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SELECTED PROBLEMS OF THE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION AFTER 1989

Since the beginning of the 1990s Pacific has become much more important to the U.S. administration. The change of priorities was expressed by the first overseas journey of the newly appointed U.S. President G. W. H. Bush in 1989, when he chose to travel first to Asia instead of Europe. Having in mind the enormous growth of the Pacific Rim countries, as well as their human and territorial potential this dimension will be more and more important in the U.S. foreign policy. There are contrasting visions and interests of the U.S. in this region and lately we could have observed the U.S. tendencies to curtail the integration in the Pacific Basin. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq resulted in reducing U.S. activity in the Asia-Pacific region, which entails the danger of limiting role of the United States in the region. It may result in U.S. exclusion from the East Asian integration process and endanger its hegemonic position. After some clear signals the U.S. administration decided to counteract, and, as a result, we may observe President Bush's proposal of creating Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area.

The paper shortly presents U.S. priorities and relations with the most important actors of the region: China and Japan, regional alliances and American role in the regional organizations (especially APEC and ASEAN).

Theoretical Approach

Looking at the U.S. strategies towards East Asia, we must consider at least two intellectual traditions: realism and liberalism.¹ Realistic approach is visible in the policies of balance of power and containment, wars in Asia, and America's military presence. It some-

¹ These two theoretical currents presented in this paper are definitely simplification. While analyzing theoretical approaches of the U.S. foreign policy in the 1990s, we may look at different classifications. One presented by H. Wiarda encompasses: conservative isolationism (Perrot, Buchanan), liberal isolationism, (represented by B. Clinton – focused on internal affairs, economy), conservative liberalism (A. Muravchik – main goal of the U.S. foreign policy should be a promotion of democracy), liberal idealism (supported by Clinton Administration – the U.S. should promote political goals, using economic tools), realism (the U.S. should not engage in idealistic crusades, but focus on protection of its own interests), interdependence (it links somehow all the aforementioned). All those currents were present in U.S. Policy towards Asia-Pacific. See: H. Wiarda, *U.S. Foreign and Strategic Policy in the Post-Cold War Era: A Geopolitical Perspective*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996, pp. 5–8.

how reflects the hegemonic bargain with the East Asia: the U.S. provides security protection and access to its technology and markets. East Asian countries give in exchange a diplomatic, logistical and economic support for the U.S. led international order.² The liberal “grand strategy” is focused on three elements that generate stable order. These three elements are: to open up, tie down, and bind together. Opening up refers to using trade, investment, cultural exchange, and transnational society into the isolated countries with strong state rule. This concept has been strongly supported by the U.S. President Bill Clinton. Creating wealth and autonomy within the economy and society entails political pluralism. Tying down means encouraging governments to participate in international institutions, like the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or the ASEAN Regional Forum (which seems to be the best example). Here one creates expectations and obligations for the governments through membership in regional and global institutions. Binding together relates to the creation of formal institutional links between countries that are potential adversaries, hence reducing the incentive to balance against each other.³

U.S. priorities in the Asia-Pacific region

Till the end of the Cold War East Asia was the secondary battlefield while the most important area for the U.S. foreign policy was Europe. The situation changed when George Walker Herbert Bush became the U.S. president in January 1989 and paid his first foreign visit to Asia. The administration, as National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft wrote, was seeking a pretext to go to China before the Soviet leader M. Gorbachev, who was supposed to go there in May. There was no reason, however, to justify such a visit till the death of the Japanese emperor Hirohito, who died in January. G. Bush decided to visit Beijing after Hirohito’s funeral and landed there on February 25th. It was a “signal of the new era’s priorities” for the administration since newly-appointed presidents used to go to Europe first.⁴

Two years later, in 1991 James Baker, the then U.S. Secretary of State set forth the role of East Asia and the Pacific. He focused on the role of U.S. engagement in East Asia and the Pacific as vital to U.S. interests, for the region, but also to the international system the U.S. is trying to forge. J. Baker stressed U.S. defense commitments as the core of the Asia-Pacific security structure, but also signaled growing role and possibilities of American allies and friends in the region. Two main goals he mentioned were supporting democratic trends and helping to shape a framework for economic integration.⁵ The U.S. was

² See: G. J. Ikenberry, *America in East Asia: Power, Markets, and Grand Strategy* [in:] E. Krauss, T. Pempel (eds), *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 41–42.

