

**China and the U.S.–Japan
and U.S.–Korea Alliances
in a Changing Northeast Asia**

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The American security alliances with Japan and South Korea have been a major concern of China's foreign and defense policies. China's position toward the alliances is determined by its foreign policy and security theories, doctrines, and principles; by its approach to a regional security mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region; by its bilateral relations with countries in Northeast Asia; and by incidental issues such as territorial disputes in Asia in which it is involved.

The Alliances and Chinese Doctrine

As a matter of long-standing doctrine and principle, China has always opposed military (security) alliances or "bloc politics." In the Cold War era, China was almost always against the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea security alliances; NATO, the Warsaw Pact, SEATO, and ANZUS; and almost every other military/security alliance, whether it was bilateral or multi-lateral, targeted at China or not. This principle remains the same in the post-Cold War era. In his address to the Russian State Duma on April 23, 1997, Chinese president Jiang Zemin reiterated that China will not participate in an arms race, join any military bloc, or engage in military expansion.¹ With regard to security, in his report delivered at the 15th Party Congress on September 12, 1997, Jiang stated:

At present, the international situation as a whole is becoming more relaxed. . . . However, the Cold War mentality still exists, and hegemonism and power politics continue to be the main source of threat to world peace and stability. Expanding military blocs and strengthening military alliances will not be conducive to safeguarding peace and security. We should adhere to Deng Xiaoping's thinking on diplomatic work and firmly

pursue an independent foreign policy of peace. In international affairs, we should determine our position and policies by proceeding from the fundamental interests of the people of China and other countries and judging each case on its own merits. We shall not yield to any outside pressure or enter into alliance with any big power or group of countries, nor shall we establish any military bloc, join in the arms race, or seek military expansion.²

Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said after meeting with U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright in July 1997, “expanding military blocs and enhancing military alliances under new circumstances can do little to bring about greater security.”³ In his remarks at the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, on July 27, 1997, the minister stated that China pursues an independent foreign policy of peace, seeks neither alliance nor confrontation, and lives in amity and “good-neighborliness” with other countries in the region.⁴ “It has been proved that the security concept and framework of the Cold War era, which were based on military alliances and conducted by increasing arms building, cannot build peace. In the new situation, expanding military blocs and enhancing military alliances are against the current and future historical trend,” added Qian.⁵

During his visit to Japan and Australia in February 1998, General Chi Haotian, China’s defense minister, reiterated China’s policy of not establishing military alliances with any countries nor stationing its troops or establishing military bases on foreign soil.⁶ General Fu Quanyou, chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), said to his Indian counterpart during his Indian visit in April 1998 that China pursues a peaceful, independent foreign policy, seeking neither hegemony nor foreign expansion.⁷

Chinese oppose military alliances even when an alliance is not directly relevant to China’s security, such as NATO. In an April 1997 article about NATO’s eastward expansion, *China Daily* argued that NATO expansion “is questionable because to many it is totally unnecessary.” NATO was created by the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949, essentially to create and maintain a collective security alliance against armed attack. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the reason for NATO’s existence, the article stated, has become unclear. No country or military alliance has the might to attack the organization, led by the United States—now the world’s sole superpower. NATO currently enjoys a 3–1 superiority over Russia in tanks and other non-nuclear forces in Europe. But instead of disbanding, NATO has decided to enlarge by taking in some Eastern European countries that were once members of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. This, naturally, has provoked strong Russian resistance. Russians regard NATO as a remnant of the Cold War. The article finds the “philosophy” of NATO’s expansion questionable: “Instead of fending off major threats, it quite often leads to confrontation. . . . This questionable but unstoppable expansion once again underscores the nature of power politics and the underlying factors that blind and separate nations. . . . How far will NATO expansion go? It is possible that by excessive expansion the organization might undo itself. Already its members have expressed different opinions concerning the expansion. If NATO should include the whole world someday, then it would totally undo itself.”⁸

China believes the new world order in the post–Cold War era will be a system of partnership, a system that is now in the process of replacing the alliances system. A commentary in *Renmin Ribao* (the People’s Daily) on April 25, 1998, asserted that compared with the confrontation and narrow alliances between big powers in the Cold War era, the new form of

relations is a real improvement, for it is more conducive to cooperation between partners and to world stability.

Military alliances were a major facet of the Cold War. After World War II, the United States, which was then set to contain the former Soviet Union and other socialist countries, established alliances with major countries in the West through a series of bilateral and multilateral treaties. By the end of the Cold War, however, these military alliances had lost much of their cohesive force, as the enemies they were directed at containing no longer existed. Yet the United States has been trying to maintain these old alliances, hoping to act as their hegemonic leader. Many countries want no part in such alliances, but there are signs that they are willing to enter into broad partnerships. The coexistence of the three kinds of international relations—confrontation, narrow alliances between big powers, and a new form of cooperative partnership—indicates that the world is ridding itself of hegemonism, power politics, and military groupings and moving instead toward an era of multipolarization based on equality and cooperation.⁹

China is opposed to alliances and “bloc politics” for several reasons. First, China has seldom itself become a party to any military/security alliance. In the fifty years since the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949, the country was part of a security alliance for no more than ten years: the Sino-Soviet alliance between 1950 and 1960. Although the alliance was formally abolished by the PRC in 1980, it actually died in early 1960, when the two countries fought an ideological war. The PRC–DPRK alliance still exists; it, however, is not purely a security or military alliance. The name of the alliance is the “Friendship and Mutual Assistance Alliance,” and it is a political-security alliance. Those alliances that China has engaged in are not typical security alliances because there is no joint military organization, joint military troops, or military force stationed in allied countries.

Second, the national psychology of the Chinese people is opposed to alliance. The so-called “Central Kingdom mentality” is no longer the national psychology of the Chinese people, because they know they are no longer the center of the world. Most Chinese, however, still consider their country a big nation in almost every respect: geography, history, culture, population, economy, military, nuclear power, