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SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION: COMPETING PRIORITIES IN U.S. ASIA POLICY

SECURITY, ECONOMIC LIBERALISM, AND DEMOCRACY:
ASIAN ELITE PERCEPTIONS OF POST-COLD WAR
FOREIGN POLICY VALUES

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REALISM OR EVANGELISM? SECURITY THROUGH
DEMOCRATIZATION AS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Donald K. Emmerson

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THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF ASIAN RESEARCH

715 SAFECO Plaza
Seattle, WA 98185
Tel: (206) 632-7370
Fax: (206) 632-7487
E-mail: nbr@nbr.org
<http://www.nbr.org>

FOREWORD

In the aftermath of the Cold War, with strategic containment of the Soviet Union no longer the dominant concern, U.S. policy shifted its focus away from national security to issues of trade and democratization. It was also instilled with a sense of urgency. Economic sanctions were threatened more frequently to force economic and political liberalization, a strategy that inflamed tensions between the United States and governments in East Asia.

American policymakers have been split on the wisdom of this new course, between those who advocate seeking immediate results by pressuring foreign governments, and those who believe a return to a broader-based strategy that incorporates long-term defense interests and assumes economic engagement and quiet diplomacy will best promote economic and political liberalization. In regards to Northeast Asia, at least, the Clinton Administration has gradually come to believe in the latter approach, evidenced most recently by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake's visit to China in July in which he emphasized the common strategic interests of the two countries.

In this issue of the *NBR Analysis*, authors Sheldon Simon of Arizona State University and Donald Emmerson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison address the relationship between security, democracy, and economic liberalization in U.S. policy toward Asia. Professor Simon, summarizing dozens of interviews with East Asian foreign policy elites conducted in 1995–96, contends that they are ambivalent about current U.S. policy. While welcoming the continued American military presence and U.S. support for multilateral security efforts, Asian governments resent U.S. pressure to liberalize their domestic political and economic policies. Professor Simon cautions that a U.S. policy that places too much emphasis on democracy and human rights could exasperate Asian leaders and undercut current positive trends in multilateral security cooperation. Moreover, if sanctions were applied to countries such as Burma or China, as has been threatened, the generally positive liberalizing effects of their participation in the global economic system would be reduced.

In a similar vein, Professor Emmerson challenges the common conception that greater democratization will necessarily lead to increased security in East Asia. He observes that the Clinton Administration's foreign policy strategy has been powerfully motivated by the school of thought that teaches that democracies rarely make war on one another. However, Emmerson continues, the United States needs to recognize that under unfavorable conditions a democratically elected government can become "too representative"—its power to rule too fragmented or unstable—to ensure the personal security of its citizenry. Conversely, a government brought to power by majority vote can use its authority to threaten the security of individuals and groups in opposition to it. Emmerson suggests, therefore, that

democratization can, ironically, increase disorder or repression through the empowerment of antidemocratic or nationalist forces. U.S. policymakers, therefore, need to consider indigenous values and conditions when asserting the immediate applicability of American-style liberal democracy in Asia.

This is the second collaborative effort of Professors Simon and Emmerson in the NBR Analysis. Research for these articles was conducted under the auspices of the project "Security, Democracy, and Economic Liberalism: Implications for Peace and Post-Cold War Policy in the Asia-Pacific," funded by the United States Institute of Peace and the United States Information Agency. These papers were initially prepared for the conference "National Strategies in the Asia-Pacific: The Effects of Interacting Trade, Industrial, and Defense Policies," held in Monterey, California, March 28–29, 1996, sponsored by the Monterey Institute of International Studies and The National Bureau of Asian Research.

Richard J. Ellings
Executive Director
The National Bureau of Asian Research

SECURITY, ECONOMIC LIBERALISM, AND DEMOCRACY: ASIAN ELITE PERCEPTIONS OF POST-COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY VALUES

Sheldon W. Simon

Introduction

World politics in the 20th century has been dominated by a structural-realist realpolitik paradigm through which states aligned with or against each other for protection and expansion. Concerns about domestic political and social conditions were distinctly subordinated in security policy to more mechanistic balance-of-power considerations. This paradigm required, however, easily identifiable blocs of states as allies or adversaries. With the Cold War's end, conditions for such realpolitik, great-power foreign policies have evaporated. No new road map for policymakers has yet been drawn.

The unique objective of the Clinton Administration's global policy has been to elevate the character of other countries' domestic regimes to an American foreign-policy priority.

Nevertheless, policy councils throughout the world are debating new paradigms; these debates reveal a divergence between the concerns of states that are primarily regional actors from those that are primarily global. The United States under President Bill Clinton has formulated a new foreign policy, the "enlargement of free-market democracies," to replace the containment of Soviet communism as the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy. The unique objective of the Clinton Administration's global policy has been to elevate the character of other countries' domestic regimes to an American foreign-policy priority. Based on empirical findings that democratic governments have not fought one another in the 20th century and that governments committed to international trade prefer peace to war, Clinton's national security and foreign policy advisers believe they have identified a formula that will promote both global peace and prosperity.

In Asia, however, this emphasis on democracy (including the promotion of human rights) is frequently interpreted as a sign that the generally positive previous American roles of protector, investor, and trade partner might be replaced with one which intends to impose ethnocentric Western values on polities unwilling or unable to accept them. U.S. National Security Advisor

Sheldon W. Simon is professor of political science at Arizona State University. A specialist in comparative Asian foreign and security policies, he has authored and edited numerous works, including *The Future of Asian-Pacific Security Collaboration* (1988) and *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium* (1996).

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Anthony Lake, for example, has advocated not only support for fledgling democratic systems, but also policies to promote the liberalization of states considered hostile to democracy and markets.

America's recent concern with the domestic political order in Asia, combined with its reduced force-projection capabilities in the western Pacific, provide an impetus for the states of both Northeast and Southeast Asia to create new regional economic and security dialogues. A major purpose of these dialogues is to determine whether the time is ripe for new Asia-Pacific arrangements in which the United States, though remaining an important regional player, will share center stage with several others. In fact, until recently Washington displayed no enthusiasm for multilateral security discussions in the Asia-Pacific. Nevertheless, in the last few years a growing security dialogue has emerged in Asia at both the official and unofficial levels. This dialogue has centered on the annual post ministerial conferences of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),¹ and its unofficial counterpart involving academics, journalists, and members of regional think tanks. While Southeast Asia is the venue for these talks, their substance covers the whole Asia-Pacific region. The talks were initially motivated by the uncertainties of a regional security environment in which China and Japan appeared to be increasing their power-projection capabilities just as the Cold War superstructure was disintegrating. Thus the July 1992 ASEAN foreign ministers conference for the first time openly called on the United States to retain a military presence in the region.

In light of these changes, President Clinton altered U.S. policy toward regional security discussions in his July 1993 speech to the South Korean National Assembly. Although reassuring American allies in Asia that bilateral arrangements would be honored, the President endorsed security dialogues among Pacific countries, even urging neighboring states to explore joint security arrangements on their own. Like other American presidents before him, Mr. Clinton noted that the diversity of security threats in Asia precluded the creation of a single institution to cope with them. But unlike Presidents Reagan and Bush, he proposed a number of overlapping security activities, from multilateral discussions on specific issues (such as the Spratly Islands) to confidence-building measures, such as the discussion of defense doctrines, transparency in weapons acquisitions, and conflict management.

Just a few weeks after President Clinton's address in Korea, the ASEAN ministerial meeting in Singapore inaugurated a new ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to discuss political and security issues for the whole of Asia. In addition to the then-six ASEAN states and the Association's regular dialogue partners,² the Regional Forum also added Russia, China, Vietnam, Laos, and Papua New Guinea. Its membership is similar to that of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC). The ASEAN Regional Forum convenes annually, as does a group created exclusively for ASEAN senior foreign affairs and defense ministry officials, the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). This latter body, which meets some months before the Regional Forum, serves to hammer out a common ASEAN position for the larger gathering, just as the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) may attempt on economic issues within APEC.

At the top of the U.S. agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum are efforts to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction. For the ASEAN states, however, concerns focus on a peaceful resolution of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, as well as on the development of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation into a regional code of conduct. The body has identified a core group of five countries—Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Japan, and China—that it hopes will accede to the treaty. The common hope of Regional Forum promoters

¹ As of June 1996, the members of ASEAN are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, and Vietnam (which became a member in 1995). Burma (Myanmar) was given observer status in mid-1996 and is expected to become a full member of ASEAN in 1997.

² The dialogue partners are the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Canada, and the European Union. Cambodia became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1995. India and Burma (Myanmar) were added to the ARF in 1996.

is that potential antagonists could sit around the same table together and at least agree to address their differences without hostility.

However, just as the United States seems to be moving toward multilateral approaches to regional security, its concern over human rights in such important countries as China could have the unintended effect of derailing the process. If, for example, China and Indonesia are key countries for maintaining stability in Northeast and Southeast Asia, then a U.S. policy that diminishes the totality of its relationships with these countries and devolves primarily to human rights questions could become counterproductive. Such a policy could reduce American influence on regional security without increasing its ability to affect the domestic politics of the region's members.

Complicating the policy dilemma is the continued threat or use of sanctions by the United States and others to pressure various East Asian governments over human rights and other democracy issues. Cutting off trade or aid—including International Military Education and Training (IMET)—to nations that violate certain democratic standards, for example, severs important positive international links and reduces any liberalizing effects that come with those links. Moreover, there is a paradox in championing the goal of liberal markets while using means that curtail them. But a practical question may be the most critical: since the highly competitive economic environment of East Asia would seem to require multilateral coordination for sanctions to be effective, what are the real prospects for their use? What regional forum, if any, would be appropriate for a discussion of sanctions and could serve as the legal authority for their implementation—that is, what could be the functional equivalent of the Organization of American States in this regard? Sanctions are not effective unless all major suppliers agree to adhere to the sanction regime. Otherwise, the sanctioned country can buy elsewhere. For example, should the United States prohibit The Boeing Company from supplying aircraft to China because of the latter's violation of intellectual property rights, Europe eagerly awaits the opportunity to sell the Airbus.

The purpose of this article is to examine the effectiveness of a U.S. foreign policy that simultaneously emphasizes the development of human rights, liberal economic policies, and democratic institutions for Asian partners while encouraging defense cooperation among these states and Washington. This article is based on interviews with foreign and security policy research specialists from throughout the Asia-Pacific region.³ The interviews reveal Asian perspectives of their own security needs, economic development strategies, and attitudes toward political liberalization, which can then be compared with U.S. policy preferences. Priorities, tradeoffs, and complementarities (or their absence) were examined. These interviews raised some interesting questions regarding the relationship between American foreign policy goals and the current trend toward regionalism and multilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The compatibility of U.S. bilateral economic and security relationships and such multilateral fora as the APEC forum and ARF is assessed, and questions are asked about how these bodies affect the U.S. position in East Asia.

Specifically, the questionnaire developed for this study (see Appendix) elicited the opinions of research analysts, academics, and government officials regarding:

- (a) their country's national and regional security agendas;

³ From late September through mid-November 1995, the author conducted approximately 30 hours of interviews in the United States, China, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. (Korean, Australian, and Philippine specialists were also interviewed in the course of this research.) All respondents are specialists on their own country's foreign and defense policies. Additionally, most are affiliated with foreign policy research institutions that deal with regional multilateral organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum. Many of the respondents help set the agenda for long-term regional security planning on issues that go beyond the daily responsibilities of busy government officials. These longer-term issues have become the province of national research organizations, many of which are affiliated with one another through international nongovernmental linkages such as the ASEAN Institutes for Security and International Studies and the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP). Some respondents asked to remain anonymous.

- (b) their view of the United States as a security partner;
- (c) their view of the U.S. human rights/democratization emphasis for their own country's security; and
- (d) prospects for Asia-Pacific security cooperation and the American role within it.

The General View of the American Role

Overall, respondents from throughout the Asia-Pacific region believe that the maintenance of an American air and naval presence in Northeast Asia is still necessary for regional stability. Similarly, U.S. ground forces on the Korean peninsula are welcome, at least until the two Koreas either merge or reach some kind of peaceful, long-term rapprochement. On the other hand, American political pressures regarding human rights and democratization and U.S. threats of

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unilateral trade sanctions against those countries (Japan, China, South Korea, and sometimes Indonesia) that obstruct U.S. exports or exploit their own labor forces for unfair trade advantage are seen as destabilizing to the region. In effect, U.S. policy is seen at cross purposes: promoting security strategically but at the same time harming Asian domestic orders through intervention in local political and economic processes.

There were some dissenters to this latter criticism, however. A prominent Filipina professor remarked that the United States could exert pressures toward political and economic liberalization that are in the long-term interests of the region but that could not emanate from ASEAN partners, which are pledged to noninterference in each other's domestic affairs.⁴ Indonesian respondents also stated that American human rights concerns were at least partly responsible for the creation of an official human rights watchdog agency in Jakarta as well as President Soeharto's decision to prosecute army atrocities in the provinces of East Timor and Irian Jaya.

Two prominent Indonesian research analysts noted that the American forward deployment diminishes any regional impetus for multilateral security cooperation. Thus the ASEAN states can continue to concentrate on economic growth and domestic stability. In this way, security concerns remain focused on relations with immediate neighbors rather than the region as a whole. The United States can be counted on to deter external threats to regional tranquillity, for no potential challenger (i.e., China) could hope to match the U.S. Seventh Fleet.⁵

While most of those interviewed believed that forward-deployed American forces are sufficient to cope with any external challenges to regional security, a well-known Southeast Asian defense analyst was skeptical. He argued that the downsizing of U.S. naval forces in the Pacific had spread the Seventh Fleet so thin that it could no longer effectively monitor the region. As

⁴ Author's interview with Carolina Hernandez of the University of the Philippines, February 23, 1995, in Honolulu.

⁵ Interviews with Clara Joewono, executive director, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia, October 30, 1995; and Dewi Fortuna Anwar, director, International Affairs Division, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta, October 31, 1995.

evidence, he pointed to the U.S. Navy's apparent surprise at the discovery of Chinese structures in and around Mischief Reef adjacent to the Philippines. Moreover, he claimed, if other Asian states come to the same conclusion, an accelerated regional arms build-up would become inevitable.⁶

The U.S.-Japan and U.S.-South Korea Security Relationships

Although Japan's domestic political malaise and protracted trade conflict with Washington cloud the overall relationship between these two economic superpowers, virtually all regional observers continue to perceive the U.S.-Japan nexus as a linchpin for regional security. Indeed, the overall Asian-Pacific interest in the maintenance of U.S.-Japan defense ties may be out of sync with bilateral developments between Tokyo and Washington. Budget cutbacks in both capitals are reducing military deployments. The end of the Cold War has led attentive publics in both countries to question the necessity of having 47,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan. Neither the Japanese nor South Korean governments seem to have convinced their citizens that the American military presence is crucial for their continued security. A recent *Sankei Shimbun* public opinion poll found that only five percent of those surveyed believed that U.S. bases in Japan were primarily for their own country's benefit. Similarly, in the Republic of Korea (R.O.K.) there is a growing popular belief that North Korea is not a lethal threat because of its economic collapse. Government positions in both Japan and the R.O.K.—which emphasize the necessity of the U.S. connection—seem out of step with popular opinion.⁷

Yet it seems clear that the U.S. security treaties with both countries will be sustained well into the coming century. Because Japan, unlike Germany, has not successfully convinced its neighbors that it has genuinely repented of its imperialism of the earlier part of the century, and because Japan needs to convince these same neighbors that its economic strength will not be translated into independent military power, the U.S.-Japan treaty constitutes a kind of guarantee that Japan will not resume its old ways.⁸ Indeed, even the Socialists under Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama reversed their long-held opposition to the treaty policy to embrace the commitment of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), including U.S. forces on Japanese soil.

However, should the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty be tested by, for example, a crisis on the Korean peninsula requiring an American military response, the U.S.-Japan tie could be severely strained. Washington and American public opinion would expect direct Japanese military support. If that support were not forthcoming, the U.S.-Japan alliance might well collapse. Moreover, Washington might even impose trade sanctions against a Japan that stood by while a neighbor crucial to Japan's security was being defended by the United States alone.⁹ Finally, another issue that Washington and Tokyo must discuss is whether the treaty's scope will be expanded beyond East Asia, say, to the Persian Gulf. Japanese officials are reticent about endorsing such an expansion of responsibilities which would imply the permanence of U.S. bases in Japan.¹⁰

Interview respondents emphasized the need for multilateral Northeast Asian security discussions so that the two Koreas, China, and Japan can explain their defense doctrines, arms acquisition plans, and capabilities. A prominent Japanese defense commentator hoped to have China explain its long-term naval developments, which appear to go well beyond coastal de-

⁶Interview with a Singaporean defense specialist, November 8, 1995.

⁷Cited in Nicholas Kristof, "Welcome Mat is Wearing Thin for GIs in Asia," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1995.

⁸See Kenneth B. Pyle, "Japan's Emerging Strategy in Asia," in Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon, eds., *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, chapter 5; and author's interview with Ji Guoxing, director, Shanghai Institute of International Studies, April 14, 1995.

