East Asia: Systemic Stability Through Alliance Politics?

Kurt W. Radtke[†]

Introduction:

In the post-Cold War period an expanding NATO, and the slow growth of a purely European security system, are intended to ensure stability in continental Europe and adjoining regions. Although the Soviet Union and its system of allied satellite states have collapsed, alliance systems remain the cornerstone of the international order in Europe and the Atlantic area. In Asia, by contrast, the rise of China, the Korean crisis of 1994, and the nuclearization of India and Pakistan are some of the numerous obstacles to building a new stable order for that vast continent. It is questionable whether we can conceptualize events in Asia since 1991 in terms of a "post-Cold War order"- and there are good reasons to reconsider the meaning of the Cold War period for Asia as well, before venturing on an overall analysis of the structure of the international order. This paper aims at providing suggestions for the conceptualization of that order, rather than attempting detailed analyses of specific events.

In the minds of numerous US politicians, the Cold War had begun in Europe in the late forties and also ended in Europe with the unification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The term "Cold War" has usually also been applied to the history of other parts of the globe, even if it seems a rather inappropriate term with respect to Asia: during the past five decades many millions died in wars and civil wars in Asia in Korea, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The "stalemate" between the Soviet Union and the US did not prevent numerous hot wars and bloody civil wars outside Europe. In fact, the involvement of the Soviet Union and the United States in some of these wars increased their duration and intensity, and the spread of communist/anti-communist ideologies also repeatedly contributed to the outbreak of hostilities.

China's attempt in the early sixties to construct an axis "Beijing-Jakarta" as the beginning of a new regional order with the cooperation of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) ended in 1965 with the anti-Communist coup that cost the lives of several hundred thousand Indonesians. Added to the list must be a history of devastation in Asia brought on by "mere" economic crises, the scale and effects of which may be compared to the aftermath of a war. Once again, it was Indonesia that paid a high price, this time as a result of the Asian Crisis of 1997, triggered by financial globalisation. The threatening collapse of Indonesia as a unified state may have far-reaching implications for systemic stability in East Asia: first of all, it undermines the weight of ASEAN as a whole in playing a role in the building of a regional (security) order, symbolised through its creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum. Secondly, the crisis has so far provided vivid evidence of the inability, or unwillingness of Asian countries to join hands to maintain stability in this part of the world.

[†] Professor, Institute of Asia-Pacific Stadies, Waseda University

The end of the European Cold War also induced a rethinking of approaches towards systemic stability in East Asia. China started to develop its "New Security Strategy" since 1996 which aims to promote international and regional security by emphasizing points of common interest.[1] In the wake of the Korean crisis of 1994 the US and Japan redefined and reinforced their security arrangement, best known through the adoption of the "New Guidelines," in response to perceived threats.[2] As the "Armitage Report" already suggested the Bush administration will further emphasize the strengthening of US-Japan alliance cooperation,[3] and is also taking a tougher stance towards North Korea.[4]

The system of US alliances with governments in (South) East Asia is more than just a security guarantee against specific threats: it is meant to provide a system of international order for the region as a whole, underwritten by US military and economic power, as well as US political leadership. By the same token, it ensures the continued membership of the US as an essential part of the international system in (South) East Asia, and functions as an insurance against autonomous regionalization.[5]

In the Chinese view, the Cold War as a global phenomenon ended in 1991, requiring a new approach towards rebuilding the regional system. Quite a few observers regarded the recent thaw in relations with North Korea as the Asian equivalent to the end of the Cold War in Europe.[6] Although US politicians have usually been careful, at least in public, not to transfer enemy images of the Soviet Union to socialist China, there are signs that the new Bush administration is considering an active "roll back" policy towards what they term the dictatorships in China and North Korea. The United States considers a China-supported "regionalization" of East Asia as a road towards regional autonomy that reduces the role of the US in the region, and considers strengthening its system of alliances as one way to ensure continued US involvement. China, on the other hand, sees itself as having gained the initiative in international politics, yet able to avoid polarization that would set China against the US.[7]

There are thus fundamental divisions of opinion between China and the US over the structure of the future international system in East Asia.

It is important to note that policy debates within Japan, South Korea, or debates in

---

[1] Yan Xuetong et al. *Zhongguo yu yatai anquan-lengzhanhou yatai guojia de anquan zhanlue zouxiang*, Shishi Publishers, Beijing 1999, p. 12.

[2] Michael J. Green "State of the Field Report: Research on Japanese Security Policy," *Access Asia Review*, NBR Publications: AccessAsia Review: Vol. 2, No. 1 (http://www.nbr.org/publications/review/vol2no1/essay.html).

[3] "A report issued last October by a group under Richard Armitage, adviser to President Bush and a former assistant secretary of defense, said the revised Japan-U.S. guidelines for defense cooperation, the basis for joint defense planning, should be regarded as "the floor-not the ceiling" for an expanded Japanese role in the alliance." Hisahiko Okazaki "The Japan-U.S. Alliance. Meeting Mutual Expectations," *Japan Times*, January 20, 2001.

[4] Kyodo Newsagency, March 9, 2001.

[5] Standard authors on alliances (Stephen Walts, Glenn Snyder) focus on threats as the binding element in alliances. Frank Umbach argues that "alliances functioning during a bi-polar era remain fundamentally different in both theory and practice from those evolving in a multi-polar world. "The Future of the U.S.–Japanese Security Alliance," from an updated version of a paper originally presented at the conference 'Japanese and German Foreign Policies in Comparative Perspective', Tuebingen, 21–23 September 1998.

[6] Transcript: Albright Says Cold War Can Thaw Even in Korea, 11 Oct 2000, *The Washington File for East Asia and the Pacific*. (WF-EASIA archives—October 2000, week 2 (#9)).

[7] The topic is dealt with in Yan Xuetong *Meiguo baquan yu zhongguo anquan*, Tianjin Renmin Publishers, March 2000, esp. pp. 193–203 "Xiandai guoji guanxi."

Taiwan and Southeast Asia do not necessarily follow the frameworks set in Washington or Beijing. The average Japanese seems unwilling to see Japan become involved in a hot war against China, should the US and China clash over Taiwan. The governments of South Korea and Japan are said to have adopted a negative attitude when the US considered military attacks against North Korea during the crisis of 1994.[8] Asian nations do not always appear overly enthusiastic in their support of other US led initiatives, and that includes the formal allies of the US. The Bush administration provides only lukewarm, if any, support to Kim Daejung's opening towards North Korea. In other words, the system of US-led alliances does not by itself create a coherent body politic. The first all-Asian international forum sponsored by China at Bo'ao (Hainan)[9] recalled "Asianist" initiatives such as the Bandong Conference (1955), but is unlikely to change regional dynamics, at least for the time being.

These observations give rise to a number of questions concerning the structure of the international system in East Asia.[10] It is doubtful whether China, the US, and other parties concerned will be able to set up an effective system of co-operative security. Preferences for a multilateral or a bilateral approach are not differences over basic organizational "principles", but reflect differences over how best to pursue national interests. "Military measures", or to use plain language, war remains an option, in particular on the Korean peninsula and in the area of the Taiwan Straits. "Deterrence" worked during the Cold War since the US and the Soviet Union had concluded that they had to avoid a direct military clash. The United States is not sure whether mutual deterrence will work in a similar way with China; the proliferation of rocket carriers and weapons of mass destruction further threatens the credibility of US deterrence, affecting the credibility of US-led alliances in Asia. Last, but not least, there may be an element of deep doubt in the US whether non-Western countries such as North Korea, Pakistan, Iran and others might not consider suicidal attacks against the United States, thus rendering the logic of mutual assured destruction useless in the post-Cold War period.

