# EAST ASIAN SECURITY:
# TWO VIEWS

## The Security Challenges in Northeast Asia:
## A Chinese View

**Chu Shulong**

## Security Challenges to the United States
## in Northeast Asia:
## Looking beyond the Transformation
## of the Six-Party Talks

**Gilbert Rozman**

**November 2007**

*****



*****

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA 17013-5244.

*****

All Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) publications are available on the SSI homepage for electronic dissemination. Hard copies of this report also may be ordered from our homepage. SSI's homepage address is: *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil*.

*****

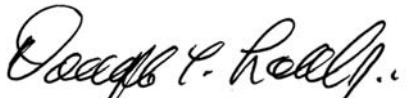


ISBN 1-58487-324-8

## FOREWORD

Northeast Asia is the most dynamic sector of the global economy, and the most dynamic element is undoubtedly the rise of China. However, in this region conflicts dating back to the Cold War have not yet found resolution. The imbalance between economic progress and political stagnation ensures that international affairs pose many challenges to governments and to students alike. The two papers herein, originally presented at the Strategic Studies Institute's 2007 annual Strategy Conference, highlight the challenges posed by the rise of China and by the new possibility for making progress on Korean issues due to the Six-Party Agreements on North Korean proliferation of February 13, 2007.

In keeping with the conference's theme, "Regional Challenges to American Security," Dr. Chu Shulong, the first paper's author, presents a view of China's interests, goals, and perspectives on Northeast Asian issues. In the second paper, one of America's most insightful writers on Asian security and Asian regionalism, Dr. Gilbert Rozman, presents an American view of the possibilities for forging a new political order around Korea. Combined, the two papers underscore the complexities and risks as well as the opportunities for political leaders in Northeast Asia in contemplating new policies and actions to readjust the region's political dynamics with its economic dynamism.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE AUTHORS

CHU SHULONG is a Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the School of Public Policy and Management and is the deputy director of the Institute of International Strategic and Development Studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. From September 2006 until June 2007 he was a visiting fellow at the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC. He was previously director for the North American Studies Division of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations. He is also a Professor at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Party School and an advisor to China's Central Television (CCTV) international reporting. Dr. Chu's research covers political theory and Chinese politics, international relations, focusing on U.S. China policy and the Sino-U.S. relations, Asian security, and Chinese foreign and security policies. His most recent publications include *The Sino-US Relations in the Post-Cold War Era; Basic Theories of International Relations*; *The World, the U.S., and China*; *Political Theories*; and a forthcoming book, *The Peaceful Rise and Development: China's Foreign Strategy and Policy.* Dr. Chu received a B.A. from Dalian Foreign Languages University, an M.A. in Law from the Beijing University of International Relations, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the George Washington University.

GILBERT ROZMAN is the Musgrave Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. His research concentrates on China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, including comparisons, bilateral relations, and regionalism. Recent co-edited books include: *Russian Strategic Thinking toward Asia* (2006), J*apanese Strategic*

*Thinking toward Asia* (2007), and *Korea at the Center: The Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (2006). Recent monographs are *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (2004) and *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four Parties Caught between North Korea and the United States* (forthcoming). Dr. Rozman holds a B.A. from Carleton College and a Ph.D. from Princeton University.

## SUMMARY

In the post-Cold War era and in the early 21st century, the region of Northeast Asia remains one of the most unstable areas in Asia and in the world compared with other regions of Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Southern Asia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America. And it could become a harsh strategic confrontational area between major powers in Asia and in the world in the future, if those major powers like the United States, China, Japan, and Russia do not manage their relationships well. It can also become a place of hot war or new Cold War in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, if the two Koreas and two sides of the Taiwan Strait problem cannot manage the unresolved issues in their relations. Northeast Asia is also on track to become another center of the global economy, science and technology, military, and international politics. Opportunities as well as challenges to Asia and the world come from the "rising" China and Asia.

A new framework for Northeast Asian security must cope with the legacy of six decades of frequent changes in the region's great power relations. In order to realize the goals of the Joint Agreement in the Six-Party Talks, multilateralism is becoming more important. The U.S. leadership faces challenges from the Sino-U.S. rivalry that is now being better managed because of cooperation over North Korea; the Russo-U.S. rivalry that has intensified, although there is potential to stabilize it in this region; Sino-Russian partnership, which has become closer in response to the nuclear crisis but could be tested by progress that would reveal conflicting national interests; North Korean belligerence, which is unlikely to end even

if the nuclear crisis is brought under control; South Korean balancing, which would remain even under a conservative president; and Sino-Japanese rivalry, which is somewhat under control in 2007 but remains the main barrier to regionalism. A U.S. regional strategy is needed that addresses all of these challenges in the context of the Six-Party Talks.

# THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTHEAST ASIA: A CHINESE VIEW

**Chu Shulong**

## THE IMMEDIATE CHALLENGE: NORTH KOREA

North Korea and the Korean Peninsula are among the most troublesome, confrontational, and dangerous places in Asia. Along with Afghanistan and the Middle East, Korea is one of the most troublesome places in the post-Cold War and 21st century world. Evidently it will remain such a place and problem for the next 5, if not 10, years.

The problem comes first from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) regime. The current leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-Il, inherited his position from his father, Kim Il-Sung, through an abnormal and illegitimate process. Therefore, the regime always has a problem with legitimacy, i.e., its relationship with the people. Thus the regime is not stable. Sooner or later it will change, and the manner of change will probably be neither legitimate nor stable. So the North Korean state itself is a security challenge in the country, on the Korean Peninsula, and in the region of East Asia.

Regime change can lead to serious political and social instability in the country, on the Peninsula, and in the region. It may cause a chaotic situation, conflicts inside the country, and between the two Koreas on the Peninsula. It may also cause large outflows of refugees, which would present major security challenges to the

neighboring countries such as South Korea, China, Japan, and perhaps Russia. The second major source of the problem or challenge stems from the regime's policy. The internal policy of the regime is a "military first" policy because the stability and survival of the regime rely heavily on the military forces. Consequently, the military enjoys a high priority and many resources. As the population is roughly 20 million people and the government maintains a million strong military, one of every 20 people is in military uniform. A country that spends so much human and other resources on the military cannot be in good shape economically. That is one of the major sources of the North Korean problem and challenge today and in the future.

For a decade, the North Koreans talked about and tried some change or "reform." The government established special zones in a border area with the South and in a city bordering with China. However, those "special zones" bear little similarity to the "special economic zones" in China when China started to reform its economy in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The North Korean leaders have talked with the Chinese leadership about economic reform, and have visited Zhongguanchun and Shanghai's Pudong, the heavily high-tech and foreign invested areas in China. But they seem neither to have learned nor done too much after their visits and return to their country.

The possibility for North Korea to engage in serious reform is small because its regime values security (both regime and national) so much that it lacks the confidence to take the risk of embarking upon a major economic reform. And without serious reform, neither the nature of the state nor the situation of the nation can change too much. Or in other words, without self-generated reform, the alternative for the DPRK would

be collapse like those socialist regimes and countries in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The only question is how and when the collapse will take place. And the collapse of North Korea is a serious security challenge to the Republic of Korea (ROK), China, and other countries in the region.

The challenge of North Korea is more direct in its external and security policies. For decades the country has tried to play games with other nations and taken this as the basic pattern of its foreign and security approach. North Korea itself is a small country and a small power, it does not have too much of a stake in its foreign relations and does not have a role or influence on regional and international relations. Therefore, the only way that the regime has found to play or engage with others is to cause trouble. Causing and then resolving the problem seems to be only way that the regime can get attention, engagement, and more aid from others. Otherwise it would be forgotten by the outside world. Therefore, combined with its internal "military first" policy, the country's strategy is generating problems for others. And the only area where it can make trouble is security. Incidents between the two Koreas, missile launches, and nuclear weapons programs are the options that the DPRK can take to get attention and aid and to reach the goals of its internal and external strategies. So the country's and the regime's survival depends upon the problems and challenges it can generate. Thus, the North Korean missile and nuclear issues may not be resolved for as long as the regime and country are there: they can only have ups and downs.

The third and long-term problem and challenge is the unresolved reunification issue between the two

Koreas on the Peninsula. Both North and South Korea want and are committed to national reunification. But they are not in hurry to reach the final goal after North Korea lost confidence in reunification based upon its own capabilities and after the South saw the huge cost of national reunification of Germany in the 1990s.

It seems, then, that the scenario for Korean reunification cannot be a peaceful one. The two sides are not in any condition for a negotiated unification. Therefore, Korean unification is very much going to resemble an Eastern European reunification where one side takes over the other. North Korea would not allow the South to take over unless it collapses and can no longer exist. Thus a Korean reunification is likely to be chaotic for one side at least, if not a chaotic situation or conflict between the two sides on the Korean Peninsula. That kind of situation would pose a challenge not only to the ROK, but also to other countries such as China, Japan, and the United States, to deal with and to manage the crisis.

## THE MOST DANGEROUS CHALLENGE: THE TAIWAN STRAIT

The North Koreans may cause endless troubles for South Korea, China, Japan, and the United States now and in the future, but unlike the situation more than half century ago, it is unlikely to cause a war. The most likely war situation in Asia is not on the Korean Peninsula but in the Taiwan Strait. The Taiwan independence movement is very likely to cause a serious war between the two sides across the Strait, between China and the United States, and perhaps Japan, if and when the movement goes too far.