³ The binding logic has been used in North Atlantic Treaty Organization, wherein we had the participation of France and Western Germany, similar logic stood behind the creation of European Coal and Steel Community, see *ibidem*, pp. 42–44.

⁴ See: G. Bush, B. Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998, p. 91.

⁵ J. Baker, *America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community*, “Foreign Affairs,” Winter 1991/1992.

realizing its interests as a Pacific Nation. This was expressed more clearly by W. Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for the Asia-Pacific in his statement before SFRC. "Today, no region in the world is more important for the United States than Asia and the Pacific. Tomorrow, in the 21st century, no region will be as important. [...] We have enormous stakes in the Pacific. We need to integrate our economic, political, and security policies. We need fresh approaches and structures of cooperation. It is time to build – with others – a new Pacific community."⁶

Looking at the U.S. National Security Strategy published in 2006, we may observe, the present priorities are similar. It states: "The United States is a Pacific nation, with extensive interests throughout East and Southeast Asia. The region's stability and prosperity depend on our sustained engagement: maintaining robust partnerships supported by a forward defense posture supporting economic integration through expanded trade and investment and promoting democracy and human rights."⁷ The document mentions crucial international institutions in the region, like the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum, a U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership, the Six-Party Talks, or the Proliferation Security Initiative, but in addition it emphasizes the role of bilateral relations with the key states in the region as the foundation.⁸

More detailed indications are to be found in the U.S. Report from the Commission on America's National Interest.⁹ The report mentions some vital interests like establishing productive relations with China, which is described as America's major potential strategic adversary in East Asia and the survival of the two main American allies in the region South Korea and Japan. The latter should actively cooperate with the U.S. to resolve problems of the region and the world. Extremely important interests include maintenance of peace in the Taiwan Strait and on the Korean Peninsula as well as the reconciliation of China and Japan under the terms that America could benefit from. Important interests are connected with the movement of East Asian countries toward democracy and free markets, growing openness of East Asian markets to U.S. goods, services and investment and peaceful solution of the secondary territorial disputes (South China Sea, Senekaku Islands).¹⁰

U.S.–Japanese relations

U.S. relations with Japan are perceived as the most important in the Asia-Pacific region and the U.S.-Japan alliance is a pivot of the U.S. based security architecture of the East Asia. The alliance is based on the San Francisco Peace Treaty (signed in 1951) and the

⁶ W. Lord, *Statement Before The Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, Washington, DC., March 31, 1993, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, vol. 4, no. 14, April 5, 1993. Available at: <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1993/html/Dispatchv4no14.html>.

⁷ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington 2006, p. 40.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Commission formed by the scholars from Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, The Nixon Center, and RAND Corporation, among the members one could find Richard Armitage, Laura Donohue, Paul Krugman, John McCain, Condoleezza Rice, Pat Roberts, Brent Scowcroft.

¹⁰ The Commission on America's National Interests, *America's National Interests*, Washington 2000, p. 24.

Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America (signed in 1960).¹¹ Having the security guarantees from the U.S. and American military bases, Japan could focus on economic development. This approach, known as Yoshida Doctrine, has been present in Japanese foreign policy since the World War II.¹² During the Cold War era Japan was the closest U.S. security ally in the Asia-Pacific, serving, as Prime Minister Nakasone used to say “unsinkable aircraft carrier” off the coast of Asia.¹³

The beginning of the G. W. H. Bush’s administration faced new challenges in bilateral relations. The top priority was then trade issues, telecommunications, semiconductors, obstacles to U.S. bidding on Japanese public works projects, automobiles, efforts to obtain more access by U.S. firms to Japan’s banking and financial markets. The collapse of the Soviet Union was regarded as a removal of the rationale for U.S.-Japan security alliance. Another challenge was the first Gulf War. The U.S. expected Japanese support, whilst Japan had its interests in the Middle East (dependence on oil) and traditional pacifist military culture as well as constitutional limits. Finally, the Kaifu Cabinet decided to send Japanese Self Defense Forces to join the coalition, but strictly to non-defense roles. Japan decided also to support the war financially. After the war ended trade issues broke out even stronger, both in Japan, and the U.S.¹⁴