There is reason to doubt the validity of traditional balance of power thinking along neo-realist lines in the analysis of the international system in East Asia. The "fuzzy" behaviour of some Asian countries towards clear-cut US leadership does not always concur with assumptions valid in neo-realist theory, although Michael Green, for instance, has suggested that Japan "is becoming more like us".[11] We ought to spend considerable efforts to improve our theoretical approaches towards that elusive issue, the nature of the international order in East Asia.[12]

In this paper I will suggest that the function of alliances in (South) East Asia may be likened to a franchise system, giving structure to international cooperation among a

---

8 South Korea's then Prime Minister Kim Youngsam published a book in February in which he recounted the circumstances of South Korea's refusal to take part.

9 *Yazhou zhoukan*, March 5–March11, 2001, pp. 28ff. "Cong Bo'ao hu'huan xin yazhou yishi."

10 In this paper the term "East Asia" includes the role of the US in the region, as well as developments in Southeast Asia as far as relevant to East Asia proper.

11 As Michael Green put it, "Japan's security policy debate is steadily becoming more "normal" and more "realist" (in both the theoretical definition and the real world meaning)." "Why Tokyo Will Be A Larger Player In Asia," Michael Green, *Northeast Asia Peace And Security Network Special Report*, July 31, 2000.

12 Paul Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist theory" in *International Security*, 19, 1994, 1, 129–130.

broad spectrum that includes military, economic, political, and cultural interaction as well. ASEAN, created by the US in the context of the Vietnam war, moved to reduce polarization in international politics, and shifted its focus towards non-military coopera-tion.[13] In its present form the US-Japanese alliance may not be viable in terms of military operability, mainly due to the volitious lack of legal and physical infrastructure in Japan. It would not be surprising if in periods of heightened tension the US would attempt the rapid construction of ad hoc coalitions set up to deal with specific crises along the model of the Gulf War-but it is uncertain whether such coalition building could be repeated successfully, and in time.

Secondly, the dynamics of an international system are not just determined by the strong points (potential "threats") of its members, but also by fear concerning their shared "weak" points. Examples are recent agreements among the ASEAN countries, China, South Korea and Japan (ASEAN-plus-three) to stabilise regional currencies. One may also regard cooperation to protect the environment from this point of view. As a particular form of regime formation I call this stabilising mechanism "Mutual Assured Instability" (MAI).[14] Each member of the system is aware that instability in another country may have serious repercussions for his own security. Policies designed to counter potential threats, such as regional cooperation in Theatre Missile Defense (TMD), may in fact contribute to instability within North Korea and China due to the costs of a renewed arms race. The deployment of TMD is likely to be countered by China producing and deploying large numbers of missiles designed to render the TMD shield ineffective.[15] However, the effects of the "security dilemma" working towards an arms race may be offset by measures designed to decrease mutual assured instability.

I will first present a brief overview of the different historical experiences of China and Japan with regard to Western style, or global "international order". Such diffe-rences go a long way towards explaining different attitudes in China and Japan towards the building of a regional international order. Subsequently I will make some remarks on aspects of "globalisation", since "globalisation" in Asia may have different effects on the structure of the domestic and international systems. Due to constraints of space I will forgo a discussion of post-positivist, structuralist approaches towards international relations theory, although some of the points raised here are relevant to that discussion. My conclusion will once more take up the contribution of the system of US-led alliances to an international system that goes far beyond their military significance.[16] Resem-

---

[13] Almonte, Jose T. "Ensuring Security the 'ASEAN Way' in *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4, Winter 1997–98, pp. 80–92.

[14] Radtke, K. W. "Asia-Pacific in Transition, or Mutually Assured Instability," in Kurt W. Radtke and Raymond Feddema, eds. *Comprehensive Security, Views from Asia and the West on a Changing Security Environment*, Brill Publishers, Leiden, Boston, Koeln, 2000.

[15] "A Defense Agency research institute report released Thursday calls for consultations between the United States and China over the proposed deployment of a U.S. national missile defense system, warning that it may prompt China to increase its intercontinental ballistic missile capability. The East Asian Strategic Review 2001, published by the National Institute for Defense Studies, devotes a chapter to the controversial plan for a missile shield." *The Japan Times*, March 2, 2001. It has been argued that it was China who provoked US initiatives to move towards a National Missile Defense, but this writer remains unconvinced. See Frank Umbach, "China's Destabilizing Arms Buildup," *Transatlantic Internationale Politik* 4/2000, 69–75.

[16] For a recent discussion of the wider aspects of the US–Japanese alliance, see *Japanese Foreign Policy Today*, edited by Inoguchi Takashi and Purnendra Jain, New York: Palgrave, 2000. See also the comments by Yoshio Okawara, president of the America–Japan Society and former Japanese ambassador to Washington, *The Japan Times*, January 20, 2001.

bling a franchise enterprise each ally participates in advocating similar "public goods" such as market democracy-but thinking globally does not prevent each country from acting locally.

New globalism-colonialism, imperialism, and new hierarchies

When in the middle of the nineteenth century Japan was forced under threat of military power to open its markets this had a major impact on its perception of order beyond its shores: order did not exist in the abstract, not as a set of organizing principles, but was "personified", as it were, in the shape of Commodore Perry's black ships. When the power of the British Colonial Empire changed the map of Asia forever, it was Great Britain, and not so much an "international system", that Japan needed to deal with. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 was more than just a bilateral alliance: it signified Japan's acceptance of a British based global order in which it, as a junior partner, claimed a certain independent role for Japan in Asia. The subsequent Japanese victory over Russia facilitated Japan's colonization of Korea, where it established its own order. For Japan, global order did not exist in a vacuum, but was primarily created by Britain's power and its colonial "mission", until Washington replaced London as the major guarantor of global order. A weak China could do little more than attach hope to adherence by the powers to principles of international law and justice. In the late twenties the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Zhengting attempted to achieve sovereignty for China by appealing to ideas about a supra-national international system of sovereign states.[17] His actions to safeguard Chinese sovereignty against Soviet encroachment, based on abstract concepts of sovereignty, evoked a Soviet Russian response that showed up China's military weaknesses, which in turned encouraged some Japanese to pursue their conquest of China's Northeastern provinces ("Manchuria"): the response by the "international community" did nothing to increase confidence in the efficacy of a Western led international order.

China's recent attempts to find supporters for its "New Security Concept" that emphasizes cooperative security based on shared interests, embodied in a network of (strategic) partnerships such as with Russia and other neighbours, betrays China's traditional predeliction for order based on abstract principles. However, without sufficient power to back them up China's new initiative is unlikely to find many adherents.[18]

"Globalization" is only one among many other processes changing the nature of nation states, other actors and their cross-border relations, contributing to interaction at the horizontal level. Security cooperation (such as in TMD (theatre missile defense)) results in an hierarchical order, especially when it requires the integration of information and control systems under (US) leadership. Bypassing obstacles encountered in building an effective system of region-wide alliances in Asia this denotes a new period in the history of international relations in Asia, since it may subsume parts of sovereign rights of participants to make decisions regarding actions of war.

---

[17] Wang's foreign policy is known as China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy."

[18] There is a vast literature on the topic, both in Chinese and other languages. For a recent general survey in English, see Yuan Jing-dong "Studying Chinese Security Policy: Toward an Analytic Framework," in *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XIII. No. 1, Spring/Summer 1999.

Different from Europe, countries with a history of colonization-and that includes the United States (!) -are clearly averse to conceding part of their sovereignty. This partially explains the fact that building a NATO-like structure in Asia seems virtually impossible. The collective memory of colonized countries differs from countries that (temporarily) lost their independence as the result of outright occupation. Colonialism was never a simple process taking place at the state level, such as the conquest of one state by another. Most characteristically it was a multi-level penetration of pre-modern regions outside Europe in which European states, companies and other institutions cooperated. Typically the object of penetration was unable to mobilize resistance under the guidance of a centralized government.