To all the Chinese, it is crystal clear that the most serious threat that the People's Republic faces now and in the future is Taiwanese independence. First, Taiwan's independence threatens China's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity—a central part of national security everywhere in the world. Second, Taiwan's independence may encourage separatist movements in other parts of China, such as Tibet and Xinjiang. Third, the independence of Taiwan will not only cause a serious war between the two sides across the Taiwan Strait, but also very likely will cause a war between China and another country or countries such as the United States, and perhaps Japan. Looking at the future, Taiwan's independence is the sole factor that will put or force China into a war. Besides Taiwanese independence, there is no other development that may lead the Chinese to fight a war in the early 21st century. Taiwan's independence also poses an economic threat to the rise of China because when there is a war across the Strait and in the Pacific Ocean, China has to stop its process of modernization, at least for a few years, if not a few decades. Again, Taiwan is the only factor that may cause such an interruption, for besides Taiwan there seems no other force that can stop the economic boom and prosperity of China in the early decades of the century. Internal difficulties and problems seem to be manageable.

The United States is the only foreign country with whom China might have a major war or military conflict in the foreseeable future. And the two countries may go into a cold and a hot war in two possible situations. One is Taiwan. The United States has committed itself to "protect" Taiwan, even if only vaguely by the Taiwan Relations Act and by virtue of many administrations' statements, if Taiwan has a military conflict with

Mainland China. Thus any war or military conflict between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is very likely to develop into a war or conflict between the United States and China.

In the Taiwan situation, if the Taiwanese independence movement goes to the "unacceptable stage" of final and total independence by changing its name from the "Republic of China" to the "Republic of Taiwan" and changing its constitution that defines it as a part of China, then the Mainland would use military force to stop the independence. And according to the Taiwan Relations Act and repeated statements by U.S. administrations, the United States would not accept the use of force to resolve the Taiwan issue and would likely intervene into the Taiwan situation. Thus a military conflict between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait would become a military confrontation between the United States and China, like the cases in 1958 and 1996.

To be sure, neither the United States nor China wants to engage in a large and serious military confrontation. But this does not mean that such a thing cannot happen. Because the war over Taiwan will mainly be a war on the sea and in the air, unlike the Korean War in the 1950s, China will not have an advantage in a fight with America over the Taiwan Strait. China's most capable weapons will be missiles, a few submarines, and fighters. And if the two sides cannot control their conflict and escalate to a large scale of military fighting, America will mainly use its aircraft carriers and combat planes from Japan, Guam, and other places in the West Pacific to attack China's forces engaging against Taiwan. Then China may feel the need to use its missiles to attack American aircraft carriers. And when or if China succeeds in hitting

American aircraft carrier(s) in the West Pacific Ocean, the United States may find it necessary to attack those Chinese missile bases on China's soil. Such an attack would be perceived by the Chinese as action directly attacking China, not just protecting Taiwan. Then China might use missiles and other weapons to launch a large scale attack against U.S. forces in Asia and the Pacific, including military bases in Japan and Guam. And when the United States attacks places other than missile bases in China in retaliation or by "mistake," China will have no choice but to use nuclear weapons to attack American soil in retaliation, including Honolulu, the West, and even the East Coasts of the United States.

That is certainly the worst scenario, and China's nuclear deterrence strategy is to try to prevent such a situation from taking place. Or in other words, China's strategy is to deter Americans from using military forces, conventional and nuclear, to attack China. And if Americans attack China's soil in the Taiwan situation, then that means a war between the United States and China. And when China's land is seriously attacked by Americans, China would use its weapons capable of attacking American soil in retaliation. And beside nuclear and strategic weapons, China does not and will not have other weapons that can reach and cause serious damage on American soil.

China's strategic force is preparing for such a worst case, and it tells Americans that if they want to attack China, their own land would be the target of retaliation. And if Americans do not like to see their soil being attacked, they had better not think about attacking China, even in a military conflict situation over Taiwan. That is the function of China's strategic forces against a strategic power, deterring such a power from using and threatening to use military forces against China.

## THE LONG-TERM AND BIGGEST STRATEGIC CHALLENGE: MAJOR POWERS AND THEIR RELATIONS

Asia is in a dynamic situation in the early part of the 21st century. Both Japan and China are "rising," and both of these risings pose challenges to each other and to other countries in the region. China is rising in its economic and military capabilities, maybe also in its demands. And Japan is "rising" in its demands in Asia and the world to be as a "normal nation," and a "normal power." Until now, the "rising demand" from Japan seemed to be acceptable and even desirable to American strategic thinking, especially to the Bush administration, but it also poses some challenges to the United States, such as the demand to be a permanent member of United Nations (UN) Security Council. Besides the rise of China and Japan, the United States has recently increased its military spending dramatically and has enhanced its military buildup in East Asia and the Western Pacific, which has caused great concern to the Chinese at least.

### The Rising Japan and Its Challenges.

Domestic structural change has been profound in Japan, with a generational change of both the leadership and the general public. Gone is the World War II generation of leadership and population who had some experience during the war and had a sense of guilt about the war. The new generation of Japanese leadership and population wants to "forget" the war, to put the war totally behind them. They think enough is enough, 60 years is enough to "apologize," and Japan should get rid of the shadow of the war, including the

Japanese constitution, and the restrictions set by the constitution and the outcome of the war. They want to see Japan become a totally normal country, a beautiful country, a country with national pride and normal power, just as other countries and powers in the world. Therefore, Japan is also "rising," and a new Japan is emerging.

Japan may increase its military force substantially and go beyond the bilateral framework with the United States in its search for a bigger role in Asia and in the world, and become a much stronger military power again, even a nuclear power. As the world's second largest economy and one of the most advanced technologies, Japan certainly has the economic, financial, and technological capabilities to substantially expand its military power when it feels the need to do so. Japan may become a much stronger military power when it feels it is "normal" to do so, or to develop a "normal" military capability to match its overall "normal" status: to become a "major military power" when it realizes its goal to become a normal major power in Asia and in the world. It may also feel the need to react to the military development of China as China's military power is consistently rising. And it may have to increase its military power substantially when or if it has suspicions about American security protection.

Japan now is on the way to becoming a "political power" in Asia and in the world, after it became an economic power 20 or 30 years ago. And when or after it believes it has become a regional and global political power, then Japan may also want to become a major military power, a much stronger one than it is today. Currently Japan does not have that strategy; however, it may have it when the situation changes in Asia in the future.

The possibility of Japan becoming a greater military power has been noticed by some Chinese and American as well as Japanese observers. In a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Mr. Eugene A. Matthews wrote concerning the December 18, 2001, North Korean spy ship event, "The fact that Tokyo was suddenly willing to use force suggested a major shift in the attitudes of the Japanese about their country and its defense." The "rising nationalism has taken hold in one of America's closest allies. This development could have an alarming consequence, namely, the rise of a militarized, assertive, and nuclear-armed Japan. . . . Japan clearly is moving in a different direction."[1]

Matthews sees that resentment of shifting attention to China, coupled with strategic tensions with China, has strengthened the hand of Japanese nationalists who think their country should once more possess the military power to rival that of its neighbors. The lack of recognition of Japan at international institutions struck many Japanese as profoundly unjust—and led some to wonder whether military rearmament might be one way to help their country get the respect it lacks and deserves. Matthews cited the words of Shinichi Kitaoka, a law professor at the University of Tokyo, "Remilitarization is indeed going on."[2]

When Shinzo Abe was about to take office as Japan's Prime Minister, *The New York Times* and other news media published many articles and reports on the rise of Japanese nationalism represented by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his successor, Shinzo Abe. According to *The New York Times*, Mr. Abe intends that Japanese "take pride in their country . . . and promote the ideal of a proud and independent Japan."[3] Mr. Abe has a big vision for the future of Japan. "He has vowed to push through a sweeping education bill, strengthening the notion of patriotism in public classrooms in a way

not seen since the fall of Imperial Japan, and to rewrite Japan's pacifist constitution to allow the country to again have an official and flexible military." "The rise of Abe, an unabashed nationalist set to be Japan's youngest post postwar prime minister and its first to be born after the conflict, underscores a profound shift in thinking that has been shaped by those threats."[4] "Rather than getting praised for wrestling a good round of sumo under the rules that foreign countries make, we should join in the making of the rules," Abe said in a televised debate in September 2006, "I believe I can create a new Japan with a new vision."[5]

In Abe's latest book, *Toward a Beautiful Country*, Japan's new leader casts doubt on the legitimacy of the Tokyo war crimes tribunal that convicted Japan's wartime leaders.

> Abe has crafted a comparatively ambitious vision. Although he is likely to maintain Koizumi's emphasis on the U.S.-Japan alliance as the basis of national defense, he has also suggested he wants Japan to be a more equal partner . . . he will strive for a version of Washington's relationship with Britain, which closely cooperates with the U.S. military but acts on its own as it sees fit.[6]

"Japan must be a country that shows leadership and that is respected and loved by the countries of the world," Mr. Abe said in his first news conference as prime minister. "I want to make Japan a country that shows its identity to the world."[7] He told reporters that one goal of his administration was to revise Japan's pacifist constitution to permit a full-fledged military. Mr. Abe speaks forcefully on security issues and on the need for Japan to have a large voice in global affairs.[8] "Abe recognizes that Japan can no longer be the country it has been," said Ichita Tamamoto, a Liberal

Democratic Party (LDP) legislator and close Abe ally.[9]

Another *New York Times* article states that "Mr. Abe calls for taking Japan in a more assertive direction . . . revising the Constitution to allow Japan to possess full-fledged armed forces."[10] The article notes that Japan "began adding weapons that once would have been unthinkable, including Japan's first spy satellite, a troop transport ship now under construction that experts say could serve as a small aircraft carrier, and aerial equipment that would allow Japanese fighter jets to refuel in midair to reach North Korea and other countries."[11]

**The Rise of China and Its Challenges**.

China's domestic structural change is very much in the arenas of economy and of the growing nationalist sense of its leadership and general public led by economic growth and success. The Chinese recognized and admired Japanese economic and technological success when Chinese opened their eyes to the outside world in the early stages of reform in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the consistently rapid economic growth and success of China since the early 1980s have increased the confidence of all the Chinese, while at the same time Japan did not move ahead in the entire decade of the 1990s. Then the Chinese leadership and general public started to feel that they not only needed to be, but also were able to be, tougher toward Japan on a number of issues between the two countries.