Till the mid-1990s we could obviously see the drift of the alliance. In 1994–1995 the U.S. and Japan stood on the brink of trade war and the future showed they’ll follow divergent paths.¹⁵ The Okinawa rape incident resulted in harsh attitudes of both societies. The situation changed dramatically after the Taiwan Strait Confrontation in 1996. It resulted in signing the U.S.-Japan Joint Security Declaration (April 1996). The U.S. and Japan focused on both bilateral security issues (the U.S. declared maintenance of 100,000 deployed military personnel in the region), role of the alliance in security of the Asia-Pacific Region, defense and R&D cooperation, and regional (role of China and Russia here was stressed) as well as global cooperation.¹⁶ Both countries started to work on Theater Missile Defense system, which was intensified after 1998 launch of Teapodong missile by

¹¹ The Treaty amended previous agreements (San Francisco 1951 and Tokyo 1952). It said “that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.” It also allowed usage of Japanese land and facilities for U.S. military bases and purposes. See *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America*. Available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

¹² Even before the Treaty was signed Yoshida realized that it would be impossible for the United States to defend its numerous bases scattered throughout the home islands, without also defending Japan, see: M. Gallicchio, *Japan in American Security Policy: A Problem in Perspective*, Working Paper No. 10, National Security Archive. Available at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/gallicchiowp.htm>.

¹³ T. Pempel, *Challenges to Bilateralism: Changing Foes, Capital Flows and Complex Forums* [in:] E. Krauss, T. Pempel (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ See: R. Wampler, *Japan and the United States. Part II: Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Relations, 1977–1992*, National Security Archive. Available at: http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/jap2_essay.htm.

¹⁵ See: B. Stokes, *Divergent Paths: U.S.-Japan Relations towards the Twenty-First Century*, “International Affairs,” vol. 72, no. 2, April 1996.

¹⁶ *Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security - Alliance for the 21st Century*, 17 April 1996. Available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html>.

North Korea. Despite some divergences U.S.-Japanese alliance was depicted as the core of American Global Security Strategy at the turn of the centuries.¹⁷

Currently we should focus on couple of the issues. Japan remains very a close U.S. ally in East Asia. The U.S. is working closely with Japan on security issues. We could observe it during the second Gulf War, when Japan sent Self Defense Force to give logistical support and sent Ground Self Defense Force to support the reconstruction of Iraq and humanitarian aid (which required constitutional changes). Cooperation in the National Missile Defense and Theater Missile Defense is also closer.¹⁸ The close cooperation stemmed from very strong personal relations between Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush. On the other hand it faced strong opposition in Japanese public opinion traditionally driven by pacifist sentiments and anti-Americanism.¹⁹

We should also focus on Japanese relations with its Asian neighbors. On one hand Koizumi's relations with Washington were very good, on the other hand, his political behavior caused many problems especially in relations with Japan's neighbors. These included problems with China about historical matters, especially Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, Japanese commemorating of Japan's war dead (including class-A war criminals). There is also problem of history textbooks and Diaoyou tai/Senkaku Islands. Dispute with Korea over the fishing-rich Liancourt Rocks (Dok-do/Take-shima) inflamed bilateral conflict. Escalating conflicts with its neighbors and growing Japanese nationalism were dangerous not only to Japan, but also to the U.S., as it's crucial Asian ally would be more and more alienated in Asia, hence reducing U.S. influence in the region.²⁰

The politics of the newly-appointed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is different. In October 2006 he paid visits to the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea. Abe and Hu agreed in Beijing on working together to prevent North Korea from further developing of its nuclear programs, accelerate talks on disputes over natural resource exploration in the East China Sea, and launch a joint study on history. In Seoul Abe and Roh condemned North Korean nuclear programs.²¹ Additionally Japan expands its aid and exchange programs with Southeast Asian countries and works on the Comprehensive Partnership Agreement with ASEAN countries.²² The aforementioned are definitely good signs

¹⁷ R. Armitage, J. Nye (co-chairs of the study group), *The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership* – Report by bipartisan study group, 2000. Available at: http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SR_01/SR_Japan.htm.

¹⁸ See: D. Fouse, *Japan and the United States 2004–2005: Going Global?* [in:] *Special Assessment: The Asia-Pacific and the United States 2004–2005*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu 2005; see also: C. Hughes, *Japan's Security Policy, the US-Japan Alliance, and the 'War on Terror': Incrementalism Confirmed or Radical Leap?*, "Australian Journal of International Affairs," vol. 58, no. 4, December 2004.