A glance at the situation of China between 1911 and 1937 tells us that the actual status of regions, and the nature of political-economic regimes in various parts of China differed so much that it was difficult to conceptualize "China" in terms of one or several "states" on Chinese soil. It is evident that this "(semi) colonial status" was not the result of a simple military conquest of an existing "state", but a series of complex dealings between local societies and alien intruders, marked by resistance as well as collaboration. One may argue that it is impossible to describe and analyze international relations in pre-1945 Asia as relations among "nations" and "states" in the received sense of these terms.[19]

The penetration of Asia by Western-derived ideologies (communism, market democracy), and the building of alliance systems after WWII that link actors to non-Asian powers such as the United States and the (Soviet) Russian Empire, created political entities whose status in the international system presented, and on occasion still presents, considerable difficulties—vide Taiwan, North Korea, South Korea, and Hong Kong. "Nation building" remains an issue and a task in Indonesia, but also in Malaysia and the Philippines. As of now, all economic/political entities of Eastern Asia except for Taiwan are organized in terms of recognized sovereign "states". The imposition of international "regimes" as part of the globalization process shares certain aspects with colonialism, since the rules of regimes are likely to be determined by the stronger party/ies. That awareness caused some Chinese to regard globalization processes in terms of "new colonialism". With tongue in cheek we might call globalization "high-tec colonialism", or "the highest stage in the development of market democracy".

The foregoing remarks may suffice to underline the fact that different historical experiences of countries in Asia conditioned different responses towards systems of international cooperation, both at the level of economic and security cooperation. Japan continues to "borrow" the authority of US power ("nuclear umbrella") to bolster its security. Also, it cannot ignore the dangers of instability on the Korean peninsula or in China affecting Japanese security. Differences in the "strategic culture" and outlook of Asian countries are also the result of differences in the internal structure of actors, affecting the functioning of the international system. There is little doubt that the serious study of the development of the international system in Asia must go beyond concepts developed on the basis of the history and experience of Europe and the United

---

[19] This is one of the points in my analysis of pre-war Japanese policies towards the Chinese sub-continent "Strategic concepts underlying the so-called Hirota Foreign Policy, 1933–37", in *Economic Development in Twentieth Century East Asia. The international context*, ed. Aiko Ikeo, Routledge, 1996.

States, and that this will influence the building of theoretical approaches towards the study of international relations. All the more amazing is the widespread lack of interest in the field of international relations in studying historical documents needed to understand the evolution of the international system in East Asia over the past one and a half centuries.[20]

The study of the theory of international relations focuses basically on Europe, Pacific Asia, and US relations with the Western and Eastern edges of Eurasia. In terms of population figures, economic clout and political importance, Germany, France and England are most important for Europe, while Japan, China and India are the major actors in Asia. Russia is the major actor straddling both Europe and Asia. Even a brief survey of recent publications on international relations (theory) in English shows that authors from Germany, France, Japan, China and India are hardly presented in such a list-not only that, they are also very seldom quoted or cited. Authors active in England happen to be slightly better represented.[21] Discussions on international relations (theory) within Germany, France, Japan and China conducted in these respective languages are usually ignored by others. On the other hand, scholars writing in German, French, Japanese and Chinese tend to refer to writings published in English as the mainstream of scholarship on international relations (theory), frequently ignoring scholarship published in languages other than English. This is partly, but not wholly due to language difficulties.[22]

In effect, scholars active in Europe and the Eastern edge of Eurasia play only a very minor role in discussions on international relations (theory), although their regions are central not only to US foreign policy, but to global politics as well. Surveys on the development of (the theory of) international relations focus on discussions carried on among scholars active within the United States. It is not surprising that one scholar recently asked, "how international is the study of international relations?"[23]

There are two conspicuous features currently characterizing English language scholarship in the field of international relations (theory). One is the prolific number of publications by well known authors of books and articles published by what we tend to call "reputable" publishers. Keeping track of most of them means that little time is left to conduct original research, especially for young scholars. It is not surprising that several scholars have seriously asked the question whether scholarship on international relations (theory) has reached an impasse, a dead end.[24] In order to be able to contribute constructively to scholarly discussion it may be desirable from time

---

[20] Tom Nichols 〈nicholst@earthlink.net〉 Naval War College: "Brezhnev's Elephant: Why can't international relations theory integrate new revelations about the Cold War and the role of ideology in it?-A review of William Wohlforth, "A Certain Idea of Science," *JCWS* (Volume 1, Number 2) and Nigel Gould-Davies, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology During the Cold War," *JCWS* (Volume 1, Number 1). Published on H-NET List for Diplomatic History 〈H-DIPLO@H-NET.MSU. EDU〉, 27 September 1999.

[21] In this paper I prefer to refer to scholars active in a particular country, rather than to their country of origin, or their citizenship.

[22] A good illustration of the near complete lack of references to scholarship from Eurasia (except Great Britain) is the article by Nagao, Yuichiro and others "Post-Cold War International Society and U.S.-China Relationship," *NIDS Security Reports* (National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo), No. 1 (March 2000) p. 1ff. (PDF version available on internet).

[23] Waever, Ole "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations," in Katzenstein, Peter J. Robert Keohane, Stephen D. Krasner, eds. *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1999.

to time to set out one's position unimpeded by the requirement to refer in detail to the structured discussions of the day.

It is ironic that China's "new approach to security" mentioned above attempts to downplay ideological differences, regarding them as being detrimental to international cooperation,[25] while the new Bush administration seems more prone to emphasize "ideology" in a way reminiscent of the Reagan administration. Harking back to ancient Iranian beliefs about history as the struggle between "light" and "dark", "good" and "evil", history in the twentieth century has often been couched in terms of a "final" struggle between systems of European origin: democracy, fascism, communism, or socialism (and there may be a few others as well). A major flaw of such an approach lies in the fact that these "systems" are in themselves much less static, and prone to internal change and transformation. For more than a century parliamentary democracy has seen many changes, perhaps most dramatically in the context of democracies surrendering part of their sovereignty to a European Union whose institutions are deficient in democratic controls. "Democracy" has also undergone numerous changes in the United States, where concepts of democratic society during the period of the New Deal, or political ideals since the Reagan administration, follow patterns of evolution different from those of Europe.

Interpreting globalization as the spread of market democracy seems an attractive proposition. The term "market democracy" denotes a political project, rather than being ananalytical, universal concept applicable world wide. The term suggests a model function for the United States without probing in detail whether the actual situation of the political economy of the United States can be adequately described in such terms.

> "Globalizations means homogenization, Prices, products, wages, wealth, and rates of interest and profit tend to become the same all over the world ... Under the protection of American military power, globalization proceeds relentlessly."[26]

The quest for legitimacy urges any institution to create the impression of long-term consistency, reflecting the core of its moral essence and identity. It is only the study of consistencies and inconsistencies in the behaviour of individuals, and states that allows us to make valid statements on the actually observed "identity" of actors-a term recently once more taken up as an important factor in international relations theory.[27] To be useful as a factor in international relations theory, "identity" in the sense of perceived consistency in decision making should not be confused with the self-images of actors, or concepts of collective memory. Ideology may be defined as guides to action compatible with self-images of identity. Political "theory", for instance, "neo-realism" in international relations theory, retooled to be a guide for action, should be more appropriately called "ideology", or "policy advice". A term such as "(market) democracy"

---

[24] Brands, Maarten "The Obsolescence of almost all Theories concerning International Relations," Uhlenbeck Lecture 14, NIAS (Wassenaar, The Netherlands), 1997; Rosenau, J. "Probing puzzles persistently: a desirable but improbable function for I. R. theory", in S. Smith, K. Booth and M. Zalewski, eds., *International Theory, Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge 1996, 309–317; Holsti, K. "International relations at the end of the millenium," *Review of International Studies* 19, 1993, 408.

[25] PRC publications avoid labels such as "(US) imperialism" and instead refer to "great power (*qiangquan*)policies" and "hegemony."

[26] Waltz, Kenneth N. "Globalization and Governace," in *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (December 1999), 693–700.

becomes a common standard phrase shared by alliance partners (franchise takers) of the US, but its relation to the actual working of the economic-political system still requires academic analysis.