And if the trends, problems, and challenges are not managed properly, something may go seriously wrong in the future when China and Japan are in the era of dynamic changes. China may dramatically increase its military capability and engage in an arms race with

Japan, or even with the United States to some degree in Asia and in the world, and thus change the balance of power system dramatically in the region. Right now or until now, China does not or has not engaged in too much of a military buildup in the era of rapid economic growth and increase in economic and technological power. Although China has increased its military spending at a double-digit rate for more than decade, the quantity of its military weapons systems has not increased tremendously. China has increased the numbers of its nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) slowly and gradually, with only a few more weapons today than 20 years ago. Conventionally, China has developed certain types of its own fighters, submarines, and surface ships, and purchased several submarines, destroyers, and about 100 fighters from Russia, but the overall military buildup has not been dramatic and has not caused shock to the region.

The Chinese leadership and government have made a decision to maintain a basic strategic position of "not engaging in an arms race" with the United States or any country in Asia and the world. China has not increased its military capability too much and will not try to engage in an arms race for the following reasons:

First, it perceives its security environment positively. Because China's relations with the United States, Japan, Russia, India, and others have been basically sound or normal, China has not perceived a threat to its national security for decades. In any case, it is the Taiwanese independence movement that causes the threat to China's national sovereignty, security, and unity. Second, China has been focusing on economic development and does not feel it needs to increase its

military power dramatically. Third, it does not want to challenge or compete with the United States in Asia and in the world because the United States does not challenge China's interests and influence in Asia and in the world, except on the Taiwan issue.

However, China may change its national strategy in the future. First, it has more resources to increase its military buildup dramatically. Economically speaking, China today and in the future is in the position of the former Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s in that it has the economic and financial resources to engage in a sort of arms race with Japan or the United States. Second, besides this capacity, China may feel it needs to do much more in its military modernization if and when it changes its assessment on the security environment, and/or sees that Japan or the United States has both the capability and will to threaten China's security and role in Asia and in the world. China may feel it needs to "react" to the rise of military power and the military tendency of Japanese policy in order to keep the military balance or some superiority vis-á-vis Japan in Asia. Third, China may need a much stronger military capability to compete with the Americans if its nationalism goes to the stage of challenging the American status and role in Asia or in the world, or if the United States adopts a comprehensive containment strategy toward the rising China.

**The Challenge of Sino-Japanese Relations in Asia**.

The fundamental structural change between China and Japan is the changing balance of power between the two Asian giants. China and Japan have been major powers and great civilizations in Asia for thousands of years. And for roughly two or three thousand years,

until the late 18th century, China was stronger than Japan, and Japan was in no position to challenge or "invade" China. Thus the balance of power structure was clear. But since Japan took a kind of reform and openness in the middle to late 19th century, Japan started to develop much faster than China and by the end of the 19th century had became the only industrialized nation in Asia, while China remained an agricultural state and was far behind.

Then for a period of a little more than a hundred years from the late 19th century until recently, Japan was clearly stronger than China in almost every respect: economic, technological, military, and political. The result of the changed balance of power was the wars between the two Asian giants, and China lost almost every war it fought with Japan during the 100 years, including the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War, when China lost Taiwan to Japanese colonialization for half a century until the end of World War II in 1945.

Now the historical balance of power between China and Japan changes again. It is true that today's Japan is still stronger than China in some major areas of national power: economic, science and technology, military hardware, and management. But China is catching up rapidly, and the Japanese also believe that sooner or later the Chinese will overtake Japan at least in terms of economic size. And if one uses UN or World Bank figures of purchasing power parity (PPP), China has surpassed Japan in economic size since 1993. Now many Japanese believe that if current trends continue, China may overtake Japan in gross domestic product (GDP) to become the largest economy in Asia and the second largest economy in the world in roughly 10 years.

These aforementioned domestic and bilateral structural changes shift the foundation of bilateral

relations between the two Asian giants and also everything that is based on that foundation including the mentality, identity, sense, and national pride of the peoples of the two nations. Thus these domestic and structural transformations are causing changes in the national strategies and policies of both countries. These structural changes are continuing and may last for another 10 to 15 years, which will be a period of great readjusting and instability for the governments and general publics of the two countries.

In the coming decades of the 21st century, Japan, the United States, and other countries in Asia will face a rising China; China, the United States, and other nations in Asia will face a rising Japan, at least in its demand to be a "normal country" and a "normal power" in Asia and in the world, including greater military capabilities, even possibly a nuclear capability. And the United States and other nations will face the rise of both China and Japan, even in different arenas, in addition to the rise of India, and perhaps of Russia to a certain degree.

China and Japan may engage in a strategic competition and confrontation in Asia and in the world. China and Japan have been the two major and most powerful countries in Asia for thousands of years. Even though Japan is relatively smaller in territory compared to China, India, Indonesia, and some other countries in the region, its population was the second largest for long time in East Asia, next only to that of China, and now is the third largest next to Indonesia's. Japan's economy has been stronger than China's and has been the strongest in Asia for more than 100 years, and its technology has been much more advanced than that of any other country in Asia.

China has been the largest country in terms of land size and population. It is one of the greatest civilizations

and has enjoyed greater cultural influence in Asia for a thousand years. It used to be stronger than Japan in terms of economy and technology for most of the previous history, but has lagged behind in the past 100 years. Now China is catching up. It might be only a question of time for China to catch up with the size of the Japanese economy and even bypass it. Chinese technology is also getting closer to that of Japan's, even though the gap is still very large. China's military power is quantitatively stronger than that of Japan, and it enjoys greater political influence than Japan in Asia and in the world.

Thus in the next one or two decades of the 21st century, Asia will have two almost equal powerful giants. China and Japan will compete in economic and technological strengths, roles, and influence in Asia and in the world. As Professor Kent E. Calder sees it, "As in the case of Anglo-German naval competition a century ago, technology, regional transition, and domestic politics all deepen the prospect of serious conflict between Japan and China today, in ways that economic interdependence alone cannot resolve."[12]

The possibility of strategic competition and confrontation is driven by complicated factors between the two Asian giants. First, the modern history of the past 100 years has left fear and distrust between the two societies. The Chinese always fear that Japan may once again threaten and cause damage to China and other Asian countries if it has the capability and sees the chance to do so. The Japanese perceive China as a historical dominating power in Asia and, since it is not democratic, undemocratic China might pose a serious threat to Japan when it becomes more economically and militarily powerful in the future. Second, as two great Asian powers, both China and Japan want to

play a major role in Asia, but so far there has been no regional arrangement or system that ensures the regional role of both countries. Therefore, each feels it needs to struggle for the role, and without an accepted system or arrangement, a power struggle is always a zero-sum contest.

Competition is both inevitable and positive in the economic and technology areas. However, if the two countries compete strategically without a stable and manageable framework, then the political and strategic competition can turn into a zero-sum game, just like the strategic competition between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the Cold War era. And this kind of competition is not only negative and destructive, it is also dangerous. There is a danger of serious military conflict between China and Japan over disputed islands and resources, or incidents stemming from the engagement in military activities in the East China Sea and Western Pacific Ocean. Some sorts of disputes, like many territorial disputes between nations, are normal or inevitable. However, in an overall confrontational relationship, small disputes can cause big uncertainties and crises, such as the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese border disputes in the 1960s and 1980s.

And if Sino-Japanese relations go seriously wrong, then the two countries will not lack for problems that could trigger big conflicts and crises. Those disputes over islands, Exclusive Economic Zones, and resources can become emotional events between the two nations. And the Taiwan issue can become more serious than previous historical or territorial confrontations if Japan decides to follow the American model and involve itself more and more in Taiwan and cross-Strait relations; or to do more either bilaterally with the United States

or unilaterally in developing political, military, and security relations with Taiwan. China may not be able to attack American soil when the latter attacks China over the Taiwan conflict, but it is easier for China to engage in a serious attack on Japan if the latter uses military means to protect Taiwan and attacks China or Chinese forces.

There has been growing concern over increasing Japanese involvement in the Taiwan issue. The Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Liu Jianchao, told a news conference on January 5, 2007, that China has "grave concern" about the Japanese report that the United States and Japan will discuss a contingency plan in case of a crisis situation arising in areas around Japan, including the Taiwan Strait. The Kyodo News Agency report quoted several sources familiar with Japan-U.S. military cooperation as saying that the two sides have reached a consensus on the necessity for such a contingency plan and will soon begin discussing the details. The two countries have put Taiwan as a "common strategic objective" and are now working on a joint war plan for the Taiwan Straits.[13] When the two countries continue the trend of increasing military activities in the East China Sea and Western Pacific Ocean, then the chance will be increased for the two navies and air forces to have some incidents, such as those already having taken place between the United States and China there (the incident involving a U.S. EP3 reconnaissance plane in 2001 is one of them).