¹⁹ See: R. Kernacs, *The Future of U.S. Relations with Japan and China: Will Bilateral Relations Survive the New American Unilateralism?*, "Asia-Pacific Perspectives: An Electronic Journal," vol. 4, no. 1, May 2004. Available at: <http://www.pacificrim.usfca.edu/research/perspectives>.

²⁰ See: E. Heginbotham, C. Twomey, *America's Bismarckian Asia Policy*, "Current History," vol. 104, no. 683, September 2005.

²¹ See: M. Green, S. Koizumi, *U.S.-Japan Relations: Abe Shows the Right Stuff*, "Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations," vol. 8, no. 4, January 2007.

²² Japan promised to provide \$ 67 million to help fight avian flu and other pandemic diseases and to strengthening maritime security. It also started youth exchange initiative (worth \$ 315 million over the next five years). R. Cossa, B. Glosserman, *Regional Overview: Renewed Hope in the Year of the Golden Pig*, "Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations," vol. 9, no. 1, April 2007.

for the U.S., as its most important ally is developing better relations in the region. On the other hand those relations may be used for Japan's own purposes, as it prefers regional trade arrangements than U.S. proposed Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area.

Sino-American relations

Japan is perceived as the crucial U.S. ally in East Asia, whereas People's Republic of China, as a potential strategic adversary.²³ During the Cold War we could observe the strategic triangle – the United States, the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China playing on the grand chessboard.

Sino-U.S. relations were relatively smooth in the 1980s. The breakdown of the relationship was an effect of the Tiananmen Square massacre that took place on June 4th, 1989, followed by the international sanctions.

China's situation radically changed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. It was mainly China that was to decide whether the UN Security Council would accept international intervention in Iraq. Chinese authorities saw the advantages of returning to the world stage as a country supporting solutions consistent with international law. China didn't support the use of force, but didn't use the right of veto, either.²⁴

Clinton entered the White House as a politician who would firmly place the problems of human rights or WMD proliferation on his agenda. Nomination of Winston Lord, a well-known critic of the Beijing regime, to Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs seemed to indicate a tightening of the China policy. But even before his inauguration, Clinton met with Bush and said: "We have a big stake in not isolating China, in seeing that China continues to develop a market economy."²⁵

Beginning in 1993, the "comprehensive (constructive) engagement" strategy was applied. It worked on the assumption that developing social and economic contacts with China was reasonable and would lead to consolidation of the liberalizing tendencies in this country, even though its achievements in the field of human rights were not satisfying. This gradual easing of tensions in bilateral relations was also an element of, developed further in 1996, the strategy of "engagement and enlargement."²⁶

Despite the "comprehensive engagement" strategy and the steady progress in bilateral relations, the next two years were very difficult for both countries, mainly because of the "Taiwan problem." The strongest episode of the confrontation over the Taiwan Strait was the Chinese maneuvers on the eve of the first democratic presidential election in Taiwan.

²³ The Commission on America's National Interests, p. 24.

²⁴ See: M. Oksenberg, *The China Problem*, "Foreign Affairs," Summer 1991; R. Garson, *The United States and China since 1949: A Troubled Affair*, London: Printer Publishers, 1994, pp. 200–08.

²⁵ See: D. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989–2000*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, p. 33.

²⁶ One of its main purposes was to maintain constructive relations with great powers, both allies and former foes, such as China and Russia, for the sake of their importance for U.S. security and prosperity. See: D. Shambaugh, *Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses*, "International Security," vol. 21, no. 2, Autumn 1996.

The U.S. reacted very firmly, sending a strong fleet (including two aircraft carrier groups) to the region.²⁷

At the 1997 APEC summit in the Philippines, Clinton and Jiang agreed to Jiang's visit to Washington and a summit meeting in Shanghai in 1998. During Jiang's visit, both presidents focused on the role of bilateral cooperation in the world (the problems of security, ecology, etc.).²⁸ More detailed arrangements were made in 1998 during Clinton's visit to Shanghai.²⁹ Furthermore, what was very important to China was that president Clinton announced his so-called "three nos policy" doctrine, in which he stated that the U.S. would not support: the independence of Taiwan; the two Chinas (or one China, one Taiwan) policy; or the membership of Taiwan in international organizations comprising solely sovereign states.³⁰

Bilateral relations became more complicated after the May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. It resulted in anti-American riots in China. The riots, however, were soon stopped, because they could be a threat to authority, and the Chinese had received an official apology and compensation for the bombing.³¹

The situation improved in November, when the agreement concerning Chinese entry to the WTO was signed (it had been discussed during the APEC summit in New Zealand). On October 10, 2000, Bill Clinton established the Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, which was the condition of Chinese membership in the World Trade Organization.