The end of communism does not equal the victory of "market democracy", however defined. It will not automatically make it easier to establish new systems of co-operative security in (South) East Asia due to the differences that still remain among political/economic entities in that part of the world. Roughly a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union the exit of the Milosevic regime symbolises a further step towards the end of communist inspired dictatorships in Europe, and also a further decrease of Russian influence abroad. Countries previously occupied by the Soviet Union or under communist rule did not just strive towards liberation from an ideological system, but also for national independence. The development of their economic-political system is still in flux, and the time is still too early to expect a natural consensus on system values.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has created the need for a new security order beyond the traditional framework of the OSCE.[28] Nato's eastward expansion is by itself not sufficient to establish a new stable order in the huge areas of Central and Central-South Asia, nor among countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

Alliances as institutions for risk management

Alliances form the core of institutionalised international relations since World War II. From a functional perspective their main task is the institutionally organised management of risk. They share this aspect with modern ideologies such as democracy and communism. One aspect of democracy is its ability to work by trial and error, and correct mistaken decisions, since it is assumed that the future cannot be predicted. In a similar way, a market economy spreads the risk of wrong decisions among many decision makers (entrepreneurs, etc). Communism assumes knowledge of the overall, long-term general direction of social and political development, thus (supposedly) reducing the risk of making wrong short term decisions. The two large alliance systems operating since WW II, NATO and the Warsaw Pact required consensus about the forms of risk management implemented by its members. The issue of the current and future roles of the nation state thus becomes related, and often subordinate to the question in what way "national" and "non-national" institutions participate in the international management of risk, including wars of aggression by states, non-state terrorism, and

---

[27] Bloom, William 1990 *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*, Cambridge UP; Chafetz, Glenn, Michael Spirtas, and Benjamin Frankel, "Introduction: Tracing the Influence of Identity on Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 8 (2–3), 1998–1999; Cronin, Bruce *Community under Anarchy: Transnational Identity and the Evolution of Cooperation*, New York, Columbia UP, 1999; Dunn, Robert G. 1998 *Identity Crises: A Social Critique of Postmodernity*, U of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London; Hall, Rodney Bruce 1999 *National Collective Identity: Social Construct and International Systems*, Columbia UP; Katzenstein, Peter J. ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, Columbia UP, 1996; Keyman, E. Fuat 1997 *Globalization, State, Identity: Difference: Toward a critical social theory of International Relations*, Humanities Press, New Jersey; Krause, Jill and Neil Renwick eds., *Identities in International Relations*; Krause, Jill and Neil Renwick eds., *Identity in International Politics*, Macmillan Press, 1996; Lapid, Yosef and Friedrich Kratochwil eds., 1996 *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, London; Meyer, Birgit and Peter Geschiere 1999 *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure*, Blackwell; Reus-Smit, Christian 1999 *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*, Princeton UP; Wendt, A. 1994 "Collective Identity Formation and the international state," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2.

[28] Homan, Kees "European Views on Comprehensive Security" in Kurt W. Radtke and Raymond Feddema eds., *Comprehensive Security in Asia*, 427–446.

aggression in international financial markets. The concept of Theatre Missile Defense and other forms of missile defense (National Missile Defense, but also including similar proposals from the Russian side) creates new forms of risk management backed up by the need of institutionalized intelligence sharing. Originally caused by military exigencies, its implementation is likely to change the nature of supra-national institutionalized risk management. It also impacts on basic terms such as the meaning of the "balance of power" among individual states.

My use of the term "risk management" does not imply that I see it as a rational process. Social sciences have inherited a cabbalistic preference for deciphering the logic inherent in human society in terms of numbers and statistics, but attempts to manage human society according to logical precepts has not necessarily increased the rationality of society. Historical experience tells us that we have to be cautious in ascribing successful solutions to crises exclusively to rational management. Talking about the Cuba crisis Robert MacNamara recalled:

> "Luck. Luck was a factor. I think, in hindsight, it was the best-managed geopolitical crisis of the post-World War II period, beyond any question. But we were also lucky. And in the end, I think two political leaders, Khrushchev and Kennedy, were wise. Each of them moved in ways that reduced the risk of confrontation."[29]

We should also be wary of the idea that social systems operate rationally-an assumption that flies in the face of common sense. Systems of international relations are not self-generating, but are contingent on the policies and strategies of state and non-state actors. As a consequence, scholarly models of international systems must take into account concepts of action dominating the thinking of the players. As Hans Maull observed:

> "A balance-of-power approach to reality may, in fact, create a balance-of-power world. Even if actors preferred qualitatively different foreign policy approaches, they may feel forced to conform. Balance-of-power politics thus may tend to homogenize international relations in dangerous ways."[30]

The preponderance of US authors in the field of international relations theory is not just due to the size and structure of the international academic community in the US. The creation of "theory" is part of a process shaping US policy which is particularly influential in creating international "realities"- for that reason, theories by authors from powerful nations seem more relevant than those from authors with little influence on the exercise of global power. From an academic point of view, however, theoretical analysis must not be confused with the policy rationales created to explain and legitimize policies. Moreover, even the power of the United States is clearly not sufficient to unilaterally determine the global international system, or the workings of regional sub-systems. Nearly a century ago it seemed reasonable for a country like Japan to focus on one, or a few powers as the underwriters of the international order, as

---

[29] Episode 11, interview with Robert Mcnamara, 9th of May roll 10573, available at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/ coldwar/interviews/episode-11/mcnamara1.html. This website belongs to The George Washington University, The National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/.

[30] Hans Maull, "Enhancing Cooperation in International Institutions", *Dynamics of Pacific Asia*, K. W. Radtke et al. eds., Kegan Paul, 1998, p. 25.

the main sovereign actors contributing to an international "balance of power".

After WWII, international cooperation through alliances, but also through international institutions such as the IMF (and many others) have formed complex networks engaged in cooperative risk management in fields such as military, economic, or health security. Such systems of order tend to be hierarchically organized, rather than reflecting deepening "democratization". Such "hegemony" is not automatically a simple reflection of the ability of one sovereign state to impose its will directly on other countries. Indices of "comprehensive national power" common in defence thinking in many countries, and still prevalent in Chinese analyses ("zonghe guoli") are attempts to rescue the axiom of the sovereign state as the basic actor unit in most current theories of international relations.[31] Also, in this age of institutionalization a comparison of the behaviour of sovereign states to autonomous individuals is highly questionable. Transmission of power has become a mediated, socialized, institutionalized process in which decision making and the exercise of power often become opaque. The dynamics of collective committee decision making differ considerably from that of a natural individual. Powers excluded from this institutionalized process may find that their only alternative to joining the process is by undermining it. Those powers tend to be categorized as "rogue states", outcasts, countries to whom the courtesies of international rules need not apply.

Economic globalization fosters the spread of horizontal cooperation, while the construction of globalizing defense cooperation engenders new vertical hierarchies and leadership. Political cooperation across the borders of "sovereign" states also puts question marks behind the assumption of states as independent actors. The former Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, De Michelis, referred to the widespread informal, and at times illegal (financial) cooperation among West European conservative political parties designed to withstand the pressure from Eastern Europe and socialist/communist parties.[32] The dynamics of the European political system since 1945 can only be appreciated through multi-actor models taking into account cross-border activities. Brezhnev's doctrine about limited sovereignty of his allied satellites was a rather crude form of colonial interference in internal affairs. Globalization, and rights of the "international community" to interfere in the internal affairs of states anywhere on the globe likewise denies the credo of absolute sovereignty, but in a much more sophisticated manner, recalling the socialization of individuals as members of their group. One should guard, however, against jumping to conclusions about the "right" of a truly global international community to interfer globally-certainly when nobody has clear authority to speak on behalf of that (imagined?) community.

The international order as a franchise system?