⁹This scenario is discussed by Hisahiko Okazaki in *Sapio* (Tokyo), December 6, 1995, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report-East Asia* (hereafter referred to as *FBIS-EAS*), December 6, 1995, p. 7. Also see Chalmers Johnson, "The Okinawa Rape Incident and the End of the Cold War in East Asia," San Diego: Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper, No. 16, February 1996; and Nicholas Kristof, "Japan to Cut Own Military, Keeping GIs," *The New York Times*, November 29, 1995.

¹⁰Kyodo News Service, November 27, 1995, in *FBIS-EAS*, November 27, 1995, p. 5.

fense.¹¹ This and other responses suggest that a multilateral forum in which all participants equally discussed their concerns and plans would be an appropriate venue for transparency.

Another prominent issue for respondents was the creation of a new, independent role for Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) through United Nations peacekeeping activities. After a tentative and not completely successful participation in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) force, Japan has subsequently sent SDF personnel to Africa and the Middle East. In addition to signifying Tokyo's commitment to global peace, this more proactive policy toward UN collective security is forcing Japan to confront the prohibition against collective security as embodied in Article Nine of its constitution and to consider either an amendment to the constitution or, at least, a more flexible interpretation of Article Nine. Japan's second largest party—the New Frontier, composed of younger, ex-LDP reformers—goes even further by arguing that Japan should evolve toward a “normal state,” with regular commitments to UN security activities. The United States would welcome this development.¹²

However, Japan's Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Law would require extensive revision if these changes were to occur. Currently, the law prohibits the SDF from participating in peace enforcement activities. It also requires Diet approval for any new SDF action related to peacekeeping, including monitoring ceasefire agreements, troop withdrawals, and buffer zone patrols. Japanese public opinion polls show that while there is considerable support for SDF humanitarian actions such as medical aid and infrastructure repair in war-torn countries, consensus evaporates when the SDF might be put in harm's way.¹³

Nevertheless, recent official advisory commissions to the Japanese government have recommended a larger role for the SDF in joint exercises with U.S. forces and a revision of the Self-Defense Forces Law to provide for participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Additionally, Japan's participation in multilateral institutions such as APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum are means of “softening the dominance of U.S.-Japan relations.”¹⁴ Multilateralism helps to restore Japan's legitimacy and is a way of responding to Asian criticism about the country's self-absorption. It is also a means of overcoming domestic resistance to a more active international role. Regardless of which party is in office, however, the government realizes it is improbable that Japan will obtain a permanent UN Security Council seat until it is willing to share the same risks as other states involved in peacekeeping and peace enforcement.¹⁵

If the Japan-U.S. security relationship is the linchpin for the American forward presence in East Asia, the R.O.K.-U.S. defense treaty constitutes the commitment for which most U.S. forces in the region are prepared. For Northeast Asian states, avoiding war on the Korean peninsula and helping Pyongyang survive its current economic implosion are high priorities. Security specialists agree that the alternatives could be devastating to Asian stability: either a costly war with high casualties and severe strains in Japan-U.S., China-U.S., and R.O.K.-China relations; or a precipitous collapse of the North Korean regime accompanied by massive population movements to the south, which Seoul is not prepared to handle politically nor economically.

A Chinese analyst noted that Beijing is introducing North Korean specialists to China's southern Special Economic Zones and encouraging North Korea to be more receptive to foreign

¹¹ Interview with the foreign affairs editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, April 18, 1995.

¹² Interviews with Masanori Nishi of the Japan Defense Agency at The Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, September 26, 1995; and a high-ranking U.S. diplomat in Tokyo, October 11, 1995.

¹³ The Japanese polling results are discussed in Takekiko Kama, “U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific,” a paper presented to the International Studies Association, Washington, DC, March 29–April 2, 1994, pp. 16–17.

¹⁴ Kenneth B. Pyle, “Japan's Emerging Strategy in Asia,” in Ellings and Simon, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Interviews with Takashi Endo, Hokkaido Tokai University and Koichiro Oda, assistant managing editor, *Hokkaido Shimbun*, Sapporo, Japan, October 12, 1995.

capital. China is also recommending that North Korea seek better relations with its southern neighbor, Japan, and the United States—all of which could provide the capital and aid Pyongyang needs to rebuild its economy. The specialist noted that overcoming North Korea's history of autarky (*juche*), however, will be a slow process. He further pointed out that it is best that outsiders use carrots, not sticks, to achieve these changes.¹⁶

For South Korea, the two key players in dealing with the North are the United States and China. The former provides the deterrent, while the latter serves as an interlocutor, urging the North Koreans to effect a rapprochement with the R.O.K. Nevertheless, strains are apparent in the R.O.K.-U.S. relationship. Some South Korean officials resent what they see as the secondary role assigned their government in negotiating the nuclear power equipment agreement with the North, particularly since the South will bear most of the costs of building the \$4 billion light-water reactors.¹⁷ South Korea is concerned that the United States will construct a separate relationship with Pyongyang, ignoring Seoul's advice. Therefore, the South Korean government is interested in creating a multilateral security forum for Northeast Asia that would guarantee Seoul's involvement in all regional security discussions.

China's Security Concerns

If, as noted above, the U.S.-Japan defense relationship remains a linchpin for a continued U.S. presence in the western Pacific, then the People's Republic of China is the unspoken target of most countries' concern. No Asian government openly casts the P.R.C. as an enemy. Each wishes success for the P.R.C.'s economic development; and virtually all are involved as trade and investment partners. Yet, China—more than any other Asian state—has major, unresolved territorial disputes with a number of neighbors: Russia, North Korea, India, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, and several Southeast Asian nations with competing claims in the South China Sea. While Beijing is settling several of these boundary disputes through negotiations and others are currently dormant, the fact remains that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) seems to be gradually developing an air and naval capability that could be used to enforce China's territorial ambitions to the south sometime in the 21st century. Moreover, any decision to do so could be rationalized as simply the protection of its own territory rather than expansionist ambition.

Most China security specialists believe that the country's situation is the best it has been since it confronted the West in the mid-19th century: it has no declared enemies, has improved its relations with neighbors, and enjoys growing economic interaction with the world.

Most China security specialists believe that the country's situation is the best it has been since it confronted the West in the mid-19th century: it has no declared enemies, has improved its relations with neighbors, and enjoys growing economic interaction with the world.¹⁸ Particularly

¹⁶ Interview with Chu Shulong, deputy director, North American Department, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, China, October 4, 1995.

¹⁷ This analysis is drawn from an interview at Arizona State University with Yung-hwan Jo, former executive director of the Kim Dae-Jung Institute, currently at Sogang University, Republic of Korea, July 3, 1995.

¹⁸ Wang Jisi, "Comparing Chinese and American Conceptions of Security," a paper prepared for the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue, Working Paper 17, Beijing, September 1992, p. 16.

important for China's future is its economic performance. It must become a middle-income country, with economic development spreading from coastal provinces to the interior. Without widespread prosperity, the prospect of peasant rebellion haunts the leadership. When asked to specify China's security priorities over the next ten years, Ji Guoxing, director of Shanghai's Institute of International Studies, emphasized domestic economic performance. He ranked armed forces modernization last.¹⁹

Ji Guoxing noted that relations with the United States are the country's most important bilateral relationship and that the American security treaty with Japan remains significant as insurance against the revival of an independent Japanese military capability.²⁰ On the other hand, over the long run, the PLA probably desires an American exit from the region.²¹ This would be particularly true if the leadership's nationalist ambitions include the restoration of a hegemonic position accompanied by one of the world's largest aggregate economies in the first quarter of the next century.

Sino-U.S. relations seem plagued by the domestic political imperatives of each side. The Clinton Administration's insistence on the expansion of human rights and democratization as a U.S. foreign policy cornerstone is interpreted by Chinese authorities as an effort to undermine the regime through political penetration and "bourgeois liberalization."²² The continuation of some of the sanctions imposed by Washington after the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 1989 is also seen as an American double standard. After all, the United States did not impose similar sanctions against the Thai military after it fired on civilian demonstrators, the Russians for their aggression in Chechnya, or Turkey because of its actions against the Kurds.²³ Chinese analysts see the United States pursuing a bifurcated policy toward China: on the positive side, economic engagement primarily through the private sector; offset politically by U.S. interference in China's domestic politics. Moreover, militarily, U.S. naval and air deployments are perceived to be counterbalancing PLA actions.²⁴ According to one prominent P.R.C. analyst, the PLA emphasizes the American military "threat" in order to make a case for its own arms build-up. Since no other regional power can threaten China militarily, the PLA must point to the U.S. presence.²⁵

Currently, the subregion of greatest concern for those who follow Chinese political-military affairs is Southeast Asia. In addition to territorial ambitions over the South China Sea islands, an older issue has reemerged: the relationship between the P.R.C. and overseas Chinese who exert commercial domination in virtually every Southeast Asian economy. Growing financial and investment networks among Southeast Asian Chinese and joint ventures in China are beginning to create anxieties about the diversion of local capital, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia. China's presumed ability to influence overseas Chinese actions may also inhibit Southeast Asian governments from taking a stronger stand against P.R.C. challenges in the Spratlys. That is, there is a fear that the P.R.C. could respond by urging Chinese communities in the region to harm local economies. (China still maintains a Department of Overseas Chinese Affairs.)²⁶

Southeast Asian states have apparently concluded that China's overall power potential in the region is so great that its territorial ambitions cannot be deterred through regional

¹⁹ Interview with Ji Guoxing, director of the Institute of International Studies, Shanghai, China, April 14, 1995 (at the University of California, San Diego).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Statement by a PLA Colonel at the February 22, 1995, Honolulu Pacific Symposium sponsored by the U.S. Pacific Command and the National Defense University.

²² Wang Jisi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²³ Interview with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kent Widement, Washington, DC, September 26, 1995.

²⁴ Interview with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Interview with a prominent Chinese security analyst, Beijing, October 5, 1995.

²⁶ Interviews with Soedjati Djwandono of Jakarta's Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 23, 1995 (in Honolulu), and Dewi Fortuna Anwar, October 31, 1995, *op. cit.*

countervailing military forces alone. This realization has led to two policy responses: one is to accept and quietly encourage the maintenance of U.S. forces in the western Pacific; the second is to engage China politically and economically to reassure Beijing that Southeast Asians welcome its membership in regional conclaves and to involve it so extensively in international trade and investment that Chinese leaders will not jeopardize these benefits through military threats. The hope is that Beijing will prefer the economic growth inherent in international commerce to the forced incorporation of an adjacent sea and subsequent regional animosity.

At least one P.R.C. specialist believes that his country's tactics in the South China Sea will continue, however. That is, China will continue to occupy quietly a few more deserted islets in various parts of the archipelago. The more islands the PLA Navy (PLAN) can occupy, the stronger its claim in later negotiations and the greater its ability to protect China's fishing fleet. Nevertheless, there are no plans to attack other countries' occupied islets or the ships supplying them. China's caution is reciprocated in Southeast Asia, where no plans exist to oppose forcefully the Chinese-controlled reefs and atolls either.²⁷ One prominent Malaysian analyst notes that there may be ways of resolving the Spratlys conflict that have not yet been explored in the Indonesian-sponsored workshops or the ARF that could be discussed in track II meetings.²⁸ Zakaria Haji Ahmad, the head of Kebangsaan University's Strategic and Security Studies Center, suggests that Malaysia might consider honoring China's Spratlys claims in exchange for a lease "in perpetuity" to those islets occupied by Kuala Lumpur. Presumably there would be some kind of financial consideration to the P.R.C. if this arrangement were accepted.²⁹ Thus far, however, China seems uninterested in such innovative solutions. While other claimants call for joint exploration and development of the Spratlys region and possibly a collegial Spratlys Authority, China speaks only of developing the areas it already controls. Beijing's approach became apparent when it signed a contract with the Crestone Corporation to drill for oil on what Vietnam insists is its continental shelf.³⁰

Taiwan's Future and Regional Security

As long as an unreformed, authoritarian Kuomintang (KMT) government ruled the island of Taiwan, its future relationship to mainland China could be postponed well into the 21st century. P.R.C. officials stated in the early 1980s that their country's economic growth would bring the

Ironically, from the perspective of the Clinton Administration, which has emphasized the desirability of democratization for global peace, the recent liberalization of Taiwanese politics and the legitimization of political parties committed to the island republic's independence have created a potential crisis in relations between Beijing and Taipei.

²⁷ Interviews with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*; a Fudan University regional security specialist, October 6, 1995; and Mohammad Jahwar Hassan, deputy director of the Malaysian Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Kuala Lumpur, November 6, 1995.

²⁸ Track II fora consist of groups such as the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) whose members include academics, private research specialists, and government officials in their *private* capacities. These groups can discuss issues that may still be too sensitive to raise in official international meetings. The results of track II deliberations are usually sent on to each member's respective government for possible inclusion on official agendas.

²⁹ Interview with Zakaria Haji Ahmad, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, November 7, 1995.

³⁰ See the detailed discussion by Lee Ngok, "Fishing in Troubled Waters?—Chinese Strategic Considerations in the South China Sea," a paper prepared for the International Studies Association—West meeting, October 29–30, 1993, Monterey, California.

mainland abreast of Taiwan within about fifty years. By that time, a new political relationship could be forged because the standards of living of the two polities would be equalized. Thus the question of whether Taipei or Beijing were the legitimate government of the whole of China could be finessed through two to three leadership generations on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Ironically, from the perspective of the Clinton Administration, which has emphasized the desirability of democratization for global peace, the recent liberalization of Republic of China (R.O.C.) politics and the legitimization of political parties committed to the island republic's independence have created a potential crisis in relations between Beijing and Taipei. In effect, a new political identity is being created in Taiwan based not on ethnicity but rather on political participation. With the presidential election in March 1996, both the executive and the legislature are now democratically constituted and can therefore claim legitimacy—a condition notably absent on the mainland. Although Taiwanese authorities have been careful not to forecast independence, the elections are interpreted by P.R.C. leaders as the first step in that direction—a step that must be resisted.

To a certain extent, economic ties across the strait could ameliorate political tensions. The P.R.C. has strongly encouraged Taiwanese trade and investment in the mainland. By 1994, the P.R.C. accounted for 16 percent of Taiwan's total trade, a figure worrisome to island officials since anything over ten percent is considered dangerous dependence.³¹ On the other hand, insofar as P.R.C. prosperity is dependent on commerce with Taiwan, the probability of a military option for unification is unlikely. Moreover, Taiwan is more than a mere trade partner. It is a conduit for overseas Chinese capital through joint ventures as well as a source of technology transfer which permits the P.R.C. to upgrade its economy. Given the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future after 1997, Taiwan's importance to China's prosperity can only grow.

Beijing acknowledges Taiwan's economic strength by agreeing to the latter's membership in international economic organizations such as APEC and ultimately—following China's own admission—the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the P.R.C. opposes Taipei's participation in any body devoted to security discussions, such as the ARF, since membership would imply the island's recognition as a political entity. Moreover, China does not want to be placed in a setting where Taiwan could raise bilateral security issues for other Asia-Pacific states to debate.³²

Interviews with P.R.C. and Taiwanese officials revealed interest on both sides in developing some new way to continue peaceful coexistence which takes into account the political changes in Taiwan. Without a new relationship, both economies could be harmed. China could lose its most important external investor, and military threats from Beijing could destroy confidence in Taiwan's future. The PLA missile tests off the Taiwan coast in July 1995 and March 1996, for example, led to a precipitous drop in the Taipei stock market. Those same missile tests also caused Taiwan's pro-independence party to back away from its insistence on complete separation from the mainland.

Taiwanese researchers have discussed two models for future relations with their P.R.C. counterparts.³³ One is based on the Finland-U.S.S.R. relationship in which the former guaranteed the latter it would not ally with any country and thus could not pose a threat. Beijing is unlikely to accept this model, however, since it is premised on Taiwan's independence. A second model would construct a confederation between the two entities. Each side would retain political autonomy; but independence would be ruled out. In this model, the two sides could move closer together over time if liberal political changes occurred on the mainland and its economy continued to prosper. This model is an application of the idea promoted in the early 1980s by Beijing that over several decades the P.R.C. and R.O.C. would gradually come together. It is also based

³¹ Interview with a Taiwanese specialist at The Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, September 26, 1995.

³² Interview with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*

³³ Interview with several specialists at the Institute of International Relations of National Chengchi University, Taipei, October 20, 1995.

on assumptions of political liberalization, continued high economic performance, and a halt to the rise of militant nationalism on both sides.

The democratization of Taiwan also possesses positive security implications. Other democratic states, led by the United States, have become committed to the island's survival because its government now reflects the will of the electorate. It would be difficult for Washington and other democratic governments to sit by idly if Taiwan were blockaded or invaded. Taiwan continues to rely on the U.S. Seventh Fleet's deterrent effect, especially since the United States has been very clear that any interference with the freedom of international commerce would be viewed as a serious threat to regional security.

Beijing and Taipei could be on a collision course. The P.R.C. believes Taiwan is following a course of "creeping independence" by raising its international profile, seeking a seat in the United Nations, serving as a major trade and investment partner for Southeast Asia, and legitimating its new national identity through free elections. Beijing may have concluded, therefore, that time is no longer on its side. By delaying a political showdown with Taipei, it may risk losing the unrecovered territory. Hence the Chinese Communist Party's Leading Group on Taiwan Affairs recently ruled that a "covert independence movement" alone constitutes sufficient grounds for an invasion even without a formal declaration of independence. Concurrent with this declaration the PLA created a "Nanjing War Zone" covering the Taiwan Strait, with the authority to call upon units from neighboring regions.³⁴

Asian armed forces generally are becoming more professional. While the gross numbers of uniformed personnel are declining, more training, education, and modern equipment are being provided.