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The presidential election in 2000 seemed to be a kind of turning point in bilateral relations. "The strategic partnership" with China, as it was called by President Clinton and his administration, was replaced with the term "strategic competition" by G. W. Bush's team. Researchers have pointed out that this declared policy was only an attempt to show the differences between the current and former administration.³²

An important change in the strategic situation of the PRC was the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the "war

²⁷ See: R. Ross, *The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force*, "International Security," vol. 25, no. 2, Fall 2000; M. O'Hanlon, *Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan*, "International Security," vol. 25, no. 2, Fall 2000.

²⁸ See: *Remarks by President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin at Arrival Ceremony*, The White House 1997. Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/jiangarv.htm>.

²⁹ The wide range of issues encompassed: reprogramming nuclear weapons not to target each other; beginning negotiations about Chinese joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); agreements dealing with export of chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines; creation of a direct presidential link to communicate more effectively; and consultation concerning regional stability, especially on the Korean Peninsula and in the Middle East. See Fact Sheet, *Achievements of U.S.-China Summit*, The White House 1998. Available at: <http://clinton5.nara.gov/textonly/WH/New/China/19980627-7898.html>.

³⁰ See: H. Harding, *American China Policy under the Bush Administration: Change and Continuity* [in:] A. Rosenbaum (ed.), *U.S.-China Relations and the Bush Administration: a New Paradigm or Continuing Modalities*, Claremont: Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 2003, pp. 68–69.

³¹ See: S. Zhao, *Chinese Nationalism and Its Foreign Policy Ramifications* [in:] Ch. Marsh, J. Dreyer (eds), *U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Policies, Prospects and Possibilities*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003, pp. 70–78.

³² See: D. Bachman, *The United States and China: Rhetoric and Reality*, "Current History," September 2001.

on terrorism” that stemmed from them. As Strobe Talbot wrote, the U.S. administration, which had been looking for a new enemy to replace the Soviet Union, didn’t have to look any further. It found it, and it was global terrorism.³³

A couple of days after the terrorist attack, the Chinese president Jiang Zemin called President Bush and promised wide support and cooperation in fighting against world terrorism. The Chinese help perhaps was not very important from a military point of view, but China was a permanent member of the UN Security Council, hence it could facilitate the American action. On the other hand, through its participation in the anti-terrorist coalition China wanted to justify its campaign against Muslim Uyghurs inhabiting the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.³⁴

Current Problems in the Sino-American relations include: violations of intellectual property rights in China (it is estimated that 90% of products in China violate property rights), currency valuation, which is perceived as one of the main reasons of huge trade deficit in U.S.-PRC trade. The U.S. accuses China of undervaluing its currency and threatens with economic sanctions. In 2005 China changed the valuation method, pegging Yuan to the basket of currencies, which resulted in a small appreciation of the RMB. Other serious tensions are connected with Taiwan and U.S. arms sales to the island. Traditionally, human rights issue is on the agenda. Pentagon expresses also concerns about growing Chinese military budget. On the other hand the U.S. and the PRC cooperate closely in Six-Party talks aiming at closing North Korean nuclear program. One should stress also establishing U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue in December 2006. Another U.S. concern is Chinese “good neighborhood” policy, resulting in increasing Chinese influence in East Asian countries, but also diplomatic offensive in South America, Middle East and Africa.³⁵ The latter may be dangerous for American hegemony in the region in particular and, on the long run, in the world.

Regional architecture

The Asia-Pacific is the biggest geopolitical region in the world, wherein bunch of international organizations exist. U.S. policy in the region is based on the traditional hub-and-spoke structure of bilateral alliances, and the support for multilateral institutions is relatively limited. Such structure is perceived as obsolete, but the assessments of its perspectives are different. Some scholars maintain that such structure will last for the next decades,³⁶ some see decreasing role of the U.S. and the coming hegemonic role of China.³⁷ Figure 1 shows the most important elements of the regional architecture.

³³ S. Talbot, *U.S.-China Relations in the Changing World* [in:] Ch. Marsh, J. Dreyer, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

³⁴ See: C. Dalpino, M. Pei, *Beijing’s Chance to Forge True Alliance*, “South China Morning Post,” September 19, 2001. Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/dalpino/20010918.htm>.

