remain part of "one China." It started out as an informal dialogue group, growing from an original 12 members (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States) in 1989 to 15 in 1991 (with the addition of China., Hong Kong, and “Chinese Taipei”) to its current strength of 21, with the addition of Mexico and Papua New Guinea (1993), Chile (1994), Peru, Russia, and Vietnam (1997). Institutionalization began in February 1993, when the APEC Secretariat was established in Singapore.

While primarily aimed at managing the effects of growing economic interdependence, APEC has had an important political and security role as well, especially since the 1993 Seattle meeting when President Clinton invited the APEC heads of state and government to the first of what have now become regular annual Leaders’ Meetings designed to elevate the importance of this economic gathering. The Leaders' Meetings have become an important vehicle for fostering political relations in addition to raising the level of economic dialogue and putting pressure on the region's leaders (and especially the host state) to move the process forward. (Taiwan's head of state is specifically not invited to attend the annual leaders' meetings, even though Hong Kong’s chief executive regularly attends.)

APEC’s Evolving Political/Security Role. The political and even strategic significance of the Leaders’ Meetings was first underscored in Auckland in 1999, a gathering that was significant more for what happened outside the APEC venue than inside the meeting. Security issues dominated the side discussions and the talk in the corridors. Not the least of these was the growing (and well-founded) concern over the deteriorating security situation in East Timor. The Auckland meeting was fortuitous in that it provided an opportunity for regional leaders, including President Clinton and Australian Prime Minister Howard, to work out arrangements for the Australian-led multinational peacekeeping mission (INTERFET) that was subsequently sent to East Timor. Obtaining on-the-spot Chinese approval of this effort, made possible by Indonesia’s reluctant acceptance of the intervention, helped assure UN Security Council authorization of the subsequent UN operation, the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET). (It should be noted that neither ASEAN nor the ARF were major players in the East Timor crisis, demonstrating their limited utility as crisis response mechanisms.)

In similar fashion, APEC 2001 provided an important vehicle for President Bush to explain Washington’s war on terrorism to his Asian colleagues and to garner their support. In addition to the usual annual APEC Leaders’ Declaration, the assembled leaders also issued an APEC Leaders’ Statement on Counter-Terrorism -- the first political document to be issued in APEC’s 13-year history -- which unequivocally condemned the September 11 attack and deemed it “imperative to strengthen international cooperation at all levels in combating terrorism in a comprehensive manner.” This was considered a real victory for President Bush and no doubt helped to increase APEC’s (or at least the Leaders Meeting’s) relevance in his eyes.

The APEC Shanghai meeting also provided President Bush with his first opportunity to meet directly with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, which helped to end the downward slide in Sino-U.S. relations underway since Bush’s inauguration (and especially after the collision between a U.S. reconnaissance plane and a Chinese jet fighter over the South China Sea in April 2001). The two leaders were able to put the relationship back on track, aided by China’s willingness to cooperate in the battle against terrorism. APEC 2001 also provided President Bush with another opportunity to build upon Washington’s growing post-Cold War cooperation with Russia, and to meet for the first time with Malaysian President Mahathir and Indonesian President Megawati, leaders of the two Southeast Asian nations with predominantly Muslim populations. This allowed him to underscore that the war on terrorism

was not aimed at Islam.

Security matters continue to be discussed at the Leaders Meeting, not to mention at the numerous side summits that normally accompany this gathering. For example, at the October 2003 APEC Leaders Meeting in Bangkok, the final communique referred to cooperation on combating proliferation of WMD, while President Bush used the occasion, and his side meetings with the leaders of South Korea, Japan, and China, to call on North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons aspirations, while repeating his offer to provide Pyongyang with written assurances that the U.S. does not intend to attack North Korea. Similar efforts are expected at this year's APEC Leaders Meeting in late November in Santiago, Chile.

As long as APEC provides a useful venue not only for the promotion of free trade but also for fighting the war on terrorism, we can expect that Washington will continue to be an active player. However, as with the ARF, it will remain more suited to talking about security problems than to actually helping to implement solutions. In addition to the usual drawbacks associated with East Asian multilateralism (as discussed below), APEC has the added "problem" of including Taiwan. Rather than using this venue as a vehicle for incorporating Taiwanese views and concerns into the regional security debate in a "non-governmental" setting, Beijing has tried to block any substantive security-oriented activities and to further isolate Taiwan from the dialogue process.

Multilateral Pluses and Minuses

In short, American policymakers generally believe that Asia-Pacific multilateral organizations such as the ARF and APEC are useful vehicles both for promoting greater political and economic cooperation and for enhancing regional security. While such organizations hold many promises for Asia, it is important to understand their limits, as well as the opportunities they present. A comprehensive security arrangement or NATO-type alliance aimed at containing or responding to a specified threat simply does not apply to a post-Cold War Asia. Rather, East Asia multilateral security mechanisms should be viewed more as confidence building measures aimed at avoiding or dampening the possibilities of, rather than reacting to, crises or aggression. Peacekeeping and disaster relief operations and non-traditional security issues (such as refugee problems, maritime safety, pollution, and other environmental and safety issues) also seemed well-suited to a multilateral approach. In many instances, the process is as important as the product.