In effect, China is conducting a coercive diplomacy toward Taiwan, combining threatening statements, military deployments, missile firing, and invasion exercises to influence the island's elections and ultimately force it to negotiate with Beijing on the future political relationship. These pressures are sufficiently alarming that Japan, despite its own domestic political disarray, used some of its strongest postwar diplomatic language in talks with China, insisting that the latter settle its differences with Taiwan peacefully.³⁵

Regional Arms Acquisitions

If the end of the Cold War has led to greater autonomy in regional security policy, how have arms acquisitions been affected? Are states increasingly responsible for their own defense spending acquiring more and better power projection capabilities? What are the strategic rationales—if any—behind these acquisitions?

Asian armed forces generally are becoming more professional. While the gross numbers of uniformed personnel are declining, more training, education, and modern equipment are being provided. Each nation appears to be bent on creating the capacity to deal independently with local situations. South Korea, for example, is acquiring air and naval assets which could permit

³⁴South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), November 28, 1995, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report-China* (hereafter referred to as *FBIS-China*), November 29, 1995, pp. 92–93.

³⁵Kyodo News Service, December 19, 1995, in *FBIS-China*, December 20, 1995, p. 7.

it to defend its own sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) over time. ASEAN countries are also purchasing surface combatants, submarines, and—in Thailand's case—even a light aircraft carrier. By the end of the 1990s, ASEAN countries will have procured 300 new combat aircraft, several hundred helicopters, transport aircraft, a few hundred surface combatants (destroyers, frigates, and corvettes), some submarines, and a large number of missiles and guidance systems.³⁶ The justification for some of these systems is not only to protect territorial waters and air space but also to deter outside powers from militarily intervening in regional crises.³⁷

Moreover, some regional strategists foresee localized arms competitions. Thai and Malaysian interests in acquiring modern submarines are perceived to be directly related to their overlapping territorial waters claims and fishery disputes. If Thailand suspends submarine purchases, Malaysia will acquire a maritime advantage it can use to intimidate Thai fishermen.³⁸

As J. N. Mak has noted, Asian arms requirements seem to be open-ended for several reasons: there are 200-nautical mile EEZs (exclusive economic zones) to protect; conflicting maritime territorial claims to sort out; and with the Cold War's end, a security environment characterized less by any specific threats than by general uncertainty. As the Asia-Pacific region becomes increasingly multipolar, it also becomes potentially more volatile.³⁹

No Asian navy by itself, or even ASEAN in the aggregate, could compete with either China or Japan in combat strength.⁴⁰ Thus the ASEAN states decided at their 1992 Manila ministerial meeting to deal with the South China Sea conflicts through diplomacy. The ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea was an effort to persuade China to forgo its military advantage by pledging the nonuse of force in dealing with the Spratly Islands.

Nevertheless, working on behalf of stability in Southeast Asia is the fact that territorial disputes are essentially peripheral to core national security concerns. Most of the conflicts center on resources in overlapping maritime claims rather than control over populations in volatile border regions, as was the case through the 1970s. However, an "uncertainty-based" threat environment can also generate its own dynamic, including competition for prestige and influence. Additionally, arms purchasers are currently operating in a buyers' market. ASEAN countries are offered very attractive arms packages that include everything from training to countertrade. Arms build-ups, then, appear to be a bargain financially, prudent strategically, and designed more to balance neighbors' acquisitions than to protect against specific threats.

Prosperity and Security

The internal stability enjoyed by ASEAN countries since the 1980s is generally attributed to sustained economic growth based on access to global markets. Therefore ASEAN has a significant stake in maintaining the open global trade regime. Moreover, as Northeast Asian states become trade and investment partners with Southeast Asia, there is a realization that instability in the former can impact the latter as well—hence Southeast Asia's concern that the China-Taiwan standoff be peacefully resolved and that the confrontation on the Korean peninsula not escalate to war.

³⁶ Panitan Wattanayagorn, "ASEAN's Arms Modernization and Arms Transfers Dependence," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1995), pp. 494, 498.

³⁷ Statement by Thai Rear Admiral Sombun Sukhaphan reported in *The Nation* (Bangkok), December 22, 1995, in *FBIS-EAS*, December 22, 1995, p. 82.

³⁸ *Athit* (Bangkok), December 8–14, 1995, in *FBIS-EAS*, December 22, 1995, pp. 83–84. Thailand may be forced to suspend these purchases because of allegations of bribery.

³⁹ J. N. Mak, "The ASEAN Naval Buildup: Implications for the Regional Order," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1995), pp. 303–326.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 309.

All interview respondents agreed with the proposition that national and regional prosperity and security are inextricably intertwined. A Chinese analyst stated that unless China attained the status of a middle-income country, it would never “feel secure” because it would “not be respected by other countries.” Moreover, to attain a true middle-income status, China’s economic growth would have to spread inland from the coastal areas. Since the bulk of the population is still engaged in peasant farming, prosperity must extend to the countryside, or the regime will have to worry constantly about peasant rebellion.⁴¹

Another Chinese analyst pointed out that the progressive opening of China’s market is one way of setting the stage for greater political liberalization over time. The regime is prepared to accept greater economic autonomy as well as tax and banking reforms because of its priority of economic growth. While these changes may challenge the regime’s monopoly of authority over the long run, for now economic performance is the government’s major claim to continued legitimacy.⁴²

Indonesia’s recent movement toward economic liberalization has been a difficult political choice, for Jakarta has had to overcome a history of suspicion about foreign investors in the local economy. President Soeharto and his advisers have concluded, however, that investment must be liberalized if Indonesia is to be globally competitive and if economic growth is to expand beyond the exploitation of natural resources. Soeharto’s hope is that economic liberalization will spread prosperity beyond Java to the outer islands.⁴³ Nevertheless, Indonesia still has a distance to go. State monopolies continue to be protected, nepotism is rampant, and business laws are frequently ignored by government agencies.

The ASEAN vision of APEC differs from that of the United States, Australia, and Canada. While the latter prefer an institutionalized decision-making body which could bind its members authoritatively to specific trade and investment liberalization targets, ASEAN states desire a looser forum, which would work on a consensus principle.

These countries approaching the status of a newly industrializing economy (NIE) are increasing their investments in human resources by upgrading education and vocational training. Malaysia is experiencing a shortage of skilled labor and managerial and professional talent. Its future economic progress depends on raising the educational attainment of its citizens so that the economy can diversify beyond that of a manufacturing platform for foreign investors to one in which financial, managerial, and professional services become linked to local production.⁴⁴ An important positive political effect of Malaysia’s extraordinary economic growth over the past decade is a much more relaxed relationship between ethnic Chinese and Malayan citizens, since the high performance economy has significantly improved Malayan educational and living standards. Political leaders are speaking in terms of a new Malaysian national identity which transcends ethnicity.⁴⁵ In this buoyant context, Malaysia’s neighbor, Singapore, continues to define

⁴¹ Interview with Ji Guoxing, April 14, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁴² Interview with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Interview with Dewi Fortuna Anwar October 31, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Interview with Mohammad Jahwar Hassan, November 6, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Interview with Zakarla Haji Ahmad, head of the Strategic and Security Studies Center, University Kebangsaan, Kuala Lumpur, November 7, 1995.

itself as a regional center for capital and expertise, contributing to growth strategies throughout the Asia-Pacific region with an investment focus in its northern and southern neighbors through the Singapore-Johore-Riau growth triangle.⁴⁶

APEC is central to the Asian strategy of seeking stability through prosperity since it enhances international trade and investment opportunities that speed domestic economic growth within the Asia-Pacific region. Insofar as tariffs, quotas, and licensing procedures constitute obstacles to national economic performance, APEC agreements can reduce these obstacles, thus enhancing the legitimacy of national regimes by contributing to improved living standards.

The ASEAN vision of APEC differs from that of the United States, Australia, and Canada. While the latter prefer an institutionalized decision-making body which could bind its members authoritatively to specific trade and investment liberalization targets, ASEAN states desire a looser forum, which would work on a consensus principle. ASEAN members would also like to see APEC serve as a kind of multilateral technical assistance arrangement through which the forum's developed members would aid the others in managerial, technological, and professional development.⁴⁷ Indeed, APEC has been institutionalized. There are regular ministerial meetings, annual summits for heads of state, ten ongoing work projects, and a modest secretariat. Moreover, as a result of President Soeharto's Bogor 1994 initiative, a trade-liberalization timetable has been set under which industrialized members are to eliminate their trade barriers by 2010, with the rest of the membership following suit by 2020. Nevertheless, individual countries may modify their commitment to this timetable based on their unique economic situation. Such was the compromise necessary to obtain ASEAN's acquiescence.

In general, all APEC members accept the necessity of regional and international economic integration. ASEAN members were the first to recognize this when they created an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) to enhance their attractiveness for investment and trade. APEC was a logical extension of the AFTA, although Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand were somewhat concerned that the industrialized economies would dominate APEC's agendas. To offset this possibility, the ASEAN states have created some strategies within APEC to protect weaker members. One would permit any state to opt out of a general commitment until it believes its economy is competitive. Another is to agree on principles first, to be followed later by implementation. Both of these approaches deemphasize legally binding commitments. Moreover, a number of Asian analysts see APEC's primary value to be the continued encouragement of *unilateral* liberalization and "open regionalism" applied to any trading partner in a nondiscriminatory, WTO-consistent manner. APEC's November 1995 Osaka summit seemed to endorse these gradualist procedures.⁴⁸

Perhaps APEC's greatest impact will be on U.S.-Japan economic relations. Since APEC's mission is to address and remove all government-imposed barriers to regional commerce, the forum's working groups could address Japanese regulations, standards, and competition policies that obstruct free trade. Harmonization of customs procedures and product standards as well as trade in services and direct investment have been particularly difficult for Japan's trade partners. All are to be addressed within APEC.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Interview with Lau Teik-soon and Lee Lai To of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, November 8, 1995.

⁴⁷ Sheldon W. Simon, "The Parallel Tracks of Asian Multilateralism," in Ellings and Simon, *op. cit.*, chapter 2.

⁴⁸ Hadi Soesastro, "ASEAN and APEC: Do Concentric Circles Work?" *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1995), pp. 476, 477, 486, 487; and Sebastian Moffett, "The Devil's in the Details," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 30, 1995, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁹ Adlai E. Stevenson, III, "APEC Ministerial and Leaders Meetings in Osaka," *Pac Net*, Honolulu: Pacific Forum, vol. 42 (December 8, 1995); and Bart Boaden, "APEC Could Hold the Key to U.S.-Japan Relations," *The Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly*, November 27, 1995.

APEC's most reticent participants are China and Malaysia. A Chinese respondent stated that the P.R.C. has not yet developed a cohesive or comprehensive policy toward the forum. China is not comfortable in multilateral settings; nor is the country ready for free trade which, Beijing believes, will inordinately benefit such major players as Japan and the United States. Therefore, China's posture in APEC is "damage control"—to ensure that whatever APEC decides, China will not be harmed.⁵⁰ Kuala Lumpur's concerns parallel Beijing's, though in the former the key variable appears to be Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed's distrust of Western economic dominance. The Malaysian prime minister believes there is still a strong possibility that international trade could break into regional blocs and that East Asia should therefore have its own caucus group (the EAEC) separate from North America and Australia/New Zealand.⁵¹ In fact, an EAEC is informally functioning, and it held a meeting with European Union members in the spring of 1996.

Finally, a point about the efficacy of track II diplomacy. An Indonesian respondent directly attributed President Soeharto's willingness to take the lead in trade liberalization at the Bogor APEC summit to arguments made by Hadi Soesastro and Jusuf Wanandi of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) that convinced Indonesia's Ministries of Commerce and Foreign Affairs. CSIS helped to persuade Jakarta that APEC offered an opportunity to exert Indonesian leadership and that further trade liberalization would increase the country's prosperity.⁵²

Democracy and Human Rights

No single issue has been more controversial in U.S. foreign policy toward Asia than the Clinton Administration's emphasis on democratization and human rights. Based on Clinton's neo-Wilsonian belief that free-market democracies are generally peaceful in their relations with one another and that an important American post-Cold War role should be to promote global human rights, Washington has assumed the obligation to comment on, and sometimes react to, the internal political affairs of several Asian states.

Underlying liberalism in both domestic and international politics is an antipathy toward centralized power and a concern that power can become arbitrary and excessive at home and imperial abroad unless constrained by legal guarantees through independent judiciaries. However, for many Asian states, including China, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the leadership's concern is not too much power but rather threats of chaos from below that result from the disintegration of authority. The fear of Chinese leaders at Tiananmen Square in 1989 was less of an organized effort to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party than of the prospect of the country degenerating into chaos.

Even those policymakers who believe in promoting democracy overseas hesitate to push political reforms if a country has not yet reached a sufficiently high level of education and economic development to create a substantial middle class. In the early phases of development, this class frequently supports authoritarian regimes if the incumbent powerholders provide the political order and financial subsidies to assist the country's economic growth and middle class expansion. At some point, though, the enlarged middle class begins to demand political liberalization, and the state's power may be constrained. These changes have occurred in Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and, arguably, Thailand. However, this outcome is by no means inevitable. Despite rapid economic growth and rising middle classes, political liberalization has not followed in Malaysia or Singapore, nor, of course, in China.⁵³

⁵⁰ Interview with a Chinese research official, Beijing, October 5, 1995.

⁵¹ Interview by Donald K. Emmerson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a high-ranking Southeast Asian, Stanford University, May 5, 1995.

⁵² Interview with Clara Joewono, October 30, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁵³ Muthiah Alagappa, *Democratic Transition in Asia: The Role of the International Community*, Honolulu: East-West Center Special Report, no. 1 (October 1994), pp. 26, 27, 32.

Ironically, Western efforts to promote democratization (including advocating human rights) have facilitated political coalescence among several Asian states that otherwise regard each other as external security problems. This has been true of Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and to a lesser extent, Indonesia and China. Uniting against American complaints about political repression and unfair labor practices (including subsistence wages, unhealthy working conditions, and prison and child labor) these states reject the United States and other developed parliamentary systems as models for their futures. Instead, they hold that economic development and the promotion of indigenous culture are more important for their societies. Moreover, they argue that Western states should do nothing to impede their development; they should not, for example, withhold trade and aid in order to punish those developing countries that do not meet liberal political criteria.⁵⁴

To link democracy and human rights to economic and security considerations is perceived in many Asian states as a Western attempt to preserve dominance by ideological means. While an American military presence may remain welcome, U.S. interference in Asian domestic affairs is not.

Moreover, some Asian regimes see themselves as the wave of the future. They view efforts by the West to create a universal order in its image as bound to fail, since Western power and influence are waning. To link democracy and human rights to economic and security considerations is perceived in many Asian states as a Western attempt to preserve dominance by ideological means. While an American military presence may remain welcome, U.S. interference in Asian domestic affairs is not.⁵⁵

Despite these attacks on U.S. foreign policy values, the Clinton Administration continues to emphasize human rights and democracy in its Asian relations. When Washington established full diplomatic relations with Hanoi, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's message insisted that Vietnam's future prosperity depends on an independent judiciary, a free press, and an end to authoritarianism. This was ambitious rhetoric, given that Vietnam is a country where political dissent invariably leads to jail, and the government clearly is betting that it can follow the Chinese model of economic liberalization and Leninist politics.⁵⁶

Similarly, in discussions with Indonesia's President Soeharto, President Clinton raised human rights issues, particularly relating to East Timor. Interestingly, in the Indonesian case there has been some positive response to Western human rights views. A National Commission on Human Rights was formed in Jakarta, and it is remarkably open in its investigations and criticisms of official wrongdoing. The commission has been involved in publicizing military actions against the civilian population in Irian Jaya and may have been partly responsible for the government's decision to arrest and prosecute the soldiers involved.⁵⁷ Soeharto's toleration of

⁵⁴ Diane Mauzy, "Human Rights and the East versus West Debate in Thailand: Some Reflections from a Recent Visit," a paper presented to the Southeast Asian Studies Conference of Arizona State University, Tempe, December 8, 1995, pp. 4, 5, 10.

⁵⁵ Yash Ghai, *Human Rights and Governance: The Asia Debate*, San Francisco: The Asia Foundation Center for Asia Pacific Affairs, November 1994, p. 5.

⁵⁶ David E. Sanger, "U.S. Message to Vietnam: Freedom Pays," *The New York Times*, August 7, 1995; and "Vietnam's Budding Market: What Role for the U.S.?" *The New York Times*, August 9, 1995.

⁵⁷ "Clinton Nudges Suharto on Human Rights," *International Herald-Tribune*, October 28-29, 1995; "Four Soldiers Arrested Due to Tiika Shooting," *Jakarta Post*, October 10, 1995; and *Republika*, April 20, 1995, in *FBIS-EAS*, April 21, 1995, pp. 39-40.

and perhaps tacit support for the commission's work may be related to his own differences with the army. The commission becomes, then, an additional check on the army's political power.