³⁵ See: K. Dumbaugh, *China-U.S. Relations: Current Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy*, CRS Report for Congress, February 14, 2007. Available at: <http://www.opencrs.com>.

³⁶ See: J. Ikenberry, *American Hegemony and East Asian Order*, “Australian Journal of International Affairs,” vol. 58, no. 3, September 2004.

³⁷ See: E. Medeiros, *Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability*, “The Washington Quarterly,” vol. 29, no. 1, Winter 2005–2006.

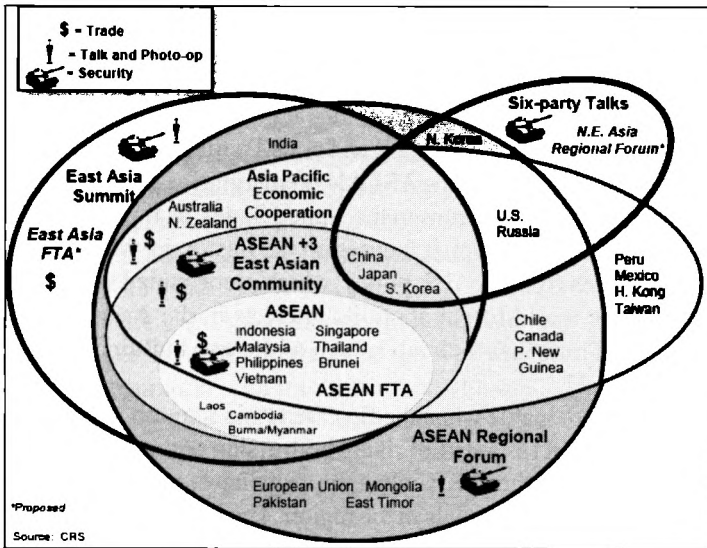


Fig. 1. East Asian Regional Arrangements – Existing and Proposed

Source: D. Nanto, *East Asian Regional Architecture: New Economic and Security Arrangements and U.S. Policy*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington 2006.

If taking into account the U.S. interests, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, created in 1989, seem to be the most important organization.³⁸ Its role was appreciated in 1993, when the U.S. hosted first APEC Summit in Seattle. As a Polish scholar E. Halizak wrote, APEC is treated as a basic instrument of the American policy in the region, acting as a tool of liberalizing the trade and investment in the region, increasing chances of U.S. companies, preventing the creation of the East Asian trading block, binding institutionally East Asia and North America, legitimizing U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific Region.³⁹ Since the Asian Economic Crisis (1997–1998), however, APEC's role started to diminish, as this organization could not respond to the crisis appropriately. It also seem to lose its breath,⁴⁰ especially in achieving the so called Bogor goals, by pursuing free trade and investment till 2010 (2020 for less developed economies).⁴¹

³⁸ It stemmed from the initiative undertaken by group of scholars, who had started to meet in 1968 as Pacific Free Trade and Development Conference (PAFTAD). The group gave intellectual impact on Australian and Japanese foreign policy makers. The U.S. was relatively reluctant to join the first ministerial meeting that took place in Canberra, but finally decided to participate. See: H. Patrick, *From PAFTAD to APEC: Economists Networks and Public Policy Making*, Discussion Paper no. 2, Columbia University APEC Study Center. Available at: www.columbia.edu.

³⁹ E. Halizak, *Stosunki międzynarodowe w rejonie Azji i Pacyfiku*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 1999, p. 143.

⁴⁰ To achieve the Bogor goals, Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization emerged in APEC. This initiative encountered serious problems in APEC and revealed the crisis within APEC. See: M. Wesley, *APEC's Mid-Life Crisis?: The Rise and Fall of Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization*, "Pacific Affairs," vol. 74, no. 2, Summer 2001.

⁴¹ Economic Leaders' Declaration said: "We are determined to pursue free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific in a manner that will encourage and strengthen trade and investment liberalization in the

Economic attitude of APEC changed in 2001, when the Economic Leaders assembled in Shanghai decided to issue the statement on counter-terrorism, which was regarded as the rising influence of the U.S. and extra-economic factor in the organization.⁴² The role of the APEC in the region is gradually diminishing.