The harsh strategic competition between China and Japan may block the development of Asian economic and security cooperation. Asia is a large, complicated, and diverse place, and the long-term peace and development of Asia depend much more on regional cooperation and integration, and cannot depend on

one power or just a few greater powers forever. First, good relationships among major powers are not easy to make and to keep. Second, most countries would not accept a major power's dominated peace forever, they want a regional arrangement where each country plays its legitimate and proper role, just as in a democratic domestic system in a nation.

A Sino-Japanese strategic competition and confrontation would heighten the difficulty of further Asian integration, if not make it impossible. Without one of the two countries, any economic or security cooperation in Asia will be meaningless. And regional integration will go nowhere when countries in the region face a choice between the two regional giants.

The closer bilateral relations of the United States with either one of the two Asian giants may end with weakening the relationship with the other, and that will generate huge difficulties in promoting American interests and its agenda in Asia and in the world. When China and Japan engage in strategic rivalry and the United States decides to support one side, then the Sino-Japanese competition will expend to Sino-Japan/U.S. rivalry in Asia and in the world. In that situation, such as it was in the Cold War era in the 1950s and 1960s, surely China would suffer more than either the United States or Japan, but American interests and its agenda would be also damaged seriously.

> The ultimate danger is that Japanese diplomatic isolation in the Western Pacific, coupled with the clear security challenges that Tokyo faces, and its ongoing internal political shifts, could drive Japan either toward an assertive and counter-productive unilateralism, or toward an unhealthy, overly militarized variant of the U.S.-Japan alliance that will greatly intensify tension within Asia.[14]

Others also see that it is not in Washington's interest for Asia's two most powerful and influential states to be locked in an emotionally charged, deteriorating relationship that could disrupt regional growth and stability and even increase the chance that a new cold war would develop in the region. A deepening Sino-Japanese rivalry would severely limit U.S. flexibility and might eventually drag the United States into a confrontation, or even a conflict, with China, especially if Tokyo became even more closely tied to Washington. More broadly, an intensified rivalry could divide Asia by driving a wedge between the United States and Japan on one side, and China and much of the rest of Asia on the other.[15]

**American Military Buildup in East Asia/Western Pacific and Its Challenges**.

No American believes that their military buildup in general and in the Asia-Pacific region in particular would cause concern because of the implications for Asian security. But to the Chinese at least, American moves are the biggest factor that shape the regional security situation, and these negative moves pose the greatest challenge to national and regional security in Asia.

To many Chinese observers and strategists, the United States is not the sole military superpower in Asia and in the world, but is also a rapidly growing military power. Its military spending, although it already accounts for half of the total world military spending, has almost doubled in a few years from the Clinton administration's roughly U.S.$300 billion to more than $600 billion this year, including the expenditure on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is understandable for

others that the United States has reason to spend more on the military because of September 11, 2001 (9/11), and the war on terror. However, the Chinese worry that the increasing military spending is not solely for the wars on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in other areas such as the Asia-Pacific region.

What worries the Chinese most is the U.S. missile defense and other military buildup in the Asia-Pacific region and its "contingency plan" for war over Taiwan, unilaterally or bilaterally with Japan, that have been announced in the Pentagon's *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) and other documents in recent years. The 2006 QDR by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has met with a strong negative reaction from the Chinese government, military, academics, and news media. The Chinese in particular disagree with the following strategic and "threat" statement about China: "Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages absent U.S. counter strategies."[16] Both the American and Chinese news media reported or interpreted the statement as "the United States identifies China as the major long-term threat," and the Chinese take it very seriously when they see that DoD regards China as the biggest threat to the United States in the future in its formal official document.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman publicly criticized the QDR as promoting the "China threat" and hostility towards China. Mr. Kong Quan, a Chinese spokesman, criticized the report on February 7, 2006, for unreasonably attacking China's normal defense construction, interfering in China's internal affairs, and promoting the "China military threat,"

which is a misleading opinion. Thus the Chinese government opposes the report firmly and undertook serious contacts with the U.S. Government on the matter.[17] Chinese military officers, academic scholars, and commentators all published intensively after the publication of the QDR and attacked the Pentagon's strategic assessment of a "China threat." To the Chinese, the QDR represents the negative and hard-line forces in the American government, military, and society that take a confrontational attitude and approach towards China, identifying China as a threat and enemy of the United States today and in the future.

The Chinese cannot agree nor do they understand why the Pentagon, or at least the civilian part of DoD, foresees China as the "major threat" to the U.S. military and the United States. The Chinese see that, in terms of capacity, only the Russian military is and will be able to threaten the U.S. military today and in the foreseeable future. The Chinese military does not have the potential to pose a threat to the American military even if it wanted to. Therefore, the Chinese see the Pentagon's report as totally groundless and designed intentionally to cause confrontation between the United States and China and make trouble between China and other countries in Asia.

The *China Daily*, an official English newspaper published in Beijing, reported and commented upon the QDR more moderately than other official news media in China. It noticed that the QDR is the first released report of its kind since the United States declared its global war on terror in 2001. Therefore, it is not surprising that antiterrorism features so prominently in the document. In comparison with the two previous reviews, this one, for the first time, calls for shifting strategic priorities from conventional wars

to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the so-called "countries at strategic crossroads." However, the changes were seen by many analysts as an adjustment and refinement process, rather than a fundamental overhaul. While the new review underlines changes that reflect the ongoing war in Iraq and the threat of terrorism, the essentials of U.S. military doctrine are left largely intact. Obviously, the protracted war in Iraq and the ongoing worldwide campaign against terrorism have changed much of the U.S. military thinking, and the new review is full of the impact of these events.[18]

The Chinese military, government, and expert community also worries about planned deployments following the "China threat" assessment. The Chinese have noticed in recent years, and the QDR states clearly, that the American military continues to increase heavily its strategic naval and air forces in the Asia-Pacific region. Great numbers of aircraft carriers, strategic bombers, nuclear submarines, new aircraft, and other equipment have been and will continue to be deployed in the Asia-Pacific region and closer to China. Mr. Xing Benjian, an editor of the *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*), pointed out that the QDR proposes to deploy six of the reduced total of 11 aircraft carriers, and 60 percent of the total of 70 nuclear submarines in the Pacific Ocean.[19] The Chinese wonder who is the target of those increasing military forces. The answer is not North Korea, but China, because the United States does not need so large a scale of military forces to deal with the Korean situation now and in the future.

*Renmin Ribao* published Mr. Li Xuejiang's commentary on the QDR, emphasizing that the U.S. military is planning to develop power projection forces and long-range attack weapons in the Asia-Pacific

region, including establishing an air and underwater based missile defense system. He pointed out that the QDR proposes a "balancing strategy," to stress the alliances and friends of the United States surrounding China and enhancing their military capabilities so as to contain China.[20]

Admiral Yang Yi, director of the Institute of Strategic Studies of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) National Defense University, published an article in the *Global Times* arguing that the United States needs to take the rationale of preventing China's rise as the excuse to maintain its military hegemony. To his understanding, Deputy Secretary Robert B. Zoellick's "responsible stakeholder"[21] and the Pentagon's "the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States" reflect two sides of the American "hedge strategy" toward China.[22]

At the same time, Admiral Yang points out that the QDR shows that so far, the United States has not taken China as a fighting target. He argues that because of strategic alarm and prevention, the United States sometimes takes offensive measures as tactics in its military deployment targeting China while actually taking a preventive and defensive strategic posture. The QDR's definition of China as the "greatest potential competitor" does not mean that the United States has taken China as a fighting foe, nor does that mean that the two countries are due to engage in military confrontation.[23]

General Luo Yuan, Deputy Director-General of the World Military Department of the PLA's Academy of Military Science, interprets U.S. activities as a strategic move. He believes the QDR indicates that as the war on terrorism has completed its first stage, the American strategic intention to move toward Asia. The

United States now is encouraging Japan to relieve itself from military restrictions and wooing India and other countries. All of these actions are intended to constrain and slow down the pace of China's development. The rapid rise of China has brought to Americans a strong sense of crisis, thus the United States looks at China with worrisome eyes in its QDR, and its China Military Capacity reports intend to frighten China from challenging American traditional military superiority.[24]

General Luo sees the QDR as proposing a strategic shift of American military priority from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This indicates that while it still pays attention to the war on terror, the United States does not ignore the middle- and long-term powers, including China, India, and Russia, whose rise may have some impact upon America. The QDR states that the United States would not allow any power to become a dominant force in regional and global settings. The United States will ensure that all the emerging powers such as China, India, and Russia play a constructive role and become responsible stakeholders in the international system.[25]

According to General Qian Lihua, deputy director general of the PLA's Foreign Military Affairs' Office who accompanied General Guo Boxiong on his visit to the United States in July 2006, the Chinese side frankly expressed its view on the Pentagon's China Military Report published in June 2006. China does not agree with the content of the report and views many parts of the report as not being based on facts, thus it is groundless, especially the conclusion that the expanding Chinese military capacity has destroyed the regional balance in Asia.[26]

## TERRORIST, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND OTHER NONTRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

As Asia and the world are increasingly being globalized, mobilized, and integrated, new issues, tasks, and challenges are emerging to unexpected degrees. The issues and challenges that the countries in Asia face are:

1. The spread of terrorism in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Central and South Asia, and Southeast Asia.
2. Environmental protection: Asia and the world are facing the deterioration of natural conditions through global warming; drying and decreasing water sources; and air and water pollution.
3. Energy supply and new energies; and the financial security of the international system.
4. Integration of different cultures and civilizations and the relationships between different religions and ethnic groups such as Islam in Asia and in the world.
5. Diseases such as AIDS, SARS, and bird flu and other widely and quickly spreading public health problems in Asia and in the world.
6. Immigration, smuggling, illegal drugs, transnational crimes, and other law enforcement issues.