Another approach taken by "Asian values" advocates is to point to the allegedly fragile social structure of multiethnic societies. If each ethnic group has the right to contend openly on its own behalf, the result could be social disintegration: hence the necessity of government's tight control over political expression on racial/ethnic matters. Yet even Prime Minister Mahathir admits that when Malaysia reaches the development level of an advanced industrial state "our society will be more liberal in your sense."⁵⁸ Thus even underlying Mahathir's view of Asian politics may be a developmental perspective on democracy: sometime later, but not now. Moreover, the fact that there are elites concerned about human rights throughout Southeast Asia and nongovernmental organizations in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand that link democracy to indigenous values suggests that the "cultural relativism" argument may not be entirely valid. Democratic and human rights elements are found in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam. They are not unique to the Judeo-Christian tradition.⁵⁹

At bottom, the Asian values or cultural relativist position is almost exclusively occupied by governing elites. For these elites, human rights are a constant challenge to vested interests and authority where the rule of law is weak and subject to interference by the powerful. Human rights are a key element in the struggle for power and the conception of a good society. As Yash Ghai claims: "It is for this precise reason that Asian governments have engaged in this debate with the West; the real audience is their own people."⁶⁰

P.R.C. respondents reinforced the preceding analysis of Asian views of democracy and human rights. One noted that for the Chinese Communist Party, regime survival was the uppermost security concern. Liberalization, in the Western sense of the term, is seen as a direct threat to security, for it challenges Leninism. Moreover, while Chinese authorities view the P.R.C.'s economic success as a source of great pride, they also believe that, at bottom, the West does not want China to achieve true economic development. As a developed country, China would have its own international ambitions which would challenge Western dominance. This fear of Western intentions can be carried to an extreme. Two analysts noted that Beijing's interpretation of Hillary Clinton's speech to the Fall 1995 UN Women's Conference opposing infanticide was a deliberate American policy to encourage greater Chinese population growth, which the country cannot support economically.⁶¹

A parallel line of argument holds that the West refuses to acknowledge that, in fact, human rights in China have never been better—that shelter, education, employment, and freedom from hunger are the best they have ever been. Moreover, even freedom of expression exists as long as it is carried out privately. And, of course, as the economy continues to decentralize and privatize, societal autonomy is also strengthened.⁶²

The contrast between P.R.C. and R.O.C. views on these issues is striking. As Taiwan's politics in the past decade evolved toward both an open competitive party system and a legislature with genuine lawmaking abilities, the island's commitment to electoral democracy has taken hold. Human rights are also increasingly held up to public scrutiny. For example, investigations

⁵⁸ Prime Minister Mahathir's interview in *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), August 21, 1995, in *FBIS-EAS*, August 24, 1995, pp. 50–53.

⁵⁹ See the argument made by Carolina Hernandez, *ASEAN Perspectives on Human Rights and Democracy in International Relations: Problems and Prospects*, Toronto: Center for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1995, p. 27.

⁶⁰ Yash Ghai, *Human Rights and Governance: The Asia Debate*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Also see Miles Kahler, "A World of Blocs," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 1995), pp. 21–22.

⁶¹ Interview, Beijing, October 4, 1995; and a separate interview with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁶² Interview with a senior research scholar at Fudan University, Shanghai, October 6, 1995; and with Yang Jiemian, deputy director of the Chinese Institute for Peace and Development Studies, Shanghai, October 9, 1995.

have been undertaken regarding the bullying of recruits in the armed forces. Antidemocratic laws remaining on the books are no longer enforced. Those Taiwanese who visit the mainland are impressed by the difference in individual freedom between the two systems. This difference probably contributes to the development of a separate new Taiwan national identity—Beijing’s most worrisome concern in its relations with Taipei.

Intellectuals in Taiwan, with their Confucian cultural background, do not see democracy as incompatible with Asian cultures. Democratic strands exist in Confucianism, including the idea that rulers must have the general support of the people, as embodied in the concept of the “mandate of heaven.” Confucianism is also characterized by a humanistic orientation toward government, whose purpose is not the elite’s aggrandizement but rather the population’s well-being. Moreover, Taiwan’s new democratic experience has helped it to gain friends abroad, since democratic governments are almost universally recognized to be legitimate. Therefore any efforts to overthrow democratic Taiwan by force would be broadly condemned.⁶³

Among the ASEAN states, opinions vary greatly as to democracy and human rights. One respondent observed that sensitivity about political liberalization reflects apprehension over the political and social ramifications of rapid economic growth and the commercialization of society. There is a concern, especially in Singapore and in Islamic societies such as Malaysia and Indonesia, that materialism will undermine indigenous culture and replace it with a kind of caricature of Western liberalism, that is, licentiousness and corruption. Moreover, liberalism’s emphasis on the individual could exacerbate communal differences. In both Malaysia and Indonesia, a liberal regime would harm the status of indigenous peoples (*bumiputra* in Malay, *pribumi* in Indonesian) vis-à-vis the more successful Chinese minorities in each country.⁶⁴

This same concern for communal tranquillity is used to justify media censorship. The Malaysian media are forbidden to discuss race and religion. Nevertheless, Malaysia seems to have a longer-term commitment to political openness. Politics there is characterized by a multiparty system, with opposition parties gaining power periodically (currently, an opposition party controls Kelantan state). Moreover, there appears to be growing latitude for political criticism.⁶⁵

Indonesia seems the most sensitive to formal human rights issues of any of the ASEAN “soft authoritarian” states (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei). Hasan Wiryuda of the Foreign Ministry became the architect of Indonesia’s new human rights policy after serving in Geneva at the United Nations. He managed to persuade the government to develop a proactive human rights policy. As a result, the National Commission on Human Rights was established in 1993. Significantly, commission members are elected through their own membership. They are not appointed by the president. The commission has a working relationship with the army, while maintaining its independence and openly releasing its reports to the public. Commission investigations have led to trials of military personnel for human rights violations. Some observers believe that the commission’s surveillance has led the army to take a more tolerant view of civil dissent.⁶⁶ Within ASEAN, Indonesia has cooperated with the Philippines and Thailand to establish a discourse on human rights through the ASEAN Institutes for Security and International Studies meetings. CSIS-Jakarta has even held a one-day public workshop on human rights convened by Jusuf Wanandi.

⁶³ Interview with Tien Heng-mao, October 21, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ Interview with Abdul Razak Abdullah Baginda, executive director, Malaysian Strategic Research Center, Kuala Lumpur, November 6, 1995; and a statement by Rumjah Hussain, Malaysian deputy chief of mission to the United Nations, at the National Defense University, Pacific Command (NDU/PACOM) Pacific Symposium, Honolulu, February 22, 1995.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mohammad Jawar Hassan, November 6, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Interview with a U.S. Embassy official, Jakarta, October 30, 1995.

Nevertheless, some Indonesian scholars believe that outside pressure regarding human rights should continue to be exerted. Only external concern over Indonesia's human rights performance, they argue, will cause Jakarta to acknowledge the change in global political norms attendant upon the Cold War's end. Moreover, a more open political system is absolutely essential if Indonesia is to compete successfully in the global economy.⁶⁷

The implications of this mixed picture of regional reactions to U.S. pressure to democratize and improve human rights frankly are unclear. If the primary American foreign policy goal is to promote democracy and human rights regardless of the cost—essentially in political relationships—then there is some evidence that external pressures may be successfully promoting the development of pluralism in Indonesia, just as they may have been a factor over time in the democratization of Taiwan and the Republic of Korea and in returning the army to its barracks in Thailand. However, if Washington is concerned about maintaining good working relationships with authoritarian governments to promote other interests (i.e., trade, investment, strategic interests), then persistent complaints about their domestic politics may lead to strained economic and strategic

Assuming Washington policymakers want to pursue all these objectives simultaneously (democracy/human rights, economic and strategic ties), then careful orchestration is required. Too much emphasis on the first will lead to a weakening of the others.

ties. America's partners in the Asia-Pacific region could conclude that conducting joint military exercises and offering locations for U.S. airfields and port calls may not be worth the prospect of American political interference with their regimes. For these leaders, maintaining domestic tranquillity and staying in power may outweigh the benefits of economic and military ties to the United States. Assuming Washington policymakers want to pursue all these objectives simultaneously (democracy/human rights, economic and strategic ties), then careful orchestration is required. Too much emphasis on the first will lead to a weakening of the others.

Conclusion: The Development of Multilateral Regional Security

The essential external security challenge in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific region is how to create a concert arrangement through which states can offset threats by adopting policies of reassurance, transparency, and confidence-building.⁶⁸ Most Asia-Pacific states are attempting to create a sense of community via institutions like APEC and the ARF and practices sufficiently strong and widespread to elicit expectations of peaceful change. Leaders in East Asia hope to create a "pluralistic security community" in Karl Deutsch's classic meaning.⁶⁹ While the security dilemma has not been completely overcome by members of this "community," they believe that all-out war at least will not erupt among themselves. To avoid war, small states within this kind of community will support principles of nonintervention and accept the promise of assistance from other members. Some may desire to keep defense pacts with larger states,

⁶⁷ Interviews with Dewi Fortuna Anwar, October 31, 1995, *op. cit.*; Clara Joewono, October 30, 1995, *op. cit.*; and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Soebijakto, chief executive, Institute of Strategic Studies for Indonesia, Jakarta, October 31, 1995.

⁶⁸ Brian Job, *Multilateralism: The Relevance of the Concept to Regional Conflict Management*, Vancouver: Institute of International Relations, University of British Columbia, Working Paper No. 5, October 1994, pp. 2, 12.

⁶⁹ Karl Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 5.

usually to deter regional powers. Indeed, in general, nonintervention, preventive diplomacy, and confidence building comprise the strategies of small states vis-à-vis their more powerful neighbors.⁷⁰ However, these communities cannot form successfully if a potentially deviant state is bent on seeking relative gains at others' expense.

Without publicly identifying a regional threat, a quiet consensus seems to be forming in the Asia-Pacific region centered on China's future capabilities and intentions. Indeed, Beijing's regular refutations about a "China threat" are designed to defuse these concerns, but to little avail. The P.R.C.'s long-standing claims to the Spratly Islands and all their surrounding seas, plus Beijing's more recent threats of military action across the Taiwan Strait, have created a powerful impression that China is the only major "unsatisfied" power in the Asia-Pacific region. Compared to this, unresolved border demarcations and conflicting claims to small islands among the ASEAN states pale in significance.

Moreover, despite the expectations of ASEAN members that they will not make war against one another, unresolved territorial claims, piracy, smuggling, illegal immigration, and prestige factors are leading the militaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to arm competitively.

The region's states have abjured any strategy of confrontation with China, however. Instead, they are following an inclusive approach to the P.R.C., welcoming its membership in regional groups and urging transparency, confidence-building measures, and multilateral negotiations upon Beijing. ASEAN's 1992 Declaration on the South China Sea constitutes a regional effort to commit China to the peaceful resolution of conflicting Spratlys claims, while accepting the current status quo. Given Beijing's additional occupation of archipelago islets, however, ASEAN's strategy apparently has not been successful.

Moreover, despite the expectations of ASEAN members that they will not make war against one another, unresolved territorial claims, piracy, smuggling, illegal immigration, and prestige factors are leading the militaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to arm competitively. That is, each wants to ensure that its neighbors do not upset a rough balance of capabilities. Southeast Asian armed forces are gradually acquiring a modest but increasingly modern air combat, aerial ground attack, and air defense capacity. Much of this new power is directed toward maritime territories and claims. For example, of the 15 maritime boundaries in the South China Sea, 12 are in dispute.⁷¹

This residual distrust has also worked in favor of maintaining some external security links to Great Britain, Australia, and, especially, the United States. Under President George Bush, Washington began in the early 1990s to move toward a less threat-based American military profile through the East Asia Security Initiative (EASI). Low-profile bilateral arrangements for airfield and port visits as well as joint exercises were established with almost all ASEAN members. Because of nationalist sensitivities, almost all of these undertakings went unpublicized. The main

⁷⁰ Brian Job, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.

⁷¹ Amitav Acharya, *An Arms Race in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia? Prospects for Control*, Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1994, chapter 3.

purpose of this low-key network was to ensure that a general American deterrent remained in the region as a backdrop for the creation of a new multilateral security forum.

The ASEAN Regional Forum grew out of ASEAN's post-ministerial conferences and constituted a recognition that dynamic economic growth was not sufficient for the elimination of regional conflicts and tension. Nor was economic cooperation through the APEC and AFTA. Regional security dialogue was essential. ARF's unique setup is its two-track operation: (1) official, ministerial-level meetings and (2) nonofficial (track II) meetings in which scholars and think tank personnel discuss issues more freely in their private capacities, subsequently passing along policy papers on longer-term issues to the official level.

Only in existence for two years, the ARF foresees several successive stages in its deliberations. Confidence-building measures are the first step, followed by preventive diplomacy; ultimately, the ARF should be a mechanism for conflict resolution—though this last stage might be some time in the future.⁷² The first two stages, which may overlap, include security dialogues, defense white papers, military exchanges, joint exercises, and high-level defense discussions. These would be followed by an exploration of ways to prevent conflict, including guidelines for dispute settlement and maritime security cooperation. As an Asia-Pacific-wide conclave, ARF's foremost challenge is to engage China in a cooperative security dialogue. The Forum's very existence, however, reflects America's willingness to accept and participate in multilateral security discussions in the region for the first time.⁷³

* * *

A variety of views, interpretations, and policy preferences regarding regional security were expressed by Asia-Pacific specialists about their own countries' situations as well as such multilateral arrangements as ASEAN and the ARF. These views ranged from a strong endorsement for multilateral fora to considerable suspicion about their purpose and efficacy. It would be fair to say that no consensus has emerged across the region on security collaboration. A discussion of the range of these views concludes this paper.

All agree with noted Southeast Asia specialist Michael Leifer of the University of London that ASEAN is not directly about regional problem-solving but rather focuses on ways of managing national differences in strategic perspectives so that disputes do not disrupt a tranquil commercial environment. The major risk in widening ASEAN to include Indochina and Burma is that its hard-won political understanding may be diluted rather than deepened.⁷⁴ For the first time, single-party, Leninist states are becoming members of an association that was originally formed, at least partly, to contain their expansion.

The other major reason for ASEAN's formation was to provide Indonesia a legitimate leadership role in Southeast Asia and to limit its more grandiose ambitions. Those goals have been achieved, as Jakarta has restrained its development of external military capabilities, confident that cooperation with neighbors is a better defense policy than the intimidation characteristic of the pre-ASEAN period. Now, for example, Indonesia collaborates with its former adversaries—Singapore and Malaysia—in antipiracy patrols in the Strait of Malacca as well as in the sharing of intelligence on the South China Sea.⁷⁵

⁷² C.P.F. Luhulima, *ASEAN's Security Framework*, San Francisco: The Asia Foundation Center for Asia Pacific Studies, Report No. 22, November 1995, pp. 6–7.

⁷³ William Tow and Richard Gary, "Asia-Pacific Security Regimes: Conditions and Constraints," *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 30, no. 3 (November 1995), p. 446.

⁷⁴ Michael Leifer, "The Issue is ASEAN," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 30, 1995, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Interview with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Soebijakto, October 31, 1995, *op. cit.*

Indonesia views regional security as a series of concentric circles, with the ASEAN states at the core and non-Southeast Asia great powers at the periphery. Because of the strategic importance of the region's sea lanes, all ASEAN members, including Indonesia, accept the general security role of the U.S. Navy. Yet regional collaboration and great power guarantees are no substitute for self defense of a country's air and sea space: hence Jakarta's decision to expand and modernize its air and naval forces. Because Indonesia estimates that it loses \$1 billion annually to fishing poachers, coastal patrol—not power projection—is a priority.⁷⁶

Malaysia also sees multilateral efforts, alongside the build-up of Kuala Lumpur's own autonomous armed forces, as a way of ensuring Southeast Asia's independence. In this view, the combination of subregional collaboration and national defense will ensure security in the post-Cold War era. Because Malaysia has territorial disputes with all its neighbors, the Mahathir government has generally taken a conciliatory approach to regional security concerns. Conciliation has been effective with the Philippines over the Sabah dispute, and relations between Manila and Kuala Lumpur are the best they have ever been. By contrast, Indonesian-Malaysian intimacy is currently strained because Prime Minister Mahathir has a more confrontational approach to regional leadership than President Soeharto; and he has tried to preempt ASEAN policy on subregional collaboration within APEC. Thus, Malaysia has "violated" ASEAN's implicit understanding that Indonesia will set the association's overall policy toward external actors.

Sensitive to territorial problems with neighbors, Malaysia has established border security committees with all except Singapore. These groups deal not only with specific issues of border demarcation, local trade, and illegal immigration, but also have been expanded to discuss foreign and defense affairs more broadly. There is no particular regional vision in this foreign policy. Rather there is a kind of ad hoc coping with a variety of neighbors possessing differing cultures, all of whom have disputes with Malaysia of varying degrees of importance.⁷⁷ ASEAN norms are comforting for Malaysia in this context because the association has developed ways of dealing with these relatively minor issues so that they are not blown out of proportion.