While the role of the APEC is lessening and trans-Pacific economic community seems to vanish, another regional institution – ASEAN is emerging as a dominant organization of the East Asia. It is definitely dangerous to the United States, as it precludes this country as a part of the Asia-Pacific. Moreover, it focuses on the East Asia, where the U.S. is unnecessary. It somehow stems from the U.S. policy, which preoccupied with other problems in different regions of the world forgot about its interests in the Asia-Pacific.⁴³ It was the People's Republic of China that took advantage of the gap building close relations with ASEAN.⁴⁴

The danger became palpable when the first East Asia Summit was organized in Kuala Lumpur in 2005. The event (as a part of rising both Asian regionalism and China's rising influence) was perceived by the U.S. analysts as a challenge to the central role of the U.S. in setting the agenda and shaping goals in the region. The East Asia Summit was perceived as an instrument that, led by China, would exclude the U.S. and displace APEC as the leading force in the region.⁴⁵ These fears did not come fully true when the ASEAN countries invited other big states to participate in the East Asia Summit, which aimed at balancing Chinese influence.⁴⁶ Finally ASEAN was recognized as a driving force for the East Asia Summit.⁴⁷

The United States, realizing the danger, undertook some countermeasures. Those include mainly two initiatives that address multilateral institutions of the region. First of them is the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership 2006–2011.⁴⁸ The plan focuses on good governance, transparency, protection of intellectual property rights, aid to small and me-

world as a whole. Thus, the outcome of trade and investment liberalization in the Asia-Pacific will not only be the actual reduction of barriers among APEC economies but also between APEC economies and non-APEC economies." See: *APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration of Common Resolve*, Bogor, Indonesia, November 15, 1994. Available at: http://www.apecsec.org.sg/apec/leaders_declarations/1994.html.

⁴² See: *APEC Leaders' Statement on Counter-Terrorism*, Shanghai, People's Republic of China, October 21, 2001. Available at: http://www.apecsec.org.sg/content/apec/leaders_daclarations/2001/statement_on_counter-terrorism.html.

⁴³ R. Sutter, *The United States and Asia in 2005: Managing Troubles, Sustaining Leadership*, "Asian Survey," vol. 46, issue 1, 2006.

⁴⁴ China changed its policy especially since Asian Economic Crisis, using moderate approaches to territorial disputes, accession to Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (what U.S. refuses to sign), accepting the so-called ASEAN way, and signing the China-ASEAN FTA. See: Jing-dong Yuan, *China-ASEAN Relations: Perspectives, Prospects and Implications for U.S. Interests*, Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006, *passim*.

⁴⁵ See: B. Vaughn, *East Asian Summit: Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington 2005.

⁴⁶ China was initially attempting not to include India, Australia and New Zealand into the summit, but failed to keep them down. This attempt failed as well. See: M. Malik, *The East Asia Summit*, "Australian Journal of International Affairs," vol. 60, no. 2, June 2006.

⁴⁷ See: *Chairman's Statement of the First East Asia Summit*, Kuala Lumpur, December 14, 2005. Available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/18104.htm>.

⁴⁸ See: *Joint Press Statement on Follow-Up to the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership*, 17 November 2006. Available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/18955.htm>.

dium enterprises, and U.S. assistance to ASEAN public health activities.⁴⁹ The other initiative was made during the APEC Summit in Hanoi in November 2006. President Bush proposed the creation the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific and APEC leaders agreed to study the project as a potential long-term goal for APEC⁵⁰. Both initiatives aim at preventing U.S. exclusion from its regional leader position.

The period discussed in this article may be viewed as a loop of American policy towards the region. We could observe the increasing role of the Asia-Pacific region in the U.S. policy, and, first and foremost, the rising understanding of the role in early nineties. Then, preoccupation with other issues and regions prevailed. Finally, we may see, the initiatives that address the East Asia, not only in American way (understood here as an obsolete "hub-and-spoke" system), but also in the way the East Asian countries prefer (including stronger cooperation with multilateral institutions). The latter is successfully implemented by the People's Republic of China and may be used by the U.S. as well. The upcoming years will show whether the U.S. will maintain its hegemonic position in the region, and if its current initiatives will be fruitful.

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⁴⁹ See: S. Simon, *U.S.-Southeast Asian Relations: Bush Reaches Out at APEC*, "Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations," vol. 8, no. 4, January 2007.

⁵⁰ See: *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2006*, Fact Sheet, White House Office of the Press Secretary, November 19, 2006. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/76318.htm>.