**The Three Forces**.

Since the middle 1990s, the Chinese government has defined "the three forces" as the major threat to China and Asia's peace and stability, including to its regime. These forces are separatists, extremists, and terrorists. Separatist forces are Taiwan's independence movement

and separatist organizations and activities in Xinjiang and Tibet. They are the number one, two, and three major threats to China's security, sovereignty, territory integrity, and national unity. Since the end of the Soviet threat, the Chinese government clearly regards the separatist forces in Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet as the major threats to China in the post-Cold War era, including in the early decades of the 21st century. So after the Cold War, the major security threat to China comes from inside, not outside of the country. This is the fundamental difference between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. Separatist forces are always extremists, and they use extremist thinking, religion, slogans, and methods to threaten Chinese security and national unity. Therefore, extremist ideology, religion, propaganda, and organizations are seen by the Chinese government as serious threats to social and political stability, regime security, and the national security of China.

Inside and outside China, separatists and extremists have tended to use terrorist methods to pursue their goals during the last decade and now. So China has a common understanding with the international community on terrorism and the war against international terrorism. The major terrorist groups targeting China come from the same area of international terrorism: Central, South, and Western Asia. "The Three Forces" are not only the long-term threats to China in the post-Cold War era, they also may become more serious to China in the future, including when China holds the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

## CONCLUSION: A STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

The 21st century is an era of dynamic change and development in Asia, with great opportunities and challenges. Challenge does not necessary mean problems, threats, or conflicts. It means the issues we need to pay attention to in order to find ways to manage these issues. We are living in an era of a globalized, integrated, and interdependent world. Zero-sum games no longer work. Therefore, countries in East Asia, especially the major powers such as the United States, China, and Japan, need to work together to manage the challenges facing them. Communication, consultation, compromise, and cooperation are the only ways to manage the challenges and serve the interests of all of the countries.

There are existing forms and processes of bilateral and multilateral engagement and cooperation among countries in East Asia, including among the three major powers of the United States, China, and Japan. But they are not enough. Countries, especially the three powers, need more serious and systemic efforts to reduce suspicion, mistrust, and conflict among them, and build sustainable and solid relationships among them. Self-restraint, transparency, and strategic assurance on strategic areas, including military buildup and modernization, are needed by all the major powers. Everybody needs to work toward a peaceful and prosperous Asia, not an unstable and conflicted region in the 21st century. It is understandable and acceptable for all the powers to build up and to prepare for the worst case, especially in the military sense, but it would be dangerous and destructive for any power to go along the "worst case scenario" direction in their strategy, policy, and relations with other powers in the region of Asia.

## ENDNOTES - CHU

1. Eugene A. Matthews, "Japan's New Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, pp. 74-76.

2. *Ibid*., pp. 81, 83, 87.

3. Anthony Faiola, "Japan's Abe, Poised to Lead, Offers Nation Vision of Pride," *The New York Times*, September 19, 2006, p. A01.

4. *Ibid*.

5. *Ibid*.

6. *Ibid*.

7. Martin Fackler, "New Premier Seeks a Japan With Muscle and a Voice," *The New York Times*, September 27, 2006.

8. *Ibid*.

9. *Ibid*, p. 3.

10. Martin Fackler, "Japan Now Seems Likely to Rally Behind New Prime Minister's Call for a Stronger Military," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2006.

11. *Ibid*.

12. Kent E. Calder, "Stabilizing the US-Japan-China Strategic Triangle," *Asia-Pacific Policy Paper Series*, Washington, DC: The Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, 2006, p. 2.

13. Qin Jize, "Japan-U.S. Plan Causes 'Grave Concern'," *China Daily*, January 5, 2007.

14. Calder, p. 17.

15. Minxin Pei and Michael Swaine, "Simmering Fire in Asia: Averting Sino-Japanese Strategic Conflict," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief*, No. 44, November 2005, p. 7.

16. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 29, available at *www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/qdr20060203.pdf*, accessed July 23, 2007.

17. Xinhua: "China Firmly Opposes QDR's Overstatement about 'China Threat'," *Renmin Ribao*, February 8, 2006, p. 4.

18. "Major US Military Strategy Blueprint Changes Priorities," *China Daily,* February 8, 2006, p. 11.

19. Xing Benjian: "The U.S. Publishes Defense Review Report," *Renmin Ribao*, February 6, 2006, p. 7.

20. Li Xuejiang: "Unharmonious Voice in the Sino-US Relations," *Renmin Ribao*, February 10, p. 3.

21. Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" available at *www.state.gov/s/d/rem/53682.htm*, accessed July 23, 2007.

22. Yang Yi: "China's Military Modernization Should not be Constrained by the United States," *Global Times*, February 10, 2006, p. 11.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Luo Yuan and Zhang Shuangpeng, "American Security Strategy and Dilemmas," *China Review*, No. 3, 2006, p. 91.

25. *Ibid*.

26. "Militaries of China and the U.S. Have Reached Six-Point Agreement," *Wen Hui Bao*, July 21, 2006, p. 8.

# SECURITY CHALLENGES TO THE UNITED STATES IN NORTHEAST ASIA: LOOKING BEYOND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SIX-PARTY TALKS

**Gilbert Rozman**

The February 13, 2007, agreement at the Six-Party Talks may be remembered as a transformative event for security relations in Northeast Asia. Instead of North Korea backing down in the face of intense U.S. pressure as demanded in the first stage of this nuclear crisis, a process of multilateralism was accelerated in which the United States accepted a compromise encouraged by China, South Korea, and Russia, leaving Japan little choice but to concur and the future of the North's nuclear plans still to be tested. Five working groups each began to grope for a new agenda fraught with wide-ranging implications for regional security. These developments are interpreted in the light of unresolved postwar issues as well as a series of challenges still facing U.S. foreign policy in the region.

The security situation in Northeast Asia has changed abruptly decade by decade since the end of World War II. We can expect nothing less in the coming decade. China's rise is continuing, Russia's readjustment proceeds amidst uncertain energy prices, Japan's ambivalence between realism and revisionism in "reentering Asia" remains unresolved (as it leans on the United States but also explores regionalism in some form), and, above all, the two sides of the Korean peninsula are maneuvering for advantage, raising aloft symbols of reunification while also seeking support from the various regional powers. Despite

the exceptional economic dynamism and integration in the region, an easy path to stability cannot be expected.[1] Yet, in the face of continued threat potential from North Korea and the rapidly rising military modernization of China, we also would likely err if we anticipated a sharp polarization with many countries either bandwagoning with China or balancing against it. Instead, we should prepare for rivalries and coalitions as befitting multipolarity in Asia coexisting with global unipolarity. A new framework must cope with the legacy of earlier attempts to reshape security in Asia's core region of Northeast Asia.

In the course of 7 decades, bilateral relations in Northeast Asia have changed more frequently than anywhere else on the globe. Sino-Russian, Sino-U.S., Russo-U.S., and Sino-Japanese relations have fluctuated, as has the situation on the Korean peninsula since the cold war. Relative consistency in U.S.-Japanese and Russo-Japanese ties may remove them from depictions of flux, but their impact in driving regional realignment has been rising. Taking bilateral ties as the building blocks of regional security and viewing the Six-Party Talks as the incubator for bilateral and multilateral strategic rethinking, I review unresolved security problems in the region linked to six possible challenges to U.S. leadership: (1) Sino-U.S. rivalry, spilling into an arms race and the threat of war over Taiwan, despite a cooperative spirit in dealing with North Korea; (2) Russo-U.S. rivalry, extending, as before, across many regions and reviving the triangle in which Japan sides firmly with the United States; (3) Sino-Russian strategic ties, accelerating China's rise as a military power with secure energy resources inclusive of those from Central Asia; (4) North Korean belligerence, retaining nuclear weapons and gaining a measure of acceptance by

neighboring states; (5) South Korean loss of trust in the U.S. alliance and moves toward closer ties with China than Japan; and (6) Sino-Japanese rivalry, fostering divisiveness that alienates Japan from other neighbors as well. A review of the past 60 years since the end of World War II and Japan's colonialism sets the stage to view these challenges.

## THE POSTWAR SECURITY LEGACY IN NORTHEAST ASIA

In the 1940s Japanese colonialism was replaced by rival U.S. and Soviet spheres of control with renewed potential for confrontation. Yet, the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty did little to resolve lingering consequences and emotions from Japan's aggression: the territorial disputes, acknowledgments of guilt and compensation, and normalization of relations with the main victim nations. A half century later, Koizumi Junichiro's annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine followed by Abe Shinzo's preoccupation with making Japan a "beautiful nation" (even contemplating the act of rescinding its apology for forcing "comfort women" to be sex slaves as it focused on Constitutional revision intended for revisionist as well as realist aims) rekindled emotions. Having, at times of weakness and urgency, agreed to normalization without gaining satisfaction on historical justice, South Korea and China now see North Korea's pursuit of normalization with Japan as the last chance. Thus the working group established for this purpose has an emotional element of broader significance than the abductions over which Japanese obsess. Japan's role in Korean reunification and room to maneuver over regional security cannot be divorced from how it handles normalization with the North amidst troubled

memories. The United States would be short-sighted to think that a Japan unable to make headway in healing these wounds would become an anchor for regional stability or even a satisfied junior partner.