More than any other ASEAN member, Singapore's foreign policy is oriented toward broad-gauged Asia-Pacific regionalism. As an urban center for financial services and management skills, the city-state is a strong proponent of both APEC and the ARF. Singapore's relations with its immediate neighbors have never been better. With an emphasis on economic development, Singapore provides the capital and management expertise for a growth triangle centered in Malaysia's Johore province and Indonesia's Riau islands. Singapore also benefits from policies followed by both Muslim neighbors committed to controlling Islamic radicalism—a problem that could seriously affect a predominantly Chinese island in a "Malay sea."⁷⁸

In military affairs, Singapore supports transparency by issuing a white paper on defense. Thailand and Indonesia have followed suit. But there is little prospect for multilateral defense cooperation other than antipiracy coordination in the Strait of Malacca. According to Lau Teik-soon of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, concern over neighbors' defense plans still drives ASEAN states' military acquisitions. For example, even though relations with Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur are currently cordial, a change in political leadership or a reversal of economic growth in either country could have profound negative security implications.

All ASEAN respondents identified China as their major, long-term external security concern, but none advocated confrontation. All believed the best approach to China was political and economic engagement, bilaterally as well as through regional organizations. P.R.C. respondents

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; and an interview with Dewi Fortuna Anwar, October 31, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Interviews with B. M. Hamzah, J. N. Mak, and Mohammad Jahwar Hassan, November 6, 1995, *op. cit.* Also an interview with Chandran Jeshurun, formerly with Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, November 7, 1995.

⁷⁸ Interview with Lau Teik-soon, president of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, November 8, 1995.

demurred, by contrast, to the proliferation of multilateral security venues in the Asia-Pacific region. Ji Guoxing of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies supported the idea of unilateral transparency through the independent publication of defense white papers. (China is reportedly going to produce such a document for the first time in 1996.) He sees a progression toward confidence-building measures that goes from white papers and military personnel exchanges to military doctrine discussions and, ultimately, to arms control and institution building. Ji believes that territorial disputes should be separated from confidence-building measures so that the former do not obstruct progress on the latter.⁷⁹

In many ways, the ARF's creation was a logical extension of ASEAN-based security discussions which had gone on for over a decade, that is, since Vietnam's Cambodian intervention in late 1978. By initiating an Asia-Pacific-wide security dialogue, ASEAN hoped to reassert the association's primacy after APEC had been "captured" by the United States and Japan. The ASEAN states wanted to make sure there was no repetition of this experience in security matters.⁸⁰ With ASEAN at ARF's core, presumably the "Asian way" would dominate regional security, that is, dialogue would take precedence over the creation of binding legal arrangements. The ASEAN Regional Forum was also seen by both ASEAN and Tokyo as a device to involve Japan in regional security without threatening its neighbors. Indeed, Japan has taken the lead in funding and directing a kind of secretariat for the ARF's confidence-building measures between the forum's annual meetings.⁸¹ ARF also provides, of course, an opportunity to engage China.

Indeed, ARF's most prominent "success" in its short existence grew out of its engagement of China at the July 1995 Brunei meeting. The ASEAN members pressed China on negotiations over the Spratly Islands at a time when Beijing feared diplomatic isolation in the region. China's relations with the United States and Japan were tense because of human rights issues, nuclear testing, and P.R.C. military efforts to intimidate Taiwan during its elections with missile tests over the Taiwan Strait. In this highly charged atmosphere, Beijing did not want to alienate ASEAN as well over the Spratlys, so at least a rhetorical concession was made. China agreed for the first time in Brunei to engage in multilateral negotiations on the Spratlys with other claimants and to consider the 1982 Law of the Sea as the basis for these negotiations. The 1982 Law of the Sea provides that all littoral states with overlapping territorial waters and exclusive economic zones should negotiate their overlapping jurisdictions. The ASEAN states interpreted it as a possible breakthrough, though, in fact, little subsequent followup has occurred. According to ASEAN analysts, China had implicitly accepted the legitimacy of others' claims on the Spratlys—a substantive change from its earlier rejection of their holdings as invalid because of P.R.C. sovereignty over all of the South China Sea.⁸² The "Brunei breakthrough" on the South China Sea disputes would not have occurred had ARF not been in place and China not been pressured to negotiate.

A major reason behind Taiwan's keen desire for membership in the ARF is to use the forum to internationalize its dispute with China. Taiwan-based analysts believe that a regional security framework in which both Taipei and Beijing hold membership would block the P.R.C.'s military assertiveness. Beijing perceives possible Taiwanese membership in the ARF in exactly the same light and, therefore, adamantly opposes it. China insists that its actions toward Taiwan are an internal matter, and it brooks no international interference. Moreover, Beijing argues, Taiwan cannot be permitted to enter the ARF because the latter is explicitly devoted to security, and only sovereign states can be members of international security groups. To admit Taiwan would be to accept the prospect of its sovereignty.⁸³

⁷⁹ Interview with Ji Guoxing, April 14, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Interview with Allan Gury, deputy director of the U.S. State Department Office of Regional Affairs and Security Policy, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC, September 26, 1995.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Interviews with Chu Shulong, October 4, 1995, *op. cit.*; and Yang Jiemian, October 9, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁸³ Interview with Tien Heng-mao, October 21, 1995, *op. cit.*

At the very least, Taiwan is lobbying for membership in the track II Conference for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), a nongovernmental organization focused on multilateral security and confidence building. But, even in that body, Beijing has raised strong objections. In hopes of effecting a compromise, the U.S. delegation to the June 1995 CSCAP International Steering Committee meeting offered an amendment to the CSCAP charter that would have provided for a new category of "Observer/Affiliate." This category was established specifically to provide a vehicle for Taiwan's informal participation. While this new category of "membership" has been approved by CSCAP, Taiwan has not yet been invited to participate because the P.R.C. continues to raise objections to Taiwanese participation in track II fora.⁸⁴

In summary, for the smaller states of the Asia-Pacific region, the ARF is a way of keeping big powers inside a collaborative organization where they might be required to explain and justify their security policies toward the region. In a sense, ASEAN respondents see the ARF as a means of extending ASEAN's successful experience in preventive diplomacy to the whole Asia-Pacific.⁸⁵ Yet ASEAN members do not want the ARF to move toward transparency and confidence-building measures too quickly, fearing that this would alienate China. Thus ASEAN's original idea for the ARF to establish a regional security studies center was dropped at the July 1994 Bangkok meeting because it was considered to be a device for mandating transparency. The region as a whole does not seem ready for this step because to some (particularly China), transparency requirements amount to intelligence gathering.

What role, then, for the future of multilateralism as a foreign policy strategy? In general, the Asia-Pacific preference is informality and an expansion of existing arrangements rather than the imposition of new ones. Expanding existing maritime cooperation efforts might be a good place to begin, building on the old U.S.-Soviet or recent Russia-Japan incidents-at-sea agreements and broadened to include other countries as well as a safety-at-sea dimension. A similar expansion of antipiracy cooperation beyond the current Strait of Malacca arrangement to the China Seas seems feasible. Signatories could also add pollution control and search-and-rescue operations.⁸⁶

No real community consisting of common values, interlocking histories, and the free movement of peoples and firms across national boundaries exists yet in the region. Hence the reticence about creating political institutions that would entail policymaking based on legal procedures.

Buttressing these multilateral arrangements for the foreseeable future should be the maintenance of forward-deployed U.S. forces. They balance North Korea and China and render Japan's own growing military capability acceptable to the rest of the region. It would be unwise, however, to go beyond defense arrangements among neighbors by attempting to create a multilateral security community for the Asia-Pacific region at this time. No real community consisting of common values, interlocking histories, and the free movement of peoples and firms across national boundaries exists yet in the region. Hence the reticence about creating political institu-

⁸⁴ Minutes of the USCSCAP Board of Directors Meeting, Washington, DC, October 20, 1995.

⁸⁵ Interviews with Soedjati Djawandono, February 23, 1995, *op. cit.*; and Carolina Hernandez, February 23, 1995, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ See a number of suggestions in Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures* (CSCAP Memorandum No. 2, 1995), *passim*.

tions that would entail policymaking based on legal procedures. Successful institutions require common views of objectives as well as cost and benefit sharing.⁸⁷

Trust and confidence can be achieved, however, even if a security community is not created. CSCAP recommendations to the ARF for greater transparency regarding military doctrine, capabilities, and intentions could provide the reassurance necessary to insure that military modernization does not escalate into arms races. Toward this end, uniform outlines to provide comparability for defense policy white papers, arms registries, and defense expenditures would be most helpful.

If security collaboration is based on a belief that the dominant partner remains committed to sustaining a peaceful international environment, then the U.S. profile has improved in recent months.

What, then, can one say about the compatibility of the Clinton Administration's emphasis on military security, human rights/democracy, and market economics with the Asia-Pacific's tentative movements toward security multilateralism? As in most complex international political matters, the fit is somewhat procrustean. If security collaboration is based on a belief that the dominant partner remains committed to sustaining a peaceful international environment, then the U.S. profile has improved in recent months. The deployment of two carrier battle groups adjacent to the Taiwan Strait in March 1996 to observe the PLA's amphibious exercises demonstrated to East Asians that Washington was still prepared to "deter" intimidation and could bring overwhelming military force to bear if necessary. That is, the United States possessed both the political will and military capability to sustain a balance-of-power policy in the Asia-Pacific—at least in this instance. Similarly, President Clinton's May 1996 proposal that four-power talks in Korea (to include the United States, South Korea, North Korea, and China) be convened to effect a peace agreement on that troubled peninsula also demonstrated a creative diplomatic effort to persuade the North that negotiations were a better political option than unilateral abrogation of the 43-year-old armistice. These actions, plus a potential strengthening of the U.S.-Japan security relationship, add up to a set of signals that the United States will continue to be a major security player in the region well into the next decade.

There is, however, considerably less enthusiasm for American pressures on governing elites to conform to U.S. views of market liberalism and human rights. These incompatibilities are particularly prominent during negotiations over trade policy in APEC and the WTO, where Washington's concerns about child labor, general wage rates, and working conditions are perceived by many in the region as thinly disguised protectionism on behalf of higher-priced American products. U.S. efforts in these same venues to go beyond tariffs and quotas by attacking other impediments to trade and foreign investment (including licensing procedures and domestic content requirements) are also resisted. Southeast Asian countries especially fear that the United States is using APEC and the WTO to derail local development strategies and once again dominate their economies. Thus far, American explanations that it is only seeking a level playing field, that it is running chronic trade deficits with its Asian partners because the American market is open and their's are not, and that human rights concerns are independent of trade issues have not persuaded Asian leaders.

⁸⁷ Akio Watanabe and Tsutomu Kikuchi, "Japan's Perspective on APEC: Community or Association?" *NBR Analysis*, vol. 6, no. 3 (November 1995), pp. 29-30.

The net result seems to be that although security cooperation with the United States via military exercises, port and airfield visits, joint training, and multilateral discussions are prized throughout the region, U.S. human rights and market pressures are not. While Washington is seen as an important ally in the former, it is perceived as an adversary in the latter.

Finally, Asia-Pacific states must understand that in the current U.S. political climate, overseas security commitments may not be sustainable if it appears that U.S. forces are protecting the external security of countries that have become long-term creditors of the United States and that appear to keep their markets closed to U.S. products. Although the Clinton Administration continues to emphasize democracy and human rights as foreign-policy values, American foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region is driven more strongly by commercial considerations. (Witness the President's decision to continue China's most-favored-nation status despite human rights transgressions, while at the same time threatening to impose trade sanctions over intellectual property rights violations.) Security is tied to trade and investment. If the United States is to continue to provide a significant proportion of security, the region must open itself even more to the global economy.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

U.S. Institute of Peace Project on Asia-Pacific Elite Views of Security, Prosperity, and Democracy: Compatibility Issues

1. In your opinion, what is your country's view (definition) of national security? To what extent do you think the prosperity of your country is a means to security (i.e., the relationship between economic growth and security)? Is your country currently secure? How should your country achieve or maintain national security over the next five to ten years?
2. From your country's perspective, what is regional security? Does it exist now? How can it be achieved or maintained over the next five to ten years? Can you give priorities (i.e., which issues are the most important for regional security)? To what extent do you think regional prosperity is important for regional security? Should this prosperity be achieved interdependently (e.g., through WTO, APEC, AFTA)?
3. What roles do other countries have in your country's vision of security? Which countries? Can you rank their importance and relationship (ally, adversary, neutral)? Which great powers should play a role in regional security over the next five to ten years? What countries outside the region are important to your country's achievement of prosperity, viz., through trade, investment, technology transfer, aid?
4. As you know, it has been asserted that domestic political openness and popular governance are positively associated with security, just as economic openness is associated with prosperity. How much support—if any—does this proposition have in your country? Should internal political and economic arrangements be of international concern?
5. With the Cold War's end, has your country's view of security changed?
6. Are there any other comments about the relationships among security, prosperity, and democracy you wish to add?

REALISM OR EVANGELISM? SECURITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIZATION AS A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Donald K. Emmerson

Democracy and Security: Euphoria Remembered

From 1989 to 1991, for anyone who had hoped through the long years of the Cold War for the eventual triumph of democracy over totalitarianism, it was hard not to feel good about world events.

In 1989, scant months after a pure white “Goddess of Democracy” arose in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, the Berlin Wall fell down. As if by chain reaction, Czech legislators voted down red power, and anticommunist Romanian rebels ended Nicolae Ceausescu’s brutal rule. By then, to be sure, Deng Xiaoping’s troops had already overturned the “Goddess of Democracy” and massacred the statue’s makers. But many, if not most, of the Americans who ventured to predict the future in China in the wake of that tragedy doubted that the butchers of Beijing could prevent democratization. In the aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre, to my knowledge no respectable China-watcher argued that China was inherently or permanently incapable of democratizing, or that Chinese culture and democratic politics were somehow forever destined to remain incompatible. Typically, on newspaper opinion pages and talk shows, revulsion over the killings was accompanied by cautious optimism: Democracy would come to China. If not this year, perhaps the next; and if not then, perhaps the year after, or the following year, or the year after that. One would have to wait, but not too long, and certainly not forever.

By the end of 1989, Francis Fukuyama had taken the end-of-communism argument one step further into the possible ending of history itself, on the grounds that communism’s downfall had left nothing standing that could compete with liberal democracy and market capitalism on a global scale.¹ And as the number of liberal-democratic and market-capitalist countries grew, the world would become more secure. No longer would there be any reason to defend either system against an alternative; there were none. Fukuyama’s thinking struck many at the time as wishful—erudite and intriguing, but wishful all the same.

In October 1990, more than a year after the massacre in Beijing, I found myself in the Boston area attending a seminar on Asian democratization sponsored by the Asia Foundation. Among those present was a well known China expert who argued eloquently that the Tiananmen students and the Chinese peasantry understood freedom in the same way, were equally dedicated to bringing it about, and would soon rise up to transform China into a democracy. Yet on the freedom scale of a leading human rights monitoring organization, Freedom House, as of Janu-

Donald K. Emmerson is professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is author of *The “Stable” War: Cambodia and the Great Powers*; *Pacific Optimism*; and other works on Asian security and political economy. Funding for Professor Emmerson’s research was provided by the United States Institute of Peace.

¹ See his article, “The End of History,” *The National Interest*, no. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.

ary 1996 China still received the worst possible score²—as if nothing had changed in the six-and-a-half years since the crackdown.

Chinese politics have changed,³ but they are by no stretch of the imagination liberal democratic. Overly optimistic observers underestimated the sustainability of Leninism. The income-raising effects of economic reform made political reform less urgent. Not all Chinese conceived of freedom first in political terms. By initially satisfying the desire of rural dwellers to be free from hunger, Deng Xiaoping made it easier to deny freedom of speech to urban students and intellectuals. Even in the cities, many Chinese were willing not to make waves so long as they could keep making money. Against the wishful thinking of outsiders, pragmatic compromises helped prolong authoritarian rule.

Meanwhile, economic gaps between the coast and the countryside have been growing. The benefits of decollectivizing agriculture have faded in memory. Rural dwellers have wearied of mistreatment by local party cadres. Rural as well as urban crime is on the rise. Beijing cannot rely as it may have before on a peasantry materially coopted into quiescence.

Even if these trends do signal expanding demand for a more accountable government—a plausible if debatable inference—it does not necessarily follow that China’s rulers will choose to respond with concessions instead of repression. And even if a supply of democratic institutions and practices does arise to meet the demand, it does not necessarily follow that a more democratic China will behave in ways conducive to regional security. The democratization of China, by entrenching nationalism as a popular mandate, could make it harder, not easier, for Beijing’s leaders to compromise with neighbors for the sake of peace in the region. This could be especially true in the dangerous and possibly protracted phase when democratic ways are being experimented with but have not been institutionalized.

Thus, looking back on that Asia Foundation seminar in 1990, I remain persuaded that in those euphoric days too many observers of China and other developing countries were excessively sanguine about the prospects for democracy within states and its conduciveness to security among states.

The optimism was understandable. If 1989 had been a banner year for democracy and security, 1990 had brought more encouraging news: the surrender of drug-trafficking, election-canceling Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega to U.S. troops; the end of Yugoslav and Soviet communist monopolies on power; the end of Leninist rule in Nicaragua through a peaceful election; the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and the unraveling of South African apartheid; a U.S.-Soviet arms accord; NATO’s formally declared epitaph for the Cold War and its proposals for East-West cooperation; the reunification of Germany as a democracy; and Lech Walesa’s and Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s respective electoral accessions to the Polish and Haitian presidencies.