Efforts that build upon and seek to complement, and not to replace, existing bilateral relationships that already exist in Asia are of particular value from a U.S. perspective. Any effort that is perceived at undermining U.S. bilateral dealings, and especially those that seek to diminish or replace America_s key bilateral security alliances, are sure to be rejected by Washington both today and by any future administration.

More generally speaking, Asian multilateral security mechanisms can serve as important vehicles for promoting long term peace and stability. They provide a framework for continued direct U.S. involvement in regional security matters. They offer a means for Japan, China, and Russia, among others, to become more actively involved in regional security affairs in a manner that is non-threatening to their neighbors. They also provide a forum for exposing North Korea to regional realities while facilitating bilateral dialogue between the North and South Korea, Japan, and the U.S., respectively. They also provide a mechanism for other regional actors to be heard, while contributing to a sense of regional identity and a spirit of cooperation and confidence building. Since Sept. 11, they have also become increasingly relevant for coordinating regional views and efforts in the war on terrorism.

Six-Party Talks: Best Hope for Dealing With Pyongyang

If Washington has only limited confidence in institutionalized multilateral mechanisms (like the ARF, APEC, and United Nations), it is developing a clear preference for ad hoc or tailored multilateralism aimed at a specific task or objective and comprised of a "coalition of the willing." The multinational force

assembled for the war in Iraq provides one example, as does the aforementioned Proliferation Security Initiative. The best example in Northeast Asia is the Six-Party Talks, established by Washington to multilateralize what many initially viewed as a bilateral U.S.-DPRK problem.

The creation of the six-party process, in this author's opinion, may represent one of the Bush administration's finest diplomatic hours. It draws from the lessons learned during the first North Korea nuclear crisis, where – despite close coordination and consultation – Washington was widely perceived as unilaterally cutting a deal with Pyongyang before sticking Seoul and Tokyo with the bill. While Pyongyang argued for bilateral consultations (and a separate U.S.-DPRK non-aggression pact), Washington rightfully insisted this time that participation by Seoul and Tokyo was "essential." It also acknowledges the important role that China, and to a lesser extent Russia, must play if multilateral security guarantees are to be part of the final solution (as most would agree they are). Finally, the Bush administration recognized and tried to work around Pyongyang's strategy of trying to play all sides against one another by presenting different, conflicting messages depending on the audience. All this is not to argue that the crisis could not have been handled better; it is to say that the multilateral approach represents the most logical avenue toward crafting a long-term solution that achieves not only Washington's immediate goal of stopping nuclear proliferation but also addresses the needs and concerns of North Korea's immediate neighbors.

So Much for "Agreements in Principle." While hopes for the six-party process remain high, at this writing, the talks remain in limbo. Optimism was beginning to abound following the third round of Six-Party Talks in Beijing in late June, following the tabling by the U.S. of a detailed proposal which laid out the steps North Korea needed to take to dismantle its nuclear weapons program and, most significantly, what Washington and its allies were prepared to do in return. While all agreed "in principle" to hold a series of working group meetings and another plenary session before the end of September, Pyongyang once again demonstrated that agreements in principle were only as good as the principles of those doing the agreeing. The conventional wisdom, not challenged here, is that Pyongyang had already made up its mind to wait for the outcome of the November U.S. presidential elections before proceeding with any talks, given the Bush administration's continued insistence on CVID: the complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of all North Korea's nuclear weapons programs, including their clandestine uranium enrichment program (an effort Pyongyang allegedly admitted in October 2002 but now denies). It remains to be seen what Pyongyang will do next, now that elections are over. But one thing seems clear, the Bush administration will continue to insist on a multilateral six-party setting, even if it ultimately shows an increased willingness to engage Pyongyang directly along the sidelines of the multilateral gathering.

The six-party format also provides a potential framework for more institutionalized multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia, once (and if) the North Korea-induced nuclear crisis is peacefully settled. Washington remains receptive to suggestions by Seoul and Tokyo, and now even from Beijing. That this forum could one day form the basis of a Northeast Asian Security Community. In fact, a more institutionalized forum will likely be necessary to implement whatever type agreement is finally reached, both to monitor and verify compliance and to implement the multilateral security guarantees and likely step-by-step economic incentives that are likely to be found in any eventual settlement.

Conclusion

The U.S.-Japan alliance will remain the cornerstone of U.S. security strategy in East Asia for the foreseeable future. Washington will be supportive of efforts by Japan to become a more "normal" nation and will encourage Tokyo to play a more active role in regional security (while refraining from open pressure or from meddling in the debate over constitutional revision). The Global Force Review will continue and will likely result in some modest adjustments in the U.S. military footprint in Japan, but with no lessening of Washington's overall commitment or ability to respond to regional rises. Meanwhile, Washington will continue to support institutionalized multilateral mechanisms as useful means to promote regional security and coordinate counter-terrorism efforts, while relying on ad hoc coalitions (or unilateral actions if necessary) to address specific threats to its own security or to the security of its allies.

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