The structure of the international order since World War II, dominated by alliance systems, may be likened to the rivalry among two franchise enterprises: the Soviet one, and the project later to be known as market democracy led by the United States. Yet by

---

[31] Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, National Defense University Press, Washington, D. C., 2000, and Huang Shuofeng, *Zonghe guoli xinlun*. Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999.

[32] Interview with De Michelis: '"Wir wussten, dass Elf Kohls Politik finanzieren sollte". Italiens Ex-Außenminister de Michelis zur Affare,' in *Die Welt*, internet edition, 31 January 2000, Berlin.

far not all countries were, or remained members of the franchise system-and that included the largest democracy, India, but also a socialist country such as China.

A franchise enterprise is likely to bind the franchise takers into a lasting relationship with franchise headquarters, often through practices highly questionable under anti-monopoly or consumer protection laws. Its relative stability is amongst others due to the fact that membership promises stable returns on investments, but once investments are made withdrawal from the chain usually results in heavy losses of accumulated investments. A franchise enterprise "thinks globally, and acts locally". It markets its products in globally recognizable packages, but their contents are not always identical with those produced elsewhere.

The collapse of the rival franchise enterprise (the Soviet Union) had major consequences for US relations with its allies. The change from a bipolar system of two franchise chains to a unipolar system meant that it was now the US led alliance system which embodied international order, and not an abstractly conceived international system. Neither the United Nations, nor a fictitious "international community", but US led alliance systems ensured continuity of order after 1991. To this must be added institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO acting as "transmission belts" (in the traditional Marxist-Leninist sense of the word) of power for the industrialized countries. Power is thus exercised directly by sovereign nations, but in a mediated and diffused form through a vast array of institutions active in many different areas, at economic, military, and other levels. Asian nations are only poorly presented in the UN Security Council, the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO,[33] or the Asian Development Bank, certainly when measured against their weight in population and economic strength. This adds to common feelings of frustrations in Asia which have so far not sufficed to create a common front.

Although this writer is convinced that China's WTO membership—if it is finally realised-will have a great impact on patterns of cooperation in East Asia, it is still too early to attempt an assessment of its influence on relations among, and with alliance partners of the US in Asia.

Any true empire provides sets of policies and patterns of actions ("regimes") that are actively exported, and either forced upon others, or voluntarily accepted by the "periphery". For much of pre-19th century European history it was France that provided such examples, including the French revolution that for the first time created one people out of the many *"nations"* (in its French meaning) that coexisted in France. England supplanted France as an exporter of such "models", in turn replaced by the United States. "Globalization", "market democracy", and the building of "civil societies" with its separate pattern of institutionalization (e.g., in the form of NGO's) are but different aspects of the same political project.

> "...the system derives its remarkable power from the concept of private property and of free markets, which together create a private realm-civil society-outside the state's domain. ... The market system gradually transfers power to the business and corporate groups, churches, the media and other

---

[33] "What I learned at the world economic crisis. The Insider." By Joseph Stiglitz, *The New Republic* (Online), Issue date: 04.17.00, Post date: 04.06.00.

voluntary associations that constitute civil society. The open economy slowly imposes its own restraints on the political system-raising the political costs of arbitrariness and the abuse of power."[34]

We may liken the export of forms of organization in the political, cultural, social and economic sphere to the spread of a network of *franchise enterprises*, not "owned" by company headquarters, but bound to it in a complex set of relationships. As a consequence, debates on particular policy issues (*"discours"*) tend to be structured by the pattern of the franchise headquarters, whatever the specific local conditions. Scholars affiliated with the culture of franchise headquarters carry greater weight than those in the so-called "periphery". Terms such as "good governance" reflect the codes set by franchise headquarters.

In a sense, the "franchise" allegory resembles the phenomenon of "bandwagoning" described in balance of power theories, yet franchising also entails a more complex process of interaction in which states can no longer easily be conceptualized as independent actors.

> "Asians' long-term objective should be to replace security arrangements based on a military balance with mutual security based on economic cooperation-on mutually beneficial trade and investment. Under the balance-of-power concept, ethical principles have had no place in international relations. ..."[35]

Finally, Japan's limited room for maneuvre in foreign policy resulting from its pre-1945 past virtually forces Japan to accept continued dependence on the US over and above the usual reasons for states to accept junior roles in alliances.

Globalization as a political project

The "Asian crisis" starting in July 1997 involved the reshaping of societies, economic, social and political systems from Indonesia to South Korea. It also led to tremendous pressures on China to alter the exchange rate of its currency, and triggered a reevaluation of China's domestic reform policies, as well as its foreign policy.[36] It would be wrong to interpret the events following the crisis of 1997 simply in terms of an imposition of the will of the US on some countries in Asia. Policy changes in Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, and Japan in response to the crisis were not uniform, and critics (especially from the US) have often complained that reforms have not been going far enough. As Lester Thurow put it, globalization is a political revolution brought about by business.[37] Undermining the ability of states and governments to maintain full sovereignty over events happening within their boundaries is an essential feature in an age where "footloose" global enterprise and business seem to reconquer the freedoms of a feudal age, free from the constraints of the territorial state, and constituting a novel global nobility.[38]

---

[34] Almonte, Jose T. "Ensuring Security the 'ASEAN Way' in *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4, Winter 1997–98, pp. 80–92, here p. 85.

[35] Almonte, Jose T. "Ensuring Security the 'ASEAN Way' in *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4, Winter 1997–98, p. 90.

[36] D. Zweig "The Stalled Fifth Wave: Zhu Rongji's Reform Agenda of 1998–2000," in *Asian Survey*, forthcoming.

[37] Lester Thurow, in *Yomiuri shinbun*, 25 April 2000.

[38] Staden, A. Van (ed) *De nationale staat. Onhoudbaar maar onmisbaar? Het perspectief van Europese integratie en mondialisering*, 1996, Van Gorcum, Assen, p. 14: "The experience of the European Union demonstrates how difficult it is to organize democratic decision making in a large-scale system whose organizing principles are partly determined by territorial, partly by functional principles". I take the term "feudal" here to refer to the principle of personal bonds, in opposition to the post-feudal principle of territoriality.

Globalization does not equal democratization, and mass society has not obviated the need for new elites, rather the opposite is the case. One reason is the need to strengthen the speed of decision making, referred to elsewhere in my paper. At this stage it may be useful to turn to the historic precedent of elites in the Chinese empire which functioned as supra-regional elites in ways somewhat comparable to our contemporary globalizing/globalized elites.

The Chinese empire relied on a numerically fairly small number of elites that were systematically trained and socialized as supra-regional elites ("Confucianism", "examination system") to constitute an epistemic community engaged in the management of local and supra-local affairs. The imperial government advocated the spread of a universally accepted form of governance, the use of a common language and culture among the elite, and maintained the right to interfere in local (military) disturbances. It also created sophisticated forms of control of a population that often was far from docilei until the present day, Chinese peasants are famous for their "stubbornness". Modern Chinese governments are just as concerned about controlling the masses as were governments in the past, and that applies in particular to secret societies and some religious organisations as well (*Falungong*). The teaching of Quanzhenjiao (13thc.) was similarly eclectic. The Chinese empire did not impose one national language or uniform culture on the citizens of the empire, and adopted different forms of taxation according to the economic structure of regions. It accepted the widespread use of self-government both in the economy (*Huiguan*, mistranslated into English as "guilds"), moral education (*jiaxun* "clan rules") and even parts of the criminal law. In this sense, the organization of the Chinese empire may present an early paradigm of "globalization", likewise with only limited means to impose centralized political rule.

The twentieth century brought with it an unprecedented spread of formal institutionalization in many different areas, but this applies mainly to highly industrialized, urbanized societies. Such changes are not simply an expression of "Westernization". The speed with which these changes happen depends to a large extent on modern-style urbanization, but since such processes occur rather unevenly throughout (South) East Asia and within countries in the region, we should not be surprised to find that globalization has as yet not led to the kind of interchange and interpenetration among societies in East Asia of the kind observable in Europe and North America.