The first half of 1991 brought more good news: American-led United Nations troops restored the security of Kuwait by reversing Iraq’s invasion of that country; majorities in the Baltics voted for independence from the U.S.S.R.; Albania’s holdout communist regime resigned; and the South African parliament repealed apartheid.

Democratizing Asia: First Principles, Second Thoughts

It was against this backdrop of spectacular progress toward a more democratic and secure world that I found myself in July 1991 at another meeting on democratization in Asia, this one

² *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1995–1996*, New York: Freedom House, 1996, p. 536.

³ Examples of such change include elections at the village level that are sometimes competitive, a somewhat more autonomous National People’s Congress, fewer political prisoners, and the willingness of at least some Chinese to use the courts and the media to express grievances against administrative misconduct by officials. For details, see China scholar Minxin Pei’s letter to *The New York Times*, May 15, 1996, p. A20.

convened in Santa Cruz, California, again by the Asia Foundation. Our task was to debate and recommend first principles for a project to promote democracy in Asia which the Foundation would then implement using public and private funds.

The good news continued, right up to and following that weekend in Santa Cruz. On the eve of our meeting, the Warsaw Pact dissolved itself, and Boris Yeltsin became the first freely elected president of Russia. Soon after our conference, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev would negotiate a strategic arms reduction treaty; China would endorse an earlier treaty on nonproliferation; Moscow would recognize the independence of the democratizing Baltic republics; Israel and the U.S.S.R. would resume diplomatic relations broken off 24 years before; the last American hostages in Lebanon would be freed; the Soviet Union would dissolve into a potentially democratic Commonwealth of Independent States; and the 12-year civil war in El Salvador would come to an end.

There were a few disturbing notes on the margins of all these good tidings. In 1989 Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini called on Muslims to kill writer Salman Rushdie. The ostensible defeat of Saddam Hussein in Kuwait did not stop the Iraqi leader from launching a campaign against Kurds and Shiites in his own country. In September 1991, on a single day, the Serb-led Yugoslav army attacked Croatia, and Haitian troops overthrew President Aristide.

As the world became simultaneously more democratic and more secure, it was tempting to infer from this co-occurrence a causal logic: that as countries democratized, the actuality and likelihood of violence inside and between them would recede, and vice versa.

In Santa Cruz in July, however, it was almost impossible not to feel encouraged about the prospects for democratization and security alike around the world. As the world became simultaneously more democratic and more secure, it was tempting to infer from this co-occurrence a causal logic: that as countries democratized, the actuality and likelihood of violence inside and between them would recede, and vice versa. The higher the democratic tide rose on Freedom House's charts, and the farther back from midnight and nuclear armageddon the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* pushed the minute hand on its famous clock,⁴ the easier it was to believe that these two motions engaged each other in a single mechanism whereby the spread of democracy would continue to spread peace, which would make further democratization possible.⁵

It was in this upbeat ambiance in Santa Cruz that I could not help wondering aloud to my co-participants—American and foreign academics, activists, and policymakers, one of whom would become the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations—whether any among them might be

⁴ Since it first adorned the journal's cover in 1947, the closest the clock ever got to apocalypse was three minutes to midnight. This nearest-the-brink setting came in 1953 following the first (American) test of a hydrogen bomb. In 1991, after the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was signed, the *Bulletin's* editors moved the clock back farther than they ever had: to seventeen minutes before midnight. The clock's hands are still in this most optimistic position. We should remember, however, that their setting symbolizes the chance of a specifically nuclear catastrophe, not war in general. See "Word for Word: The Doomsday Clock," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1995, section 4, p. 7.

⁵ If a third desired value is added to democracy and security, namely, prosperity, we have the makings of what I have called the "virtuous spiral." By its more-is-better logic, increasing prosperity should engender democracy, which should bring about security, which in turn should enable further prosperity, and so on through rising loops of improvement. On the (non)operation of this spiral in U.S. foreign policy toward Southeast Asia and inside the countries of that region, respectively, see my "US Policy Themes in Southeast Asia in the 1990s," in David Wurfel and Bruce Burton, eds., *Southeast Asia in the New World Order: The Political Economy of a Dynamic Region*, New York: St. Martin's, 1996; and "A Virtuous Spiral? Southeast Asian Economic Growth and Its Political Implications," in George Yu, ed., *East Asia's New World Order*, Basingstoke, England: Macmillan, 1996.

prepared to consider what was an incongruous thought at that time and place: the possibility that in some circumstances more democracy might actually be a bad idea and less democracy a good one, that in certain conditions more democracy might actually decrease security and less democracy increase it. No one around the table was willing to entertain such a thought. Perhaps the very notion that democratization could be a bad thing seemed so perverse in that setting as to be unthinkable, or at any rate unspeakable.

Since no one else at the conference would, I tried to answer my own question. I cited two countries where, I thought, if democracy and security were associated, the association might not be positive, and could even be negative: Algeria and Peru.

Two Steps Backward: Algeria and Peru

In Algeria, insecurity—the riots of 1988—had led the authorities to introduce democratic reforms. That sequence already deviated from the expectation that security would incubate democracy while insecurity bred dictatorship. Local elections had been won by Islamists calling for an Islamic state. Shocked by this result, the Algerian president, Colonel Chadli Benjedid, postponed national elections. The question in July 1991 was whether to hold, further postpone, or even cancel the national poll in order to keep the Islamists from coming to power—that is, whether to forestall the democratic formation of a theocracy that would itself probably dismantle democracy.

If the fear of a democrat in Algeria was that anti-democrats might be elected to office, in Peru that already seemed to have happened. Elected president in 1990, Alberto Fujimori turned to increasingly undemocratic methods in his war against the neo-Maoist Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, whose guerrillas were then terrorizing much of the country. My question in July 1991 was whether the United States should oppose Fujimori's autocratic methods because they undermined democracy, or endorse them as necessary to prevent the destruction of democracy through extreme insecurity. In this instance the insecurity created by civil war seemed inimical to democracy, in contrast to the reform-triggering insecurity posed by the Algerian riots of 1988. Note that in these two cases, let alone a larger sample, one could not impute to insecurity a consistently positive or a consistently negative effect on democratization.

It seemed implausible to me then (it still does) that democracy must always be security-enhancing, irrespective of the particular history, society, economics, culture, or politics of a given state, or the character of its relations with neighboring states.

In Santa Cruz in 1991 my aim was to cast constructive doubt on the idea that more democracy will necessarily lead to greater security. I was in no way prepared to defend the radical counterproposition that curtailing democracy will necessarily improve security. Had I been forced to choose between these two contradictory causal laws, I would have opted then (I still would) for the first one, not the second. Rather than make that choice, however, I wished to question the absolutism of the first law. It seemed implausible to me then (it still does) that democracy must always be security-enhancing, irrespective of the particular history, society, economics, culture, or politics of a given state, or the character of its relations with neighboring states.

Have the events in Algeria and Peru since 1991 borne out my suggestion that in these countries less democracy might mean greater security? The answers are mixed. Curtailing political plu-

ralism in Algeria dramatically worsened domestic security, although since that reversal, one could argue that Algeria has had more peaceful relations with neighboring states than if democratization had been allowed to proceed. In contrast, the retreat from democracy in Peru facilitated a dramatic improvement in domestic security; and although the evidence for regional security is less convincing, a case can be made that Peru's relations with its neighbors were also better than they might otherwise have been.

Under pressure from domestic discontent, Algeria's authoritarian regime held parliamentary elections in December 1991. When, as feared, the Islamists won, the generals in Algiers nullified the result. It is hard in retrospect to imagine a worse fate for Algerians than the civil war that ensued—and still goes on. Unofficial estimates suggest a death toll between 30,000 and 50,000 in 1992–95.⁶ Had the Islamic Salvation Front been allowed to take power, it is at least conceivable that the experience of ruling Algeria might have made it in time less intolerant and more accountable.

As for regional security, because the setback to democracy in Algeria was motivated by fear of Muslim extremism, a fear shared by ruling elites in neighboring states, Algerian leaders were able with one partial exception to get along with their counterparts elsewhere in the Maghreb. The partial exception was Morocco, whose relations with Algeria briefly worsened in August 1994 over an incident that the authorities in the Moroccan capital Rabat blamed on their counterparts in Algiers. Yet this cooling was not caused by the antipathy of Algerian leaders to democratization as a possible Trojan horse for Muslim extremists to seize the state. On the contrary, Algiers and Rabat had that nightmare in common.

Algeria and Morocco had long been at loggerheads, notably over self-determination for the Western Sahara. One might have thought that Algeria's leaders would have been tempted to distract domestic attention from terrorism, unemployment, and inflation by intensifying the republic's long-standing dispute with Morocco over self-determination for the Western Sahara. On the contrary, their internal preoccupations appear to have benefited regional security by restraining Algiers from escalating its differences with Rabat. It seems virtually certain that if the canceled second round of parliamentary elections in Algeria had been held as scheduled in 1992, and if they had been won by Muslim militants who were then allowed to take power, relations between the new Islamist government and its anti-Islamist neighbors would have worsened.

Peru turned out differently. Fujimori was far more popular than Benjedid. In April 1992 Fujimori suspended the constitution, dissolved congress, and imposed censorship. The U.S. government protested these antidemocratic measures by suspending aid. On the scales of American policy, the damage to democratic procedures weighed more heavily than the damage—\$20 billion worth—inflicted by the guerrillas and their opponents on Peru's economy, not to mention the estimated 25,000 Peruvian dead. But by September the head of the Shining Path was behind bars, and Fujimori's gamble appeared to have paid off.

Of these two cancellations of democratic process in 1992, the Peruvian case seems the more defensible. Given the Shining Path's rising success at the time, it is plausible to argue that absent draconian methods Peru today would be physically and economically more insecure than it is. The initial popularity of Fujimori's methods among Peruvians tired of the corruption and violence they had come to associate with the previous democracy is another reason not to condemn him too quickly. While guerrilla violence decreased, economic reforms that accompanied the political crackdown lowered Peru's traditionally triple-digit inflation to 74, 40, and 18 percent in 1992, 1993, and 1994, respectively, while the economy boomed.⁷

⁶ *Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*, New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995, p. 263.

⁷ Bryan T. Johnson and Thomas P. Sheehy, *1996 Index of Economic Freedom*, Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 1996, p. 267.

As for regional security, Venezuela broke relations with Peru to protest the “self-coup” of April 1992 in which President Fujimori dissolved congress and suspended the constitution. But none of Peru’s contiguous neighbors followed suit, and by November 1993 Venezuelan-Peruvian relations were fully restored. Meanwhile, under Fujimori’s leadership, Peru granted landlocked Bolivia long-term access to the Pacific Ocean—access the Bolivians had lacked for more than a century. Fujimori’s success against the Shining Path also contributed to regional security, given the neighboring states’ fears of spillover from the insurrection. Positive too were the regional trade-generating effects of Peru’s economic recovery. It is impossible to know for sure how regional security would have fared in the absence of the draconian measures of April 1992. But a case can be made that continuing political indecision and domestic terror at home would have reduced, if not precluded, these gains in safety for the region.

In Peru today a formally democratic system surrounds and sustains an authoritarian regime. Official abuses of civil rights continue to occur. Yet from January 1, 1993, to January 1, 1995, on Freedom House’s seven-point scale, Peru improved its rating by a full point. Currently Freedom House considers Peru “partly free”—on par with Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Even Algeria is rated as freer today than it was three years ago, though by only half a point, and without lifting the country above the company of other “not free” states such as Brunei and Cambodia.⁸ Without condoning Fujimori’s repression, and without underestimating the risk to democracy posed by his ambition to stay in power, one can plausibly believe that political rights and civil liberties in Peru would be under greater duress today than they are, had he taken no emergency measures at all.

. . . a relative increase in the concentration of power may in certain circumstances be a necessary—to be sure, not a sufficient—condition of a liberal democracy in which power is legitimately dispersed.

I am not challenging Lord Acton’s adage that absolute power corrupts absolutely. My point is rather that a relative increase in the concentration of power may in certain circumstances be a necessary—to be sure, not a sufficient—condition of a liberal democracy in which power is legitimately dispersed. It is often said that the antidote to corruption is “the rule of law,” a hypothesis with which I generally agree. But the anti-authoritarian overtones of this phrase should not blind us to the crucial need for an authority powerful enough to ensure that the law does rule, that is, to transform the status of laws from mere words on paper into enforced criteria for actual conduct in society.

Democratic Peace? East Asia

In Asia, the present draining of central power and authority, combined with the postponing of hard decisions (e.g., on privatizing state enterprises in order to sustain economic reform and development) lead to a seemingly paradoxical conclusion: Reconcentrating power now under reformist auspices may be necessary for its future peaceful dispersal through democratization.⁹

⁸ *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1992–1993*, New York: Freedom House, 1993, p. 625, compared with *Freedom in the World, 1995–1996*, *op. cit.*, p. 541. Cambodia’s “not free” classification in 1996 represents a loss of the “partly free” rating it received in the editions of *Freedom in the World* published in 1994 and 1995 following the successful holding of elections there in 1993.

⁹ This is not an original argument. See, for example, Yumei Zhang, “China: Democratization or Recentralization?” *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1995), pp. 249–265.

Otherwise, the drift into corruption and disorder could lead to a backlash of the sort apparent in Russia, as market capitalism becomes identified not with opportunity and material betterment but with extreme personal insecurity, not to mention unfairness and greed. Such a discrediting of economic reform could, in turn, create an incentive for the leadership in Beijing to seek legitimacy on other grounds (e.g., nationalism) by escalating its threats against Taiwan, which would make East Asia less secure. The flexing of Chinese muscle in the waters off Taiwan and in the South China Sea could reflect in part such a search for legitimation.

Observers who believe that East Asian economic growth will lead to the region's democratization point most often to the way in which political pluralism has followed economic dynamism in Taiwan and South Korea.¹⁰ Yet even in these paragons democracy may never acquire a fully liberal form. Especially in the near term, political changes in other rapidly developing East Asian economies may turn out not to replicate, or even resemble, the recent evolution of political pluralism in Taiwan or South Korea. Having expressed these doubts elsewhere,¹¹ I wish to confine myself here to the implications of democratization for security.

There can be little question that the democratization of Taiwan has legitimated the expression of Taiwanese nationalism; or that this trend, by appearing to threaten the axiomatically "one-China" stand of the government in Beijing, helped to provoke Beijing into using military exercises in 1995–96 to intimidate Taipei. I am not, of course, blaming regional insecurity on Taiwanese democracy. The growing popularity of self-determination in their supposedly renegade province did not, after all, oblige Chinese leaders to drop missiles off its coast. If political pluralism grows inside China as well, Taiwan may turn out to have led the way toward a peace made permanent by a rule to which many scholars subscribe: that democracies rarely if ever make war on each other.¹²

Nevertheless, Taiwan's democratization can be considered destabilizing to the extent that it challenges the Cold War status quo. That modus vivendi, however precarious, was based on the mutually agreed postponing of two explosive questions: whether or not China should regain Taiwan, and on what terms. If in reabsorbing Hong Kong in mid-1997 China abolishes that territory's nascent democracy, the Taiwanese nationalist case for avoiding the mainland's embrace will become even stronger. Democracies may not fight each other, but the democratization of one antagonist while the other remains basically authoritarian can thicken the hostility between them.

To those with a more-is-always-better conception of democracy and its impact on security, these arguments are cautionary. Inside China, a failure to reconcentrate power now under reformist auspices could facilitate a reconcentration of power in the future under leaders whose actions could undermine prospects for democracy and security alike. As for the security of the region, Taiwan's democratization may well contribute to it in the long run, if China follows suit. But in the shorter term, the burgeoning of competitive politics on the island has enabled Taiwanese nationalists to contemplate independence, and that has infuriated Chinese leaders in Beijing.

¹⁰ For Pei, for example, politically liberalizing trends in economically booming China "vindicate the theory of political development that has been proved in South Korea and Taiwan"—namely, that economic intercourse abroad, including openness to foreign trade, promotes political accountability at home. See Minxin Pei, *loc. cit.*

¹¹ See my "Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1995), pp. 223–248.

¹² These scholars include Stewart A. Bremer, James Lee Ray, Rudolph J. Rummel, and Bruce M. Russett. See, for example, Russett's *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. Dissenters include Christopher Layne and David E. Spiro, who exchanged views with Russett in the Fall 1994 and Spring 1995 issues of *International Security*. Nevertheless, in 1995 Nils Petter Gleditsch ("Geography, Democracy, and Peace," *International Interactions*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 297–324) could still characterize the rarity of inter-democratic war as a well established generalization. Also see Randall L. Schweller, "Domestic Structures and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics*, vol. 44, no. 2 (January 1992), pp. 235–269; and David A. Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 86, no. 1 (March 1992), pp. 24–37.

If and when mainland politics are liberalized as well, the groundwork could be laid for a “democratic peace” between Taiwan and China, perhaps even for their voluntary union. But if political pluralism has given voice to nationalism on Taiwan, how can we be sure the same thing will not happen in China? Russia’s experience is unique but instructive. Russian democracy has made it more, not less, difficult for Moscow to compromise on matters of sovereignty (for example, regarding the Russian-occupied, Japan-claimed islands northeast of Hokkaido). A democratic China could prove no less nationalistic than the present one.