In the early 1950s the Sino-Soviet alliance working with North Korea threatened to spread communism by force to South Korea or beyond. Later, the North refused to acknowledge its invasion, and the alliance turned into a schism at great cost to the two main communist states without clarifying how their realist interests can be separated from ideological ones. Despite normalization between Beijing and Moscow in 1989 and close consultations over North Korea since the North-South summit of 2000, the aims of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership and a revived triangle with the North remain obscure.[2] The working group headed by Russia on forging a regional security framework not only must address the issue of how these three interact with the United States and its two allies, but also to what extent do communist alliance ties of a half-century past serve national interests of a new era. One possibility is that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will expand to include North Korea, as a new conservative administration in Seoul reaffirms the Trilateral Coordination Organizing Group (TCOG, comprising Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul) and shifts from an indirect ally of Japan to a three-way alliance. Much more likely is North Korea as well as South Korea exploring balancing roles among the four great powers active in the region, while China and Russia recognize that their strategic partnership, however essential for leverage, does not mean close cooperation on the future of the peninsula. In the Six-Party Talks and in facing U.S. unilateralism and the recent U.S.-Japan alliance, Russia and China have found common

cause, which will continue against memories of how much they each lost by ignoring their realist interests for decades, but an improving North Korean situation will reveal the limits of their current realist consensus. For the United States, gaining maneuverability with North Korea should be useful for putting some brakes on advancing Sino-Russian ties, but that is only one of various possible outcomes of the search for new strategic architecture.

While most eyes were turned to Vietnam in the 1960s, China's nuclear weapons development and assertiveness threatened instability, with Taiwan the ultimate target. The start of the 1970s brought an end to China's aggressive rhetoric and actions, but it did not lead to shared understanding on how China would resolve not only its demand that Taiwan be reunited, but also its thinking that protecting Tibet and Xinjiang requires extending influence in South and Central Asia and that securing Northeast China means sustained support of North Korea despite the latter's continued armed provocations.[3] China has yet to reconcile supporting Pakistan but opposing the Taliban, reviving close ties with Russia but ending its domination in Central Asia, and backing the survival of North Korea even when its actions are destabilizing. The SCO with its observer countries may eventually be tested over the first two issues, with an eye to how the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is doing in Afghanistan and in U.S. bases in Central Asia. As the working group on denuclearization led by China deals with North Korea's persistent threat potential, it will also test how far China has come since the 1960s in making stability the backbone of its regional policy.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, aggressive Soviet behavior from military build-ups and bluster in

Northeast Asia to a Soviet invasion in South Asia and a Soviet-backed invasion in Southeast Asia proved disruptive. With Gorbachev's agreement with U.S. and Chinese demands to pull back on all fronts, this process ended completely. Yet, the Russians did not take long after the collapse of the Soviet Union to revive strategic expectations for influence, if not domination.[4] With high energy prices, these have kept rising. U.S. and Japanese suspicions of Russian intentions are likely to matter less than Chinese and Indian readiness to find some accommodation. The working group led by Russia will also need to balance such contrasting thinking, as the legacy of the cold war proves much more enduring than most expected in the 1990s.

In the second half of the 1980s, problematic relations appeared to be normalized, alleviating security concerns, but consensus on a new regional framework proved to be far less than many assumed. Then the 1990s first nuclear crisis exposed North Korea's risky nuclear gambit, for which the Agreed Framework forged a stopgap solution only.[5] Since the turn of the century, the situation has resumed of the North flexing its military muscle to force change, along with authorities in Moscow opposing U.S. handling of the problem as they aim for a regional order that limits U.S. and Japanese power, China on the spot as the state whose actions impact the adversaries most as it weighs balancing Pyongyang's bellicose ways and Washington's perceived hegemonic designs, and South Korea newly emerged as the foremost advocate for assisting the North to make a soft landing.[6] The February 13, 2007, agreement gave impetus to multilateral bargaining with the South in charge of the working group on economic and energy assistance as well as its being active in reinvigorating the inter-Korean ministerial consultations. With the

inter-Korean summit in October, Republic of Korea (ROK) President Roh Moo-hyun seemed more eager to establish his legacy with Kim Jong-il than to coordinate with the United States in making sure that the North met its commitments. No matter who succeeds him as president, the South will proceed in search of a complex combination of revival, reunification, and regionalism.

In the background of the nuclear crisis was a legacy of inconsistent strategic thinking toward Asia in the Bush-Cheney administration. It began with a strong focus on restraining China as the emerging strategic competitor, then moved to a reduced priority for East Asia in the face of the war on terror, and then shifted to more reliance on the region to solve its own problems as the U.S. position in Iraq and Afghanistan deteriorated.[7] Vice-President Dick Cheney, along with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, sought to keep pressure on China and North Korea, offering few incentives to win their cooperation, while Under Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who had also favored a strong alliance with Japan, realized the need to keep some balance with Chinese ties. In contrast, Armitage's successor, Robert Zoellick, kept his eyes on economic relations and made improving ties with China a priority while he seemed to neglect Japan as several leading experts on it departed and left the Japanese unsure of who was taking their concerns seriously. Moreover, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Chris Hill's preoccupation with resolving the nuclear crisis and more elevated influence than his predecessor, Jim Kelly, made China the focus, while also leaving Japan on the periphery. With attention diverted, high officials divided, and sharply divergent priorities of successive guiding hands, a coherent, pragmatic course to the region could not emerge. The

U.S.-North Korean normalization working group will severely test the coherence of U.S. strategic thinking toward the region, with the North bound to demand a high price for eliminating all of its nuclear weapons (amidst serious doubts that it would actually do so) and delaying until it had extracted maximal concessions, as the other four parties differed on how to proceed.

In addition to assessing North Korea's intentions, these talks will test all bilateral ties in the region. In the working group on denuclearization, the highest priority of the United States, if North Korea fails to meet the benchmarks for declaring and disabling its nuclear weapons assets, China's response will seriously test Sino-U.S. ties, possibly reflecting other aspects of overall relations. In the working group on regional security, which would presumably build on a peace regime to be separately negotiated by the two Koreas, the United States, and China, Moscow's quest over many decades for a multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia may again stumble against Washington's distrust of its intentions and exclusive interest in bilateral alliances, with Japan drawn closely to its side. Along with the working group of the United States and North Korea that will test the former's tolerance of a despised regime and the latter's readiness to abandon belligerence, the other normalization working group of Japan and North Korea will not only test the North's pragmatism in search of economic rewards but also assess Japan's inclination to look beyond the U.S. alliance toward a new push to "reenter Asia" with considerable importance for Sino-Japanese as well as South Korean-Japanese relations. Finally, the group on economic and energy assistance to the North led by the South will determine the basis for progress toward reunification as it shows whether the South can maintain the trust of the United States, China, and Japan.

## CHALLENGES

The challenges faced by the United States are rooted in the history of Northeast Asia. The revival of China's leadership role, Russia's search for influence in support of its far-flung presence, and the impact of Sino-Russian relations were major issues in the cold war era and cannot be expected to lose their importance in the coming decades. North Korea's desperate search for renewed relevancy and South Korea's peripatetic response as well as search for regional balance have suddenly arisen as regional issues along with the rise of Sino-Japanese rivalry, which looms as a driving force of regional instability for decades.

### Challenge 1: The Sino-U.S. Rivalry.

The North Korean nuclear crisis is the best thing that has happened to Sino-U.S. relations during the Bush administration, even better than the move toward cooperation over the war in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001. In January 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell led the U.S. diplomatic appeal to enlist China in resolving the crisis. In August 2003 with the start of the Six-Party Talks, the United States entrusted management of diplomacy to the Chinese. At the critical moment on September 18, 2005, when the fate of the Joint Statement at the fourth round of talks would be decided, the United States yielded to Chinese entreaties. More importantly, after the nuclear test in October 2006, Beijing showed its ire to North Korea, and Washington relied on China in a carrots-and-sticks approach, which saw Washington offer many carrots to Pyongyang with trust that Beijing was ready to apply the sticks if necessary. However divided the United States and China had been on the negotiating tactics

at most rounds of the Six-Party Talks, their deepening experience in close cooperation on a strategic challenge was having increasing spillover effects for this most critical of all bilateral relations in Asia.