From antiquity until quite recently, the (extended) family constituted a social organizational paradigm for state organization, nobility/elites, and the organization of economic production ("family" enterprises). Over the past few decades, organizational paradigms patterned on the "rational" management of enterprises have largely eroded the position of the family paradigm, likening states, universities and other institutions to "enterprises", and requiring the restructuring of institutions according to the new paradigm. This includes the "management" of relations within a family, and has led to a continuing reassessment of the need for the individual to act within the constraints imposed by his family. Civil society used to be a concept applied to an aggregate number of natural persons; more recently, it is institutionalized citizenry (NGOs, etc) that is moving into its place. Class analysis is out of fashion. Distinctions between "politics" and "economics" are rather artificial, and acquire their meaning by classifying institutions engaged in the organization, production and distribution of social, visible

and invisible goods as "political" (including government produced "public goods") or "economic". The participation of individuals in social, political and economic processes is increasingly dependent on being embedded in (in)formal organizations, deeply affecting notions of the meaning "individual power" and "individual ownership". The major part of the economy dominated by "private enterprise" these days rarely denotes an enterprise owned and/or run by a single individual.

The socialization of elites tends to blur clear distinctions between political and economic elites. In the German parliamentary system a significant, if not the major part of legislation is shaped through the interaction of organizations representing interest groups and members of political parties having expertise in certain areas. Up to fifty percent of national legislation in EU member states originates in political processes at EU level hardly known for its "transparency".[39]

The socialization of enterprise elites is becoming increasingly internationalized. Elites engaged in the maintenance of security, both military and financial stress their professional obligation to maintain stability through the organizations they belong to. Their professional loyalty may resemble old style "nationalistic" loyalty, but is not necessarily identical with it.[40]

In this age the traditional concept of national ruling elites operating through nation-states has become diffused through the participation of elites at many levels of international activities, not least through the participation in globalized business. Business alliances such as between Nissan and Renault do not only make elites move globally. The de-nationalization of large enterprises makes it more difficult for governments to control the export and import of technology and information, as lamented by Joseph Nye who complains about the lack of concern for US national interests by major US companies.[41]

Since the individual acts increasingly through institutionalized groups-companies, NGO's and other organizations, it has become difficult, if not impossible to employ traditional concepts of class structure, and classifying the social status and behaviour of individuals independent of the organizations where they spend most of their time. Work life and domestic obligations leave precious little time for other "social activities" that seem to be the hallmark of informal "civil society". Civil society is becoming the preserve of the "leisured classes" and specialized organizations such as NGO's. NGO's and NPO's are not necessarily "private" institutions in the traditional sense of the word. An important criterium may be gained by analyzing the sources of their income. One cannot exclude that some act as front organizations of enterprises or other institutions.

Summing up, "civil society" is now characterized by institutionalization and new, often supra-national elites. Without access to such institutions one individual can hardly hope to play a significant role in non-government "civil society".

As already emphasized above, these processes are highly conspicuous in Europe, the

---

[39] Schwarz, F. *Das gekaufte Parlament,* Munich, 1999.

[40] Although Clinton formally abolished the "National Economic Security Council" established in the early stage of his presidency, there is no doubt that economic security, including the option of economic warfare, remains an important priority.

[41] Nye, Joseph "Redefining the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* July/August 1999. "Without a sure sense of national identity, Americans have become unable to define their national interests, and as a result subnational commercial interests and transnational and nonnational ethnic interests have come to dominate foreign policy."

United States and Japan, but have as yet contributed only very little to direct interaction between societies in East Asia-the basis for the creation of autonomous regionalization in East Asia remains weak.

Instant decision making creates hierarchical organizations

These processes caused changes to the role of the "state", and therefore also to the role of the state as "actor" in the international system. Modern style alliances did not escape the general pattern of institutionalization outlined above. During their early formative period states thrived on their ability to extract funding for joint defense operations.[42] This function is now partially being taken over by security alliances. Membership in security alliances-whether in the Soviet empire, NATO or other alliances-require tremendous investments which cannot easily be withdrawn. This is also true for new forms of defense cooperation such as TMD, NMD or AMD.[43] Even before their deployment cooperation in the TMD project affects the nature of international relations, adding to the polarization between China/North Korea on the one hand, and Japan/US on the other. Taiwanese cooperation in TMD will effectively increase the status of Taiwan as an independent "national" actor, without the need for a declaration of independence.

TMD is however only a part of a new generation of defense systems-including satellite based (attack) systems-that require new international control systems to prevent accidental war.

The modernization of technologies in all fields (including the "revolution in military affairs" (RMA),[44] information, production, market mechanisms) requires "instant decision making". Numerous forms of organization in politics, the economy, and armed forces are in the process of fundamental reform that demand basic reassessments of the functioning of institutions such as parliamentary democracy, one-party dictatorship, sovereignty, and the provision of public goods on the basis of (national) taxation. This has brought change not only to business strategy, but also to the internal structure of enterprises and companies. At the government level this has already led to a wave of new laws considerably widening the scope for government controlling internet communication in the United States, Great Britain, and most recently, the European Union, and also leading to a tightening of secrecy laws in general. The RMA inexorably requires specialized professionalization, leading to the virtual end of conscription in the forces of most major military powers. The abolition of conscription reduces the need to legitimize military action at home, a major factor affecting US war operations in Vietnam. The need to fight wars quickly further increases doubts about the possibility of civilian control, especially in the context of alliance operations (NATO in "Kosovo").[45]

The need to create comprehensive, global information gathering systems, coupled with instant centralized decision making delegated to one actor (the US) clearly wreaks

---

[42] Th. Rood "Staat markt en ideologie, " in Staden, A. Van (ed) *De nationale staat*, p. 59.

[43] National Missile Defence, Theatre Missile Defence, Allied Missile Defence.

[44] Paul Dibb "The Revolution in Military Affairs and Asian Security," in *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4, Winter 1997–8, pp. 93–116.

[45] The attempt by more than 30 congressmen to take legal action against Clinton for having breached the warpowers act failed, thus raising doubts about the efficacy of appealing to the constitution and law to maintain democratic control over decisions that may involve countries in war.

havoc with traditional ideas of democratic parliaments engaging in sovereign decision making. The deployment of such systems contributes to the strenghtening of hierarchy in the international order.

This development may be compared to changes in stock trading, where the speed of trading with the aid of computerized models created the danger of a melt-down that can only be managed by instant cessation of trading. In order to maintain a sensible international order in the future we may be forced to invent comparable mechanisms to prevent "unnecessary" military confrontation.

Instability brought about by these new developments may require new techniques necessary to maintain stability, a mechanism resembling old style nuclear deterrence, based on an awareness of Mutual Assured Instability (MAI) not only in the fields of military, but also economic security. So far, states and governments in East Asia have tended to build close relationships with non-Asian states rather than with their respective neighbours-mainly with the United States and Russia. Unless this tendency is reversed, there are few prospects for regionalization leading towards greater autonomy of (South) East Asia. Whether the latter is desirable is for societies in (South) East Asia to decide.

East Asia-a multilateral system?

Since 1945 Asia has remained very much divided-no region of Asia has created a stable order based on regional agreement without the U.S. or Russia playing a central role in that regional order. Major players in the international system, such as the United States, Japan, the European Community, China, India, Japan and Russia operate in a global, rather than in a regional environment. It has therefore become increasingly meaningless to establish models of geographically defined regional subsystems in Asia or Europe. This writer has spent considerable time and effort on the study of China's relations with Japan.[46] The treatment of the Sino-Japanese relationship as an exclusively, or mainly bilateral relationship is doomed to failure unless Japan's peculiar relationship with the US is given proper weight. Once again, the US wishes to see Japan become an integrated part of US strategies towards Asia, in particular China.[47] Also, Japan's relations with South Korea and in particular with Taiwan are not always given due attention in surveys of Japan's relationships with China. Theories that are based on simple assumptions of "triangular relations" or sets of "multi-angular" relations are unlikely to deliver to us models facilitating predictions about future developments. It is not only historical memories that encumber Japanese foreign policy. It goes without saying that it is plainly insulting to argue that continued US tutelage remains necessary to prevent militarism from rising in Japan once more. As in any grown up relationship mutual respect and esteem flourish only when both partners pay proper attention to the right of the other to be different.