China abuts Taiwan, Russia adjoins Japan, and proximity has been accompanied by antipathy in both cases.¹³ But in neither of these pairs are both countries “free.” Across all of East Asia, only two adjacent countries are classified by Freedom House as “free”—South Korea and Japan. South Korean-Japanese relations thus offer the best and virtually the sole test of the “democratic peace” hypothesis anywhere in the region.¹⁴ The state of peace between Seoul and Tokyo confirms the rule, although one may debate how much of that condition is explained by democracy compared with other factors.

But the rule does not go so far as to predict that relations between democracies will be free of friction, and Korean-Japanese interactions in the past have been anything but smooth. Tension flared again in 1996 over two tiny islets and some nearby rocks and reefs (named Dokdo by South Korea, Takeshima by Japan) in the Sea of Japan, which Seoul pointedly calls the Eastern Sea. The features are too small and barren to sustain human habitation, but Seoul finds it worthwhile to control them while rejecting Tokyo’s claim to sovereignty.

If the two countries were led by authoritarian regimes, would it be easier for them to settle this dispute? Not necessarily. But democratic competition, including media that fan nationalist sentiments, can make compromising with foreigners politically risky. When that risk exists in two contiguous democracies, other things being equal, territorial disputes may become harder to resolve, even as war remains unthinkable. Because the absence of war need not mean an end to frictions, and because frictions can renew animosities, regional insecurity can outlast the arrival of a “democratic peace.”

... in Southeast Asia, the remarkable success of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in creating and maintaining not only peace but cooperation among its members cannot be attributed to democratization.

Finally, in Southeast Asia, the remarkable success of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in creating and maintaining not only peace but cooperation among its members cannot be attributed to democratization. Today, nearly thirty years after the Association’s establishment in 1967, not one of its members has been classified as “free” by Freedom House,

¹³ As Gleditsch, *op. cit.*, leads us to expect.

¹⁴ Mongolia is also rated “free,” but it borders “partly free” Russia and “unfree” China. Currently peaceful relations between Mongolia and Japan or South Korea confirm the rule, but less impressively than Japan-South Korean relations do. *Freedom in the World, 1995–1996, loc. cit.*

notwithstanding a record of intramural amity-building and conflict settlement that has been nothing short of extraordinary. Whatever explains that record, it is not democracy.¹⁵

Is Democracy the Solution? A Heretic's View

My purpose in voicing these doubts is to illustrate what might be called, half-facetiously, "the Santa Cruz heresy": the thought that in some circumstances, more democracy could actually be a bad idea, that is, could diminish security, while less democracy could be a good idea, that is, could augment it.

Taken literally, in the context of what happened at the Santa Cruz conference, the theological connotations of the term "Santa Cruz heresy" are tendentious and self-serving. No one threw me out of the room. The Asia Foundation, whose work on behalf of democracy I support, is not a church. My use of "heresy" is metaphorical.

The metaphor is not, however, groundless. Democracy is not just a phenomenon to be studied; it is also an article of faith to be reaffirmed. The goodness of democracy raises a problem for analysts analogous to the problem of theodicy for believers. To ask how we can vindicate liberal democracy as an absolute good by disassociating it from bad concomitants and consequences recalls the theologian's conundrum: How can we have faith in the absolute (normatively held) goodness of God in the face of actual (empirically existing) evil?

There are two standard ways to resolve this dilemma: (1) to assert that God is not perfectly omnipotent and hence is not responsible for evil; or (2) to argue that God is not perfectly good and hence is capable of doing evil. Transposed into the discourse on democracy, the second of these assertions would hold that democracy is not absolutely good and can do bad—for example, by causing a reduction in security. Among believers in the absolute morality of democracy, expressing that view must indeed be a kind of apostasy.

Nor is the attribution of virtual omnipotence to democracy unfamiliar in democratist discourse. In December 1995 the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict published a monograph by Larry Diamond entitled *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s*.¹⁶ Undergirding the essay is the assertion that democracy is powerfully conducive to security in a wide range of circumstances. Democracy for Diamond can alleviate all of "the most important potential threats to world order and national security in the coming decade," namely: a hostile, expansionist Russia; a hostile, expansionist China; the spread of Islamic fundamentalism; political terrorism; ethnic conflict; nationalist aggression in ex-Yugoslavia; the flow of illegal drugs; the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; and the endangerment of the global ecosystem.¹⁷

By Diamond's final paragraph, democracy as the empirical means to security has become itself the normative end:

If democracy is to expand and triumph in the twenty-first century, democrats everywhere must view the challenge of democratic development and improvement as universal and ongoing. And democratic systems—new *and* old—must demonstrate anew that democracy is, in the long run, the best, most just, effective, and humane form of governance for all peoples.¹⁸

¹⁵ Of ASEAN's seven members at the beginning of 1996, Freedom House rated Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand as "partly free," and Brunei, Indonesia, and Vietnam as "unfree." *Freedom in the World, 1995–1996*, *ibid.* For more on ASEAN's success, see my chapter, "From Confrontation to Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Lessons and Prospects," in Barbara K. Bundy, Stephen D. Burns, and Kimberly V. Weichel, eds., *The Future of the Pacific Rim: Scenarios for Regional Cooperation*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994, pp. 156–171.

¹⁶ Larry Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1995.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–6; the quote is on p. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

If democracy is so omniscient to alleviate or resolve so many different kinds of insecurity, and if democracy is so clearly and universally superior—“in the long run, the best, most just, effective, and humane form of governance for all peoples”—one might understand Diamond as saying: DEMOCRACY IS THE SOLUTION. “Best, most just, effective, and humane . . .” There appears to be no downside here, no advantage left out. Is it unfair to infer from such language that democracy for the democratist is a key that fits all locks? If we believe in something strongly enough, I suppose, we can help to make it come true. In the meantime, it helps to know a locksmith.

Diamond acknowledges as much when he implies that *in the short run* democracy may *not* be the best, most just, effective, and humane form of governance for all peoples. The concession opens the gate to a researchable idea: that this “short run” may be longer in one country with one set of conditions than in another with a different set. Yet once we proceed down this revisionist path, the orthodoxy of democracy as an absolute good cannot survive.

Who has done such research? Where is the literature that seriously entertains the possibly ambiguous morality of liberal democracy in the short run? Where are the books and monographs on failed elections? I have in mind, for example, the electoral empowering of mortal enemies who are thereby enabled to deadlock government and sap its ability to act, including taking action to improve security. Or consider the boycotted poll that a regime holds anyway, even though the voting does nothing but encourage cynicism about the utility of elections in the first place.

The risk of empowering antidemocratic forces in an election may well be worth taking. Russians may someday look back on their country's tumultuous experiment with democracy in the 1990s and conclude that it worked: that only by allowing its neo-communist “red” and ultranationalist “brown” factions to compete at the ballot box and lose could Russia decisively turn its back on them. But other outcomes could warrant other verdicts.

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One also could explore, in Russia and elsewhere, the idea that in times of rapid economic decay and social disruption the loser of an election may actually “win”—by remaining free of blame for circumstances that perhaps no government could do much to ameliorate soon. In 1996 one may also wonder whether the electoral solution sought by the United States in former Yugoslavia will succeed, or merely facilitate the institutionalization of hatred. But then again, is there a better alternative?

Boycotted elections are similarly ambiguous. In retrospect, it appears to have been wise to invite the Khmer Rouge to take part in the Cambodian election of 1993 and, when they refused, to hold it anyway. The election created a regime with at least some legitimacy in Phnom Penh while helping to marginalize the country's chief security threat. But future historians are likely to judge more harshly the role of elections in, say, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the apparent Cambodian success has been looking less successful. Since 1995 the regime in Phnom Penh has increasingly shown itself willing to violate the personal security of Cambodians brave enough to express dissent. Cambodia's polity is a work in progress. Notions of political pluralism and civil liberties may in time take hold. But events have not yet vindicated those whose faith in the appeal and power of democratic ideas once led them to believe that the 1993 elections would set Cambodia firmly on the path toward accountable government, political competition, and personal freedom.

One may choose to believe, as a normative matter of faith, that democracy and security are intrinsically, absolutely, and additively good—the more the better. However, as an empirical matter of scholarship, it is worth entertaining the possibility that the goodness of democracy and security may be situational and relative—the more not always or necessarily the better.

The spread of democracy and the difficulties this has entailed have created an opportunity to research the places where and times when more democracy may not have meant more security, and to find out why. Is it unfair to note that the reluctance of scholars to pursue such a normatively contrarian research agenda is just what one would expect if democracy were indeed as hegemonically canonical in scholarship as theism is in religion? One does not lightly relativize the absolute.

Let me now formally restate the “Santa Cruz heresy”:

One may choose to believe, as a normative matter of faith, that democracy and security are intrinsically, absolutely, and additively good—the more the better. However, as an empirical matter of scholarship, it is worth entertaining the possibility that the goodness of democracy and security may be situational and relative—the more not always or necessarily the better.

In the rest of this essay I will try to do two things: first, to show abstractly how democracy's potential to decrease security is built into the tension between individual right and collective representation at the heart of “liberal democracy” (which in the American tradition is synonymous with “democracy” *tout court*); and second, to explore concretely for East Asia how “Asian values,” socioeconomic development, and external intervention may affect the “Santa Cruz heresy.”

Liberalism and Representation: Tension and Ambiguity

When Freedom House representatives and most other Americans use the term “democracy” without an adjective in front of it, they mean “liberal democracy.” Liberal democracy is the expression of liberalism in the political domain, just as market capitalism is the expression of liberalism in the economic realm. By “liberalism” I mean belief in the moral primacy of the rights of individuals.

In a direct democracy citizens themselves decide all matters of mutual interest. But direct democracy is still not practicable on a large scale. The prospect of millions of citizens someday spending an hour every morning typing “Y” or “N” on their home computers to make policies on everything relevant to their lives remains political science fiction. In representative democ-

racies, freely and regularly elected legislators will continue to make such decisions, or at any rate contribute in some check-and-balance arrangement with executives and judiciaries.¹⁹

Liberal democracy thus has two purposes: to protect the rights and freedoms of morally autonomous individuals; but also, in regular and free elections, to delegate the practical exercise of that autonomy to representatives empowered to strengthen *or to weaken* those same rights and freedoms for the sake of the community, including the nation-state to which those same individuals, as citizens, belong. As my italics suggest, in “liberal democracy” the adjective and the noun are in principled contradiction. Regardless of any procedure, the outcome of such a system must be liberal: There must be personal freedom. Yet regardless of any outcome, democracy must be the procedure: There must be majority rule. Built into liberal democracy, in other words, is an ineluctable tension between individual right and collective representation, between personal and public decisions, between placing an absolute moral priority on a predetermined end—the protection of individual freedoms—and assigning an equally absolute moral priority to an open-ended procedure—the legitimacy of preponderant numbers regardless of whether or how much they favor protecting individual freedoms.

In two direct ways the electoral or representative character of liberal democracy can endanger the exercise of individual rights: by bringing to power democratically a government that is “too representative” or one that is “not representative enough.” In the first instance, the power to rule may be too fragmented, deadlocked, corrupted, or unstable to assure the minimum level of personal security necessary for the enjoyment of individual rights. In the second event, an elected majority government can use its mandate to threaten the personal security of individuals and groups who disagree with it.

To be sure, once some threshold of chaos or repression is crossed, a system of the first kind ceases to be liberal substantively because human rights and freedoms are no longer being protected. Similarly there is a threshold in elections manipulated, postponed, or canceled beyond which a system of the second sort ceases to be democratic procedurally because the representative function is no longer renewable.

Careful analysis of such “failures of democracy” ought to treat as an open question whether the failure could have been avoided, or whether it may have stemmed in part from the tension between personal freedom and collective representation within liberal democracy. To the extent that this tension may have played a role, we ought also to entertain the possibility that making the democracy in question “more” or “less” representative might have prevented its collapse. It follows further that the extent of representation in one democracy may not be appropriate in another. For surely it is untenable to hold that in countries whose histories, societies, cultures, and economies differ, their systems of liberal democracy will have identical thresholds—likelihoods—of collapse into paralytic deadlock on the one hand, or “majoritarian” repression on the other.²⁰

This conclusion does not stand on its head the routine claim that liberal democracy is conducive to personal security. I am not counterclaiming that liberal democracy is inimical to personal security. Rather, there is a tension within liberal democracy—between the majority and the individual, between desired method and desired result—that can endanger personal security, depending on circumstances that vary according to time and place. From this it follows that to assure personal security, a crafter of liberal democracy must continually entertain the possi-

¹⁹ Futurologist John Naisbitt disagrees. See his *Global Paradox*, New York: Avon Books, 1994, pp. 46–51.

²⁰ A majority can willingly and democratically deprive a minority of its rights. But I have placed “majoritarian” between quotation marks to acknowledge a second and arguably more common situation where an authoritarian regime controls and uses elections and referenda to legitimate antiliberal values and practices that the voters themselves, given a truly free choice, would not necessarily support. At the same time, pending research on the particulars of such a case, we should not assume the contrary: that such an electorate necessarily prefers liberal values and practices.

bility of political reform, including the possibility of making a given system more or less representative, and to that extent, more or less democratic. The “Santa Cruz heresy” turns out to be not heretical at all, merely practical.

Maximizing the freedom of the individual beyond some threshold will threaten the interest of the community, as liberty becomes license, causing personal insecurity sufficient to inhibit the exercise of that individual freedom. Conversely, a democratically elected government that uses the principle of representation to minimize personal freedom for the sake of national security will, once another threshold is reached and discipline turns into dictatorship, violate the liberal principle that individuals should be free to do what they want.

Variable Thresholds: Disorder and Domination

If the principle of liberalism applies to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the principle of representation as it is embodied collectively in an elected legislature or executive applies to these individuals as members of a community or nation with a collective interest. Maximizing the freedom of the individual beyond some threshold will threaten the interest of the community, as liberty becomes license, causing personal insecurity sufficient to inhibit the exercise of that individual freedom. Conversely, a democratically elected government that uses the principle of representation to minimize personal freedom for the sake of national security will, once another threshold is reached and discipline turns into dictatorship, violate the liberal principle that individuals should be free to do what they want.

Again, it is implausible to think that these thresholds do not vary in space and time across different countries with different histories, societies, cultures, and economies. In a country where people have a higher tolerance of disorder, the threshold at which liberal democracy is replaced by anarchy will be higher than in a country whose people tolerate disorder less. Similarly, in a country where people have a lower tolerance of domination, the critical point at which liberal democracy is replaced by tyranny will be lower. As a population’s experience of disorder and domination changes over time, these thresholds will be raised or lowered accordingly.²¹

If it is to be institutionalized in any country, liberal democracy as a political system must be indigenously legitimate. But that legitimation must take place within indigenously perceived limits of disorder and domination that the tension between freedom and representation poses. Because these limits vary and change, so will the extent to which a democracy in a given coun-

²¹ For suggestive survey research evidence that elite-level East Asians, compared with their American counterparts, believe that their fellow citizens place a higher priority on having an “orderly society” and a lower priority on “personal freedom” and “the rights of individuals,” see David Hitchcock, *Asian Values and the United States: How Much Conflict?* Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994. In another survey, American business administrators appeared to be more individualistic than their counterparts in any of the other 38 countries sampled. Compared to their Singaporean counterparts, for example, the American managers were more than half again as inclined to maximize individual freedom over social responsibility. See Fons Trompenaars, *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*, Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin, 1994, pp. 51–53. For methodological caveats along with an interpretation of these results, see my “Singapore and the ‘Asian Values’ Debate,” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, no. 4 (October 1995), pp. 101–104.

try at a given time in its history can be said to be liberal. On the resulting spectrum of liberalness—the extent of respect and protection for individual rights and liberties—who is to say that a democracy can turn into a dictatorship only beyond one universally valid threshold? What if the people of one country genuinely—that is, democratically—support, in the name of the security of the community, more restrictions than would be tolerated by the people of another country? Seen realistically in the local context necessary to legitimate it, liberal democracy is not a cookie cutter. One size does not fit all.

This argument means that we cannot presume in advance, for all peoples, first, that the only good democracy is a liberal democracy, and second, that the relationship between liberal democracy and personal, community, or national security is unambiguous, that is, always mutually inducing.

The first of these conclusions leads toward a worthwhile, even urgent, project that lies beyond my present scope:

- (1) to map on multiple dimensions the existing variety of meanings and kinds of democracy in the world today; and
- (2) to use the resulting inventory to answer empirically questions such as these:
 - (a) Are some kinds of democracy more or less conducive to personal/national/transnational security?
 - (b) Do the indigenous meanings and connotations of democracy in relation to security vary synchronically and diachronically within and across populations, including variation by class and culture?
 - (c) Specifically, do indigenously assigned priorities for personal freedom and social order also vary across these units and dimensions?

Finally, after each of these questions we ought to insert these follow-ups: If not, why not? And if so, how and why?