While South Korea seemed too generous in rewarding the North and Japan found it hard to stay in step in offering assistance to change the North's behavior, China became the prime object of U.S. efforts to put in place a multistage action plan in which at each step of the way the North's conduct would be carefully measured, and commensurate rewards and punishments allotted. It would be hard to imagine the shift in U.S. policy toward the North in 2007 without not only the U.S. troubles in Iraq and priority for Iran's nuclear program but also newfound appreciation of the prospect that China would steer the fragile process of implementing the vague principles of the Joint Statement through an action plan that would not give license to the North's nuclear ambitions. In the drawn-out process of implementation, it would be difficult to fathom an abrupt move in the United States to contain the rise of a country vital for resolving this danger. Given China's diplomatic boost and positive image from its role, it too was unlikely to undermine this new mood. Even as China's influence rose rapidly in Asia, bilateral ties with the United States improved.[8]

China was ready to serve as the honest broker, insisting that both North Korea and the United States fulfill their obligations in the February deal. After having earlier blamed the United States for failing to negotiate flexibly, China directed unprecedented anger toward the North when it made its belligerent moves in July and October 2006. While seeing a need to keep pressure on the United States to meet its commitments, China's leaders gave assurances that they would insist

that the North undertake the denuclearization to which it had agreed. They were seeking the reputation of a responsible great power guiding the region toward a multilateral future, in which the Six-Party Talks serve as a forerunner, and they would be loathe to lose the respect, stability, and leadership status now at stake. In comparison to the Japanese and Russians, the Chinese were cautiously optimistic that the deal would stick and, at last, they could work constructively with U.S. leaders to face new hurdles. Even when difficulties in transferring funds that had been frozen through U.S. financial sanctions led North Korea to delay closing its nuclear reactor in the spring, China, as well as the United States, stayed on course in looking ahead to progress in implementing the agreement.

The rivalry of the leading challenger for global power and the sole superpower would not diminish because of coordination in dealing with one crisis. Yet, the stakes had risen for working together to calm moves for Taiwan de jure independence and to keep tensions over an enormous trade deficit from becoming the focus of relations, as seemed more likely in a presidential election year. The U.S. need for China would buy time for advancing the strategic dialogue between the two, and Chinese satisfaction from the benefits of the new relations would lead to restraint. As long as the February agreement holds as the basis for more Six-Party Talks, it serves in managing the Sino-U.S. rivalry.

**Challenge 2: The Russo-U.S. Rivalry.**

With Putin's February 2007 speech in Munich attacking U.S. foreign policy, the rivalry between the United States and Russia intensified. Marginalized

in Europe by NATO's expansion and an approach to its economy and human rights at odds with the European Union, Russia has invigorated its ties with Asian states. This has brought it into conflict with the United States in Northeast Asia. Instead of adopting a strategy for the Russian Far East reliant on foreign investment and globalization, Putin has reinserted state control, even using dubious means to oblige international oil companies to renegotiate the terms of their investments in Sakhalin oil and gas. Failing to supply essential information and reassurances for Japanese and other potential foreign investors for the oil pipeline from Taishet in Western Siberia under construction from 2006, Russia may be leaving itself with no other option than to accept China's offer to extend the pipeline from Skovorodino near its border to Daqing rather than the market diversification option of lengthening it to reach all the way to the Pacific coast. Khabarovsk and Vladivostok are increasingly part of a Chinese-centered economic sphere, despite U.S. interest in the 1990s and prospects for Japanese, South Korean, and other foreign involvement to globalize the area. At stake are claims by Russia that after centuries of one-sided strategies toward Asia and the role of the Russian Far East, it now has a pragmatic approach that is working well.[9]

Russian dealings with North Korea under President Vladimir Putin have aroused distrust in the United States. In 2001 when President George W. Bush could not make up his mind about continued support for the Sunshine Policy, Putin was wooing Kim Jong-il by turning the Trans-Siberian Railroad into a red carpet welcoming him to Moscow. After Bush made his "axis of evil" accusations, Putin hosted Kim Jong-il again, this time in Vladivostok. Shortly after the nuclear crisis started with the United States taking a

hard line to force the North's capitulation, Putin sent an emissary to Pyongyang defiantly in search of a compromise. Russia's inclusion in the framework for talks established in the summer of 2003 was at North Korea's request with China's approval, but the United States did not seem to be enthusiastic. By 2006 Russia had a reputation as the most sympathetic to North Korea in the Six-Party Talks. Although it often deferred to China, as in weakening Security Council resolutions in July and October 2006, it was not as successful as China in creating a mood of cooperation with the United States in this process.

In 2007 the potential for disagreement was high on how to implement the deal in the Six-Party Talks. Russia was eager for three things: (1) a multilateral security system in Northeast Asia; (2) a grid that would give it the lead in a regional plan to supply the North's energy needs; and (3) a peace regime that would leave the North Korean regime active as a force reliant on Russia for leverage in regional matters. Would the United States endorse a robust regional security framework, given its strong preference for alliances? Would it welcome Russian control over energy supplies after Russia had pressured countries with energy cutoffs and made energy the cornerstone of state power rather than a privately handled international commodity? And would reunification proceed with Russia gaining influence along with Japan in addition to the two Koreas, China, and the United States as the principals? As bilateral relations were likely to remain troubled over problems elsewhere, Russian-U.S. agreement in Northeast Asia would not be easy.

Moscow's reasoning on the February 2007 deal conflicts with that of the Bush administration: (1) it came as a result of the United States correcting its past

mistaken diplomacy; (2) it is likely to fail because the United States will not fulfill its commitments; (3) the talks serve as a model of multilateralism, applying pressure only in extreme need through unanimous Security Council resolutions and encouraging diplomacy in which officials having good ties to all parties play the decisive role; and (4) at fault is a U.S. worldview that demonizes the North Korean regime in order to justify a strategy of global hegemony. Given this line of reasoning, Russians are inclined to interpret ambiguities in the timing of mutual steps in carrying out the deal as the United States attempts to gain a one-sided advantage. Yet, if the deal sticks and Sino-U.S. ties are stabilized, the Russo-U.S. rivalry here should not be intense.

**Challenge 3: Sino-Russian Cooperation.**

Compounding the problems the United States has with China and Russia individually, it faces a growing strategic partnership with elements of an alliance. Since 1990 the two have been linked by arms sales, licensed production, and technology transfer. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is greatly strengthened as a result, and Russian production lines were maintained through difficult times. China's credibility as a threat to retake Taiwan has risen rapidly, while Russia is restoring its conventional forces to supplement the global reach of its nuclear-armed missiles. Joint military drills, ostensibly under the rubric of the SCO, may suggest readiness to combine forces in a crisis, although there is no particular situation in which that would likely occur.

In the Korean nuclear crisis, China and Russia have consulted closely. They see the South Korean military

as allied to the United States, and North Korea, however unruly, as a bulwark against the extension of U.S. power. Orchestrating a soft landing for the North, they intend to hold the United States and its alliances at a distance. In the first stage of the crisis, there was fear of a U.S. military attack resounding in a war that could spread. Later the impression that the Bush administration was pursuing regime change brought anxiety that pressure would have a similar impact, producing chaos in the North and possible collapse with South Korea extending its authority throughout the peninsula while remaining a U.S. ally. Even a one-sided deal that left the North vulnerable raised concern for its strategic consequences. Sino-Russian cooperation stood for a different outcome.

In 2007 the Six-Party Talks are turning to the possibility of a peace regime on the peninsula. This would replace the armistice signed by China and the United States as well as the North, while establishing a foundation for inter-Korean confidence-building measures. For the first stages at least, Sino-Russian cooperation is likely. Yet, at some point North Korea may again find a way to play on the competing interests of the two. After all, Russia fears both that China will find a way to dominate the Korean peninsula and that its hopes for a coastal corridor from the Russian Far East through the peninsula will be thwarted by a transportation axis that leads through China. Given North Korean wariness about China's future hegemony and possible renewed Japanese competition with China for influence in Northeast Asia, the prospect cannot be excluded that Russia will intensify its diplomacy toward South Korea in conjunction with North Korea. The United States may recognize some benefits in favoring a Russian role independent of

China. Momentum from the February 13 deal could change regional dynamics to limit Sino-Russian ties. Yet, uncertainty that will reinforce those ties is more likely for the next few years.

**Challenge 4: North Korean Belligerence.**

North Korea has been the primary threat to stability in Northeast Asia since 1950. It threatened South Korea with invasion, devastating assault on the Seoul metropolitan area, and acts of terrorism. In the 1990s its development of missiles with ever longer trajectories along with the suspected presence of one or more nuclear weapons left the region on edge, except when progress was achieved on some sort of freeze. In 2002-07 its defiance of international controls on the spread of nuclear weapons, culminating in the test of a nuclear bomb, undermined regional security. The U.S. aim in the working group on denuclearization is to eliminate the nuclear threat and, in the peace regime four-way talks, proceed to confidence-building measures to ensure lasting stability. Yet, complete denuclearization remains only an agreed principle for the final stage of the Six-Party Talks, and, even if they are launched, the four-party talks are unlikely to bring early resolution of all the sources of instability that have accumulated over 60 years.

Accelerated bilateral talks between Washington and Pyongyang at the end of 2006 and the first months of 2007 signal that the latter is intent on reaching a deal with a high payoff for its security and economic recovery and modernization. It wants to achieve a balance to play off multiple powers and to increase its leverage in facing Seoul. Yet, a continued military threat potential of one sort or another is likely to remain an arrow in

its quiver. Ideas about reunification in the two Koreas remain difficult to reconcile. The North's military power is its greatest asset, and it can be expected to hold onto it and even flex it when its position appears to be ignored or weakened. U.S. troops are not likely to be withdrawn from the Korean peninsula under these circumstances for at least the coming decade. Even if the denuclearization working group made progress, it likely would not lead to the removal of all nuclear weapons and production potential from the North for a long time or end any possibility of renewed tensions. Thus, the February 13 agreement, even if it sticks, does not put an end to the challenge of renewed belligerence.