Ozawa Ichiro, a Japanese "maverick" politician, described his own frustrations with Japanese politics in the following way:

"The Mori government was born under very murky circumstances, with a total

---

[46] *China's Relations with Japan, 1945–83: the role of Liao Chengzhi* (Manchester University Press, 1990).

[47] This is apparent from the Document Joint Vision 2020 issued by the US Department of Defense (available at http://www. dtic.mil/jv2020).

lack of transparency about the process. I don't deny the need for backroom discussions when any new government is born. One other point: the Mori cabinet is called a coalition government, but it doesn't really deserve the name. Coalitions are formed in order to create a legislative majority that will enable the government to carry out the policies it espouses. But when the Mori government came into being, there was no discussion of policies, nothing to indicate what the coalition proposed to do. But I also discern from time to time contradictory and arbitrary demands emanating from the American side. If one alliance partner demands of the other an unquestioning, Hachiko-like fidelity, that is no longer an alliance, but a master-servant relationship. (Hachiko was a dog so loyal that for many years after his master had died, he still came to the station every afternoon to greet him and walk home with him.) And this is where my remarks begin to have relevance to Mr. Mori's much-publicized statement (about Japan being a divine country under the Emperor). The present situation between Japan and the United States is that the Japanese people, without the awakened self-reliance that would cause them to face up to their own responsibilities, are nevertheless feeling greater and greater frustration over the one-sided demands coming from the American side. It is the Japanese nature not to make a public fuss about these demands or to make their own counter-demands, but all the more their frustrations and discontents pile up until they come close to boiling point. That is the background against which we are beginning to see and to hear words and actions which reflect a narrow-minded nationalism. If Mr. Mori's statement reflects this kind of thought and feeling, it represents a very unhealthy trend and is to be condemned."[48]

The formulation of China's long term strategy towards co-determining the shape of East Asia is made more complicated by the fact that China's traditional emphasis on pushing towards a multipolar world conflicts with China's tactical need to reduce the chance for independent security roles of Japan and Taiwan to the greatest possible degree. China's military strategies will be designed to ensure its security without becoming bankrupted by an arms race, and at the same time endeavour to prevent international isolation. Being an ally of the US Japan is concerned about becoming overly exposed to the effects of US foreign (economic) policies towards China. It has been argued in Japan that Japan should do more to cooperate with the US in a "Taiwan crisis", since this may restrain China from attacking Taiwan,[49] but it remains questionable whether the Japanese government will openly adopt such a policy. Japan still prefers to use its enormous economic power without giving the appearance of acting in an unwelcome "leadership role". Japan's initiatives to achieve a swap agreement among the ASEAN-Ten plus China, the RoK and Japan is one part of this strategy. The "Asian crisis" of 1997 led the major players in East and Southeast Asia (Japan, the RoK, ASEAN and China) to explore new forms of cooperative financial security that transcend traditional political and economic divisions. This is also a part of Japanese attempts to

[48] Ozawa Ichiro, in a speech at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan June 7, 2000; unofficial translation by the Liberal Democratic Party.
[49] "Japan's Military Role: Alliance Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century," Captain Katsutoshi Kawano, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. *Naval War College Review*, Volume LI, Number 4, Sequence 364, Autumn 1998.

gain greater leeway for independent action from the US in the economic field. The establishment of a Free Trade Zone with the RoK is another element, although serious doubts remain about the feasibility of such plans.[50]

Changes in Japanese approaches towards the alliance with the US after the crisis year of 1960 may be compared to attempts to alter the course of a mammoth tanker where a limited number of actors on the bridge try to pull the wheel gently in slightly differing directions, usually producing only minor, and gradual alterations to the course. For a considerable period the US seems to have welcomed such an approach that avoids the raucous atmosphere of the public debate preceding the Security Crisis of 1960. For that reason the US also attempted to avoid a linkage of open discussions on the Japanese Constitution with changes in US-Japanese defense cooperation. Defense cooperation is of course not confined to policies laid out in political documents: international cooperation between companies, at least one of whom is involved in arms production, may also have major implications, in particular as the role of high-technology increases. Such aspects of defense cooperation do not always enter the scene of public debate on defense and security cooperation. However, they are a major feature of US-Japan relations since the eighties, and are also important to an understanding of current Chinese-Russian relations.[51] Such cooperation differs from alliances in the proper sense of the word in that their duration is much more subject to (sudden) change. In Japan, the US, and China genuine debates on security are still very much the prerogative of elite discussions, and even in the US there is very little general interest in changes in the defense relationship with Japan, the cornerstone of US security arrangements for the Western Pacific and (South) east Asia.[52] Changes in the nature of the security debate are the result of complex interactions, in which "epistemological communities" play a major role. Dialogues (trialogues etc) at the official level are accompanied by unofficial exchanges. However, many so-called "private" conferences and exchanges are in fact influenced by a variety of institutional actors, often linked to government and defense establishments. Debates on theories of international relations are one of the vehicles for creating "epistemological communities", since they are useful in harmonizing the basic premises and perceptions on the basis of which discussions and debates are conducted and institutionalized. The production of theories thus contributes to the political reality they are supposed to analyze. The vast majority of theories of international relations are not very useful when applied to the huge region of Asia from India to Japan, including Southeast Asia, China and Korea. One of the basic reasons is that the nature of alliance politics in the whole of Asia is central to an understanding of international relations in the post-colonial period, but dominating approaches to international relations theory pay insufficient attention to the realities of alliance politics in Asia since 1945. Theories of alliances still tend to focus on the

---

[50] Yamazawa Ippei, *21 seiki nikkan keizai kankei kenkyuukai hookokusho* "21 seiki no nikkan keizai kankei wa ika ni arubeki ka," Nihon booeki shinkookai ajia keizai kenkyuujo, Kenkyuu kikakubu, May 2000.

[51] The current preparations for a Treaty of Friendship between Russia and China suggest a higher level of cooperation for the future.

[52] For a good summary from a US perspective, see Michael J. Green "State of the Field Report: Research on Japanese Security Policy," *Access Asia Review*, NBR Publications: AccessAsia Review: Vol. 2, No. 1 (http://www.nbr.org/publications/review/vol2no1/essay.html), and Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin, *The US-Japan Alliance, Past, Present and Future* (Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2000).

history of alliances conducted among "Western" powers. Yet even in Europe, alliances in the twentieth century are not the result of "opportunistic" choices by autonomous actors (governments). They also tend to be an expression of intent to build a long term community requiring cooperation at many levels, in economic affairs as well as domestic and external politics-including the pursuit of ideological aims such as the construction of "civil societies". Alliances demand continuous investments, financial and otherwise, of tremendous size which virtually prevent one-sided withdrawal. In other words, once established they tend to maintain themselves, usually changing only slowly. The sudden PRC de facto withdrawal from the alliance with the Soviet Union, and uncertainties surrounding the depth of mutual defense cooperation with the Soviet Union and North Korea in subsequent decades are rather unusual exceptions.

Prospects for East Asia: towards greater regional autonomy?