Liberal Democracy and “Asian Values”: Beyond Polemics

The need for empirical research regarding the above questions is great. The notion that more democracy is not always better has bordered on the unthinkable among enthusiasts of democracy who cannot countenance the possibility that what they believe in so absolutely could be only a relative good. In the 1990s Singapore’s Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew and several of his co-officials have challenged the democratists.²² The core argument of this somewhat diverse “Singapore School” is fivefold: First, many Asians hold communitarian values that are less liberal than the individualistic values held by many Westerners. Second, these “Asian values” are good for Asians, if not for Westerners as well, as protection against crime, drugs, family breakdown, and other threats to personal, community, and national security. Third, every society is entitled to its own beliefs. Fourth, independent states should respect each other’s sovereignty. From these propositions the “Singapore School” then infers its fifth tenet: that Westerners should not seek to impose their dysfunctional liberal values on Asian regimes and peoples.

Democratists have rejected this argument as an effort by autocrats, Lee preeminent among them, to rationalize their self-serving, authoritarian rule and their equally self-serving refusal to acknowledge the universality of liberal ideas, including the idea that individual freedoms must

²² See, for example, Fareed Zakaria, “Culture Is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2 (March–April 1994), pp. 109–126; Bilahari Kausikan, “Asia’s Different Standard,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 92 (Fall 1993), pp. 24–41; Kishore Mahbubani, “Go East, Young Man,” *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 5–23.

not be sacrificed on the altar of social order. Among Lee's critics, *New York Times* columnist William Safire has been particularly scathing.²³

Among the Singapore School's core propositions, the first one is most readily subject to empirical confirmation or rejection. Yet in the polemic between the School and its detractors, neither side has bothered to consult the evidence, accumulated through survey research, as to whether Asians hold similar values and whether these values differ from those held by people in Western countries such as the United States.

In October 1994, for example, 2,500 people in ten Chinese cities were surveyed. Of the respondents, 54 percent thought that economic development was a more pressing need than more democracy.²⁴ It does not follow from this result that more democracy in China will make that society less secure. But if the finding is genuine, it suggests that the constituency for more democracy in these cities may not be particularly strong compared with the constituency for more development. And if this is true, one may at least ask whether more development could have a greater positive effect on political stability than more democracy.

A counterargument comes readily to mind: We ought to reject *prima facie* the results of any survey conducted in China today—or, for that matter, in any other authoritarian polity. The respondents must have said what they thought the government wanted them to hear, for fear of getting in trouble if they did not. One prominent American theorist of democracy, Amy Gutmann, has taken this argument to its logical extreme by reasoning that the only way we can know whether people in a given polity really want to live in a more democratic system is by making their system a full-fledged liberal democracy for at least long enough to run the survey.²⁵ That is, you cannot reliably ask people whether they want freedom unless they have experienced it.

However, this makes perfection the enemy of the good and prejudices as useless all efforts to obtain a more than anecdotal estimate of public opinion in authoritarian states. Such a rejection also relies upon a model of human nature—the primacy of fear and fawning—that is itself contradicted in the behavior of at least some citizens in such states. If only because the willingness to speak out varies across different populations, we ought not to assume that all citizens of authoritarian states are equally intimidated and hence equally useless as informants.

Yet not all surveys can be trusted. I lack sufficient information on the one run in China in October 1994 to reach firm conclusions about its validity and reliability, but its findings are at least suggestive. The survey was conducted by a private outfit, Beijing Market Research Consultancy, whose head, Min Qi, was formerly a survey researcher for the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). CASS had surveyed political attitudes in 1988, but those results were apparently deemed too sensitive to publish until 1994. The book was banned in 1995, apparently for selling too well. The 1988 survey, for example, found 55 percent of its respondents—again presumably city dwellers—willing to engage in street protests “if necessary,” a prophetic datum in light of the demonstrations that would occur the following year in Tiananmen Square. Min Qi himself was jailed in the late 1970s for taking part in such protests.²⁶ Because of the sensitivity of the 1994 results, the regime in China has not permitted their publication. They have instead been circulated among a restricted group of party figures considered reliable enough not to be swayed.

²³ Compare, for example, Eric Jones, “Asia's Fate: A Response to the Singapore School,” *The National Interest*, no. 35 (Spring 1994), pp. 18–28, and Aryeh Neier, “Asia's Unacceptable Standard,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 92 (Fall 1993), pp. 42–51, with William Safire, “Singapoverty,” “Honoring Repression,” “Singapore's Fear,” in *The New York Times*, February 2, July 10, and July 20, 1995, pp. A17, A13, and A15, respectively.

²⁴ Bruce Gilley, “Whatever You Say,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 7, 1995, pp. 35–36.

²⁵ Amy Gutmann, written comment on Daniel A. Bell, “The Pros and Cons of Democracy in Singapore: A Fictitious Dialogue with Lee Kuan Yew,” seminar paper, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, October 12, 1994. Part of Bell's paper is forthcoming in *Political Theory*.

²⁶ Gilley, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

Judging by their criticisms, most respondents in the 1994 survey appear not to have censored themselves, at least not with regard to all questions to which they could have given critical replies. Seventy-one percent, for example, expressed anger over official corruption. Yet one cannot infer from the concerns of respondents a desire for liberal democracy. An advocate of the Singapore School, for example, could have drawn comfort from the fact that 51 percent of the respondents chose to decry what they saw as a high level of public disorder in China. A critic of the School, on the other hand, could object that such a razor-thin majority hardly confirmed the importance of social order as a distinctively Chinese (let alone Asian) value.

What is more, if the 1988 and 1994 results are compared, it would appear that a small but growing minority of respondents—between 20 and 25 percent in the latter year—were willing to complain about sociopolitical ills in the media and to their delegates in the People’s Congresses.²⁷ Despite the apparently higher priority given to development and order over democratization, an increasing readiness to articulate grievances may imply that a modestly more assertive and autonomous society could be in the making.

The implications for democracy and security are not clear. On the one hand, a more vocal public augurs well for a more democratic system that can respond to the public’s demands. On the other, the activation of the media and the People’s Congresses as channels of discontent could merely encourage their institutionalization as safety valves. Such mechanisms could, in effect, let off just enough pent-up steam to enable people to identify with the existing system, thereby facilitating its reform while slowing, postponing, or even precluding China’s transformation into a liberal democracy.

In keeping with my interest in empirical questions, I should like to complete these already overlong thoughts on democracy and security by citing some circumstantial, mainly Asian, evidence that seems to support the “Santa Cruz heresy” with regard to two additional factors: socioeconomic development and external intervention.

In this essay I have recommended diversifying what we mean by democracy and locating its various types in particular times and places in order to estimate the varying implications for security.

Development and Democracy: Comparing Prophylactics

In this essay I have recommended diversifying what we mean by democracy and locating its various types in particular times and places in order to estimate the varying implications for security. (We should also semantically diversify and historically situate the concept of security.) Another fruitful way to relativize democracy for purposes of empirical research is to compare its hypothetically security-enlarging effects with those of other phenomena. One of those phenomena is socioeconomic development.

Exponents of the Singapore School have not denied that making a country more democratic may help to make it more secure, though they would underscore the conditionality of “may.” But Lee Kuan Yew and his co-officials have argued that in many lower-income countries economic development may be more security-improving than political democracy. In their view, a

²⁷ *Ibid.*

regime held to be autocratic by “Western” (liberal-democratic) criteria may nevertheless achieve security without meeting those criteria if its leaders make sound, market-based economic policy decisions that raise living standards. From this perspective, between poverty and autocracy, poverty is the greater enemy of security.

In the mid-1990s, examples of state collapse accompanied by extreme physical insecurity—famously dramatized by Robert Kaplan as “The Coming Anarchy”—have multiplied.²⁸ In different ways, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Yugoslavia, and Zaire all come to mind. (Conceivably North Korea could join this list.) Aware of the challenge to U.S. foreign policy such cases pose, U.S. Vice President Al Gore asked the Central Intelligence Agency in 1994 to assemble a research team to study the causes of “state failure” as revealed in extreme insecurity—revolutionary warfare, ethnic strife, mass killings, and violently disruptive changes of regime.²⁹

The team identified 113 historical cases of state failure between 1955 and 1994, drew up a list of more than 600 variables that might have contributed to these disasters, examined the relative causal contribution of each variable, and narrowed the list down to those 31 that best explained state failure—that is, extreme political insecurity. These 31 variables were then combined in models that reportedly postdicted state failure “with an accuracy approaching 70 percent.”³⁰

The study’s conclusions hold good and bad news for champions of democracy as the most potent inoculation against insecurity a polity can take. The good news is that in general democracy did lower, and autocracy did increase, the likelihood of state failure. But the bad news is fourfold:

- (1) The single best predictor of state failure was not autocracy but high infant mortality—a circumstance typically associated with low living standards;
- (2) Poor democracies were more prone to state failure than either rich or poor autocracies;
- (3) The risk of state failure was especially great in poor democracies that did not improve living standards;
- (4) Regardless of whether a state was democratic or autocratic, a high degree of openness to foreign trade was prophylactic against failure.³¹

The reported findings suggest that although democracy reduces the likelihood that extreme political insecurity—state failure—will occur, a powerful case can be made in favor of market-conforming socioeconomic betterment as also, and conceivably even more, effective in protecting against Kaplan’s scourge.

Shifting now to interstate security and East Asian evidence, what might be called the Law of Irenic Democracy—the idea that democracies do not fight each other³²—is not contravened in the experience of East Asia in the 20th century. None of this century’s major wars in East Asia (e.g., the Russo-Japanese War, World War II, the Korean War, or the Indochina Wars) pitted one

²⁸ Robert D. Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 273, no. 2 (February 1994), pp. 44–46 ff. Kaplan has expanded the article into a book, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, New York: Random House, 1996. The specter of insecurity is invoked from the book’s first sentence, which quotes a woman Kaplan met in Liberia: “The thieves are very violent here. They will cut you up if you are not careful.”

²⁹ Tim Zimmerman, “CIA Study: Why Do Countries Fall Apart?” *U.S. News and World Report*, February 12, 1996, p. 46.

³⁰ The researchers identified four kinds of state failure: revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, mass killings, and adverse or disruptive regime changes. The fourth type was defined to include events involving (a) a termination of a democratic regime, or (b) a disruption of an authoritarian regime resulting in an extended period of disorder, but not (c) a routine coup d’état in an authoritarian state, or (d) an abrupt regime change toward stable democracy.

³¹ Zimmerman, *op. cit.*

³² See the references in footnote 12.

democracy against another. Yet, as I have noted above, what is arguably the most striking instance of state success at the business of regional security anywhere in East Asia—the record compiled by ASEAN—was achieved by relatively undemocratic countries. Most of these states did, however, manage to achieve rapid gains in socioeconomic development while, to varying degrees, welcoming foreign investment and liberalizing trade.

Would these gains have been made, and would regional security have been maintained, had the ASEAN states put political reforms ahead of economic ones—*glasnost* before *perestroika*? One can speculate that the plausibly irenic impulse of democracy—i.e., the unwillingness of vote-dependent governments to risk voters' lives without popular cause—could have been thwarted by a failure to raise living standards.

I have in mind a hypothetical economic downside of introducing liberal democracy too quickly in poor, culturally plural societies of the sort that existed in Southeast Asia in the mid-1960s when ASEAN was conceived: the chance that weakening the state by dispersing political power in a multicultural society of rivalrous groups may make it difficult, indeed impossible, for leaders to implement certain hard, pain-allocating policies that may be necessary to restore or improve that society's economic health. And if in consequence a poor democracy stays poor, political violence could be especially likely, as the investigators of state failure found.

Democracy by Intervention: Exceptional Japan

The relativity of the goodness of democracy not only requires us to diversify what we mean by that term and to locate each of the resulting types in particular circumstances. It also means that we should consider the consequences for security of the ways in which democratization can occur. An obvious first cut at this historical aspect would be to distinguish between democracy by intervention and democracy by evolution.

Other things being equal, it seems reasonable to suggest that democracy by evolution, as the culmination of an indigenous process with indigenous causes and momentum, is more likely to be security-enhancing than democracy by intervention.

Other things being equal, it seems reasonable to suggest that democracy by evolution, as the culmination of an indigenous process with indigenous causes and momentum, is more likely to be security-enhancing than democracy by intervention. The historical record in Asia supports this.

To be sure, Japan is the paradigmatic case of successful democracy by intervention, the most successful such instance in any country in the last half-century. But the conditions that enabled Japan to democratize—overwhelming defeat, unconditional surrender, and seven years of occupation by an explicitly democratizing power—were so unique as to be virtually irreproducible elsewhere. Obviously this stringent set of requirements was not met, for example, by America's intervention in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s.

Will democracy by intervention in Cambodia turn out to have been a success? In this instance, democracy and security were twinned as mutually reinforcing goals of UN policy. But as I have noted, since the departure of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), aspects of democracy that UNTAC tried to incubate at the ballot box in 1993 have been under some threat from the regime itself.

The balloting in 1993 was a short-term success. The Khmer Rouge boycott merely assured their own political isolation. A coalition regime with some legitimacy emerged from the voting process, and physical security in the country improved. But when UNTAC went home, much of the leverage the foreign democratizers had enjoyed went with them, and the subsequent harassment of opposition politicians and muzzling of press freedoms has not been encouraging. In this case, security did appear to be associated with democracy, but the latter had not evolved gradually from within. Democratization had been imposed suddenly from without, and hence may have been too fragile to perform its security-promoting role for very long. Surely also relevant in this case is Cambodian history, in particular the absence of liberal democracy and the frequency of political violence. One need not be a determinist to suggest that a country's past affects the relative feasibility of different scenarios for its future.

Then there is the Philippines. Prolonged American colonial intervention turned this archipelago into something of a schoolhouse for democracy. The irony is that the overlord may have done his work too well. Nowhere in Southeast Asia do people have more faith in elections than Filipinos do. If in Indonesia political insecurity rises in the run-ups to elections, it is in that same period in the Philippines when a coup is least likely. Yet democracy in the Philippines has not convincingly enhanced the personal, physical, or economic security of those who have participated in it so willingly for so long.

Instead, a formally democratic political design has been overlaid on—without significantly changing—an oligarchic society whose elites are in some important respects more feudal than capitalist, more familistic than nationalist, and more committed to serving themselves than the country as a whole. Long called the “sick man of ASEAN,” the Philippines has languished economically, gaps between rich and poor have yawned, and material and physical insecurity, resulting from crime and insurrection, have flourished.

Things have begun to change. Development and security are both doing better under the country's current president, Fidel Ramos. Yet that is not obviously a consequence of democracy. It may reflect instead a belated awareness among Filipinos, especially in the cities, that electoral politics-as-usual cannot solve the country's poverty, rent-seeking, and insecurity. It is probably not coincidental that Ramos is an army general, or that under his leadership a major opposition party temporarily went over to the government's side, a circumstance that, while it lasted, made Philippine politics less pluralistic than before. The Philippines may be a country where economic and physical security can best be enhanced not by making the country more democratic but by making democracy more effective. And the latter task may call for concentrating power in fewer but more capable and less culpable hands.

*Without disaggregating democracy into its constituent principles—
liberalism and representation—we cannot understand how the
logical tension between these tenets can in fact generate insecurity.*

Conclusion: Relativizing Democracy

It is time to revisit my title. Is security through democratization as a national strategy a matter of realism or evangelism—of empirically proven effectiveness or wishfully projected faith? The answer is both. Authoritarians convinced of the abilities of benign but stern philosopher-kings to keep chaos at bay ought not underestimate the irenic power of democracy. At the same time, democratists should be willing to subject their own faith to the test of effectiveness.

Democracy is a good thing. But more of it is not always better. Democracy is not the solution. It is not a key that fits all locks. Without disaggregating democracy into its constituent principles—liberalism and representation—we cannot understand how the logical tension between these tenets can in fact generate insecurity. Without relativizing democracy across different countries with different histories, we cannot understand how time and place—society, economy, culture—condition it, or what its impact on security is likely to be compared with other prospectively security-enhancing phenomena such as development. Without diversifying what can be legitimately meant by democracy—differing patterns and balances of liberalism and representation—we cannot understand why people in other countries might want, for example, a communitarian democracy in which individual liberties are more constrained by the need for public security than the American Civil Liberties Union would allow.

Relativizing democracy, after all, is not something only scholars do. People who live in democracies do so as they measure—in their own circumstances, facing their own problems, given their own priorities—the actual performance of democracy against the grand assurance that it is “the best, most just, effective, and humane form of governance for all peoples,” to requote Larry Diamond.

The Berlin Wall collapsed and pulled down with it the Soviet bloc and ultimately the Soviet Union itself because people under communism—not the utopia but the reality—could not help but relativize it in comparison with the alternatives. If democracies do not fight each other, global democratization will mean global security. But long before that blessed Kantian peace is reached, I suspect, democracy of this or that kind will have been found relatively wanting and will have been altered to fit local conditions, just as it has been in the past. Some of these changes will usher in or reintroduce dictatorships. Others will challenge us to redefine the limits of what democracy can mean, be, and do in a changing world, and the problems that it can and cannot solve in different contexts.

Finally, relativizing democracy in this constructive sense will be crucial not only for analysts. It will be necessary for proselytizers too—for the sake of evangelism. Otherwise, the monotheistic advocates of democracy as one universal norm transcending all times and places will promise too much and deliver too little. And that will endanger their own mission, in whose ultimate goal of making governance more just, effective, and humane even this Santa Cruz heretic believes.