**Challenge 5: South Korean Balancing.**

Through the mid-1990s, South Korea seemed to fit well into the U.S. imagery of a grateful ally, saved from a horrible fate by U.S.-led military intervention, aided in its transformation into an advanced market economy and democratic polity, and secure in its reliance on a U.S.-led region for stability and maintenance of universal values. Yet, with the democratization movement's resentment of U.S. support for the excesses of military dictatorship, Roh Tae-woo's nordpolitik, and the South's success in diversifying its trade away from dependence on the United States and Japan, there should have been no room for such complacency. The U.S. handling of the first nuclear crisis shook confidence in it. Its tilt to Japan, essentially giving that country's right-wing politicians license to pursue their revisionist dreams, damaged U.S. credibility. Signs that the United States was treating China as a strategic competitor and opposing regionalism clashed with South Korean

interests. The uncertain future mission for U.S. troops after the Sunshine Policy changed sentiments toward North-South relations compounded these doubts. Above all, the U.S. handling of relations with North Korea from the Kim Dae-jung visit to Washington in March 2001 to President Bush's "axis of evil" speech to the management of the second nuclear crisis left grave doubts about how bilateral relations could overcome clashing worldviews. While Roh Moo-hyun overstepped diplomatic prudence when he suggested that South Korea assume the role of "balancer" in the region, the reality was that the South was distancing itself from the United States.

The February 13 agreement narrowed the gap between the United States and South Korea, but it apparently did not produce renewed understanding about how to synchronize policy, pressuring the North to move in stages toward denuclearization and rewarding it only for its actions. For roughly 2 years, Roh had made little secret of his frustration with the U.S. resort to pressure with little chance to deter the North's pursuit of nuclear weapons, while the Bush administration made clear its resentment of Roh's increasingly unconditional economic assistance to the North. As the United States faced the North in a working group on normalization and the South faced fellow Koreans in the working group it led on economic and energy assistance as well as in ministerial consultations, synchronization acquired greater importance. Yet, other venues would also test the alliance. The two would, along with China, judge how well the North was complying with its promises for denuclearization in the six-party denuclearization work group and adjust their own moves in the groups they were leading. This process could test the triangle

of the United States-China-South Korea, not giving the South a chance to act as a balancer but having significance for how far it leaned to one side or the other.[10] Japan's conduct in leading the working group for normalizing ties between it and North Korea would also test South Korea's balancing skills. The United States and China may differ on Japan's conduct, but we can expect the greatest impatience from South Korea. With Roh intent on leaving a legacy in his final year as president, rewards to the North could complicate U.S. strategy.

While some may count on a conservative to be elected as president and to shift foreign policy closer to the United States, it would be prudent to focus on coordination with the South in carrying out the February 13 agreement. Given the overall support in the South for engagement with the North, an image of U.S. consistency in embracing multilateral diplomacy and incentives would be most productive in keeping the South close. Even so, South Korean relations are likely to be closer to China than Japan, as economic ties rise further and coordination in dealing with North Korea continues to operate.

U.S. expectations for South Korea based on the past 60 years of the latter's dependency provide poor preparation for what is to come. Deference to the South's handling of the North proved difficult in 2001-06 and may again test bilateral relations. The East Asian core triangle of China, Japan, and South Korea will produce dynamics at odds with U.S. preferences.[11] Dealing with an ally's distancing may prove more difficult than responding to a rising competitor. So far, discussions of South Korea have been slow to recognize this possibility.

**Challenge 6: Sino-Japanese Rivalry.**

From 1972 to 2002 Sino-Japanese relations were, on the surface at least, warmer than Sino-U.S. ties. Japan took care to position itself in the middle, cognizant of the historical wounds that lingered and of the opportunities available for serving as a bridge. In the late 1970s before the United States normalized diplomatic ties with China and at the start of the Reagan period when Taiwan threatened to damage relations, Japan moved ahead with large-scale Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). In 1989 as sanctions worsened Sino-U.S. ties, Japan sought advantage. In 1997-99, despite rising tensions between Tokyo and Beijing, a number of Japanese moves such as establishing Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) + 3 as the Asia-Pacific Economic Council (APEC) was weakening and taking the lead in agreeing to China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) suggested continued positioning in the middle. In 2001-02 Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi simultaneously encouraged President Bush to strengthen alliance ties and President Jiang Zemin to pursue regionalism. If Japan's prospects for taking the middle spot were diminishing with China's rapid increase in comprehensive national power, it did not seem reconciled to abandoning the leverage possible in this triangle.

The situation changed dramatically from 2003, with each succeeding year worse for Sino-Japanese relations than the preceding one until the end of 2006, as Sino-U.S. ties not only stabilized but were growing closer in handling strategic matters, especially with North Korea. While the visits by Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine were the ostensible reason for deterioration, the new Chinese leader Hu Jintao made clear that he

did not want to play the "history card" and hoped for cooperation in resolving the impasse. Instead, it was Japan's leadership that decided it no longer placed priority on positioning their country in the middle of the triangle with the United States. In the Six-Party Talks, Japan not only abandoned the middle post in the triangle with the United States and South Korea, it also preferred to be marginalized rather than to work closely with others under China's leadership.[12] Despite Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's October 2006 early visit to Beijing, taking advantage of his silence over whether he would or would not visit Yasukuni, he appeared to have no follow-up strategy to improve ties or to play a more active role in the fast-developing North Korean situation. Yet, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's April 2007 visit to Tokyo showed that China was intent on building momentum for better ties, putting the burden on Abe if he should dare to succumb to his revisionist inclinations to reopen the wounds that were healing.

The February 13 agreement left Japan's role unclear. With the abductee issue relegated to the working group on normalization with the North, Japan could be marginal to the momentum generated in the other working groups. It seemed unlikely that even the United States would put the brakes on progress in denuclearization because Japan could not win satisfaction on its issue. Perhaps nervousness over China's leadership role, the South's tilt toward China, the possibility of Korean reunification, and a multilateral security framework in the region were also holding Japan back. Even signs that China and the United States might be close to a tacit understanding on Taiwan could have alarmed some in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership who were nudging their country toward support for Taiwan independence.

Abe came to the United States in April 2007 seeking reassurance that the United States would defer to his thinking in the midst of a debate in Japan over whether it was being abandoned and now should pursue a more independent security and regional policy.

Sino-Japanese relations had not benefited from cooperation in the Six-Party Talks and were not getting a boost from the unprecedented diplomatic ferment in March 2007. While they might improve if these talks went smoothly and if Japanese-North Korean ties advanced as part of this process, the likelihood was that this rivalry would not recover from the downturn of 2003-06. The United States, as the pivot in the triangle, would then be faced with the challenge of ameliorating tensions. Already in 2005-06 there were signs of some such efforts over the Yasukuni visits. If Japan remained isolated in Northeast Asia as the nuclear crisis was being overcome, this would be bad for the United States. For example, Japan could not exert a positive influence on Russia. It could not help to keep South Korean policy balanced. And its role in steering North Korea would be very limited. Above all, China's success in 1992-2006 in outmaneuvering Japan in Asia would likely continue, leaving the U.S. reliance on Japan less effective as a regional strategy. Of all the challenges facing the United States in the region, the way the Sino-Japanese rivalry unfolded could prove the most difficult.

## CONCLUSION

While some suggest that the cold war has not yet ended in Northeast Asia, it would be more accurate to say that the postwar settlement has yet to occur and that successive strategic challenges in the region were

left without full resolution. The end game of the North Korean-U.S. confrontation has high stakes. Some assumed during the nuclear crisis that it was heading in a different direction, and that North Korea's nuclear test would signify its complete isolation and the unity of five vs. one in pressuring it to surrender in its battle to turn military threat into regime security and regional support. Yet, the February 13 agreement turned the region and the important Six-Party Talks in a different direction. Even if it is premature to conclude how this process will go forward, we should be anticipating how Northeast Asia is changing and how this fits into the long-term evolution of a multipolar region within a unipolar world.

The United States lacks a regional strategy. It has made strategic choices by reinforcing the alliance with Japan from 1996 and by cooperating more closely with China on strategic matters since 2003. In addition, important decisions dealt with the Korean peninsula: the 1994 Agreed Framework, the 1999 Perry Process and support for the Sunshine Policy, the 2005 Joint Statement, and the 2007 agreement that established five working groups. If these become the foundation for facing various challenges in this region, a strategy is in order that builds on it. If this foundation cracks, there should be backup plans as well. At present, the backup plans may be further along than strategizing about what has taken center stage at the world's intersection of assertive great powers and economic dynamism.

## ENDNOTES - ROZMAN

1. Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

2. Sherman W. Garnett, ed., *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia,* Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000.

3. Funabashi Yoichi, *The Peninsula Question: Chosen bando dainiji kaku kiji*, Tokyo: Asahi shimbun Press, 2006.

4. Gilbert Rozman, Kauzhiko Togo, and Joseph P. Ferguson, eds., *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia*, New York: Palgrave, 2006.

5. Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.

6. Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four Parties Caught between North Korea and the United States*, New York: Palgrave, 2007.

7. Jonathan D. Pollack, ed., *Korea: The East Asian Pivot*, Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2006.

8. Robert G. Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia: Promises and Perils*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

9. Gilbert Rozman, "Russia in Northeast Asia: In Search of a Strategy," in Robert Legvold, ed., *Twenty-first Century Russian Foreign Policy and the Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 343-392.

10. Jae Ho Chung, *Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

11. Gilbert Rozman, "South Korea and the Sino-Japanese Rivalry: A Middle Power's Options within the East Asian Core Triangle, *Pacific Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, June 2007, pp. 197-220.

12. Rozman, Togo, and Ferguson, eds., *Japanese Strategic Thought toward Asia,* New York: Palgrave, 2007.