Not so long ago, the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick appeared somewhat pessimistic about the prospects for the building of a stable international system in Asia:

> "... it is not clear whether most East Asian countries have internalised the fact that they will increasingly shape the international system, not just operate within it ... . Also, the examples set by other principal regions have not been inspiring. The European Union (EU)'s preoccupation with its internal affairs has barely left any room for it to consider Europe's periphery, much less the globe. The US, which did much to create the present order, still makes sacrifices, but without possessing an overarching strategy or considering the priority purposes of its still-considerable power. ..."[53]

William Tow emphasized the potential for system building in Southeast Asia by using a multi-pronged approach in which the role of alliances goes beyond the traditional threat-oriented approach:

> "This paper will explore the essential characteristics of U.S. security relationships with Southeast Asia and with Australia. It asserts that U.S. bilateral alliances in this area, constituting what can be termed the Asia Pacific region's "southern rim," work most effectively in conjunction with the multilateral security diplomacy initiated by Australia and ASEAN to stabilize their part of the world. It takes issue with those who insist that security alliances must be threat-oriented if they are to survive and be credible. Instead, it underscores the order-building characteristics of these alliances and their potential to link bilateral and multilateral security behavior in constructive ways.
> ..., the bilateral U.S. security alliances and the region's existing multilateral institutions, such as ASEAN and APEC are the only real instruments currently available for these allies to embrace common approaches to economic coordination and development."[54]

Yet when it comes to Northeast Asia it is noticeable that the revitalization of the US-Japan security relationship has been legitimized by invoking threats emanating

---

[53] Zoellick, Robert B. "Economics and Security in the Changing Asia-Pacific," in *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4 Winter 1997–98, pp. 29–51, here p. 35–36.

[54] Tow, William T. Assessing U.S. Bilateral Security Alliances in the Asia Pacific's "Southern Rim": Why the San Francisco System Endures, October 1999, Stanford, APARC paper, p. 7.

from North Korea and China. Perhaps such an approach is needed to bring the allies closer. Yet such threats may paradoxically also lead to calls for greater Japanese independence. The reason lies in different threat perceptions in Washington and capitals in Asia. One example was the Japanese reaction to the firing of North Korea's Taepodong missile in August 1998. Differences in the interpretation between Japan and the US led to calls in Japan for the establishment of an intelligence and survey network independent from the US. Differences are also apparent in the tough Japanese stance towards North Korea in its negotiations on the establishment of diplomatic relations, and openly expressed irritation about the appearance of Chinese survey ships in Japan's EEZ, although the Bush administration seems to move closer to the tough Japanese line. For obvious reasons, Japanese sources avoid taking clear cut positions on how Japan might react to Chinese attempts to gain control over Taiwan. It should not be taken for granted that greater defence cooperation between Japan and the US will automatically lead to greater Japanese compliance with US policies and strategies. There is an important ground swell in Japanese public opinion refusing to see Japan become involved in a war against China.

The establishment of collective defense cooperation between South Korea, Japan and the United States, a possible core for a future "Transpacific Security Network" (a kind of mini-NATO), is not only encumbered by interpretations of the Japanese constitution that make it difficult to join collective defense organisations, or difficulties in the Japan-RoK relationship. The US discriminates against the RoK on a number of issues. South Korea is unable to achieve treatment equal to that of Japan when it comes to the use of plutonium as nuclear fuel, or the production of medium to long range missiles. Taiwan is certainly an "identity" independent from China in the area of security, mostly relying on the US, while economic interests link Taiwan strongly to the US, Japan and China. In practical terms it remains difficult to include Taiwan as an independent actor in the political and security equation in Asia. In such a situation, the deployment of a Theater Missile Defense system appears to be a down-to-earth practical approach to ensure the operability of US-led alliances in any future confrontation with North Korea and China.

Building a system of cooperative security in Europe was possible since the Soviet Union and the US possessed comparable levels of strategic weapon systems. In addition, policy differences among NATO allies did not seriously encumber joint negotiations between the two alliance systems. In East Asia, the major antagonists China and the US do not operate at comparable levels, and strategists take into account the significance of asymmetric warfare. China's relative weaknesses induce the employment of concealment of true abilities and camouflage-which does not make for progress in establishing greater transparency in a framework of cooperative security. The US is openly discussing whether it should or should not adhere to existing agreements such as the ABM agreement, and doubts whether other agreements such as the CTBT are in fact in the strategic interest of the US. In the absence of strategic parity China has options but to to threaten to undermine the US position by other means, such as proliferation, should the US go back on existing agreements.

Yet another factor also encumbers the establishment of viable security regimes. The US has never been willing to accept the EU, or individual European states as

genuine partners in constructing a system of (cooperative) security in the Middle East. This may be compared to the unwillingness of the US to grant Japan an independent role in deliberations on the Korean issue. Japan was not represented in the Four Party Talks on Korea. It was strong Japanese reactions towards the firing of the Taepodong rocket that forced the US to grant Japan limited involvement in 1999 by establishing the US-ROK-Japan Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) in 1999.[55] China is unlikely to accept a system of cooperative security where it stands isolated against a overwhelming superior united front, led by the US and including Japan, the largest spender on defense in Asia.

The perception of the domestic political and economic systems in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other parts of Asia by US and European politicians and scholars is regularly couched in terms that call them "corrupted" variants of "pure" European-US models: Japan's economy is said to deviate from a "genuine" market economy, South Korea, Indonesia and other countries are accused of "crony capitalism". Few non-Asian scholars seem convinced that any Asian country (including India) is a "genuine" democracy (no matter how that term is defined). Foreign and military security policies of Asian actors are habitually analyzed in terms linking them to systemic, European derived divisions between "democracy" and "totalitarian dictatorships", "communism" and "nationalism". Non-Asian politicians tend to classify China as a "communist" country, using concepts ill suited to account for changes since 1980. The export of political models from the United States and, to a lesser extent, Europe, may be likened to the behaviour of the headquarters of a franchise enterprise that rewards adherence to the franchise model with certain benefits, but hesitates to grant the necessary certificates of acknowledgement to its Asian franchise takers. In a sense, both China and the US seem convinced that order is the result of hierarchies among nations. China measures its place in the hierarchy by referring to index figures of national strength.[56] The US measures stability in terms of its own strength of leadership, attempting to enforce its own "American standards" as universal standards. This is also neatly expressed in the explicit and implied visions for a united command structure under US leadership in the "Joint Vision 2020" document recently issued by the US Department of Defense.[57]

Political systems based on ideologies of European origin such as Communism and Capitalism are quite remarkable in sharing symmetric similarities: there is an inherent and explicit belief of the historical inevitability of the global spread of one's system by voluntary or forcible conversion. Both subscribe to the view that certain social-economic "core processes" are the key engines of historic progression and change: changes in the material bases engendering class struggle, market mechanisms causing increasing division of labour. If not in theory, then in actual practice both approaches produce "leaders" that present themselves as the advance force of inevitable change-

---

[55] Michael Green, "Why Tokyo Will Be A Larger Player In Asia," Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network, *Special Report*, July 31, 2000.

[56] Huang Shuofeng, *Zonghe guoli xinlun.* Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999. In some ways, Zhang Zhaozhong (*Hua shuo guofang*, Guofang daxue chubanshe, 2000) presents a more evenly balanced common sense approach.

[57] The document can be downloaded at http://www.looksmart.com/eus1/eus317836/eus317916/eus62071/eus64646/r?l &

mainly the Soviet Union and the United States. Both develop patterns of political-social-economic and also cultural orders which they attempt to spread globally. As the spread of Christianity by missionaries was taken as proof of the historical "truth" of this belief, the ability of the Soviet Union and the United States to spread their systems globally was interpreted as vindicating their respective interpretations of the ultimate rationale behind historical development. China's recent deemphasis of the role of ideology is a strong indication that China wishes to escape from the trap of ideologically based confrontation, where China would face an international coalition of overwhelming strength. The internal diversities of societies in East and Southeast Asia suggest that systemic stability cannot be based on enforcing common standards, even among partners in US alliances. Conceptualizing systemic order in terms of balance of power is likely to end in an arms race with an uncertain finish. Perhaps, when the chips come down it might not be a bad idea to accept that the military and/or economic collapse of any country does not bode well for the future of other countries either. An awareness of mutual assured instability may induce common sense where military conflict does not make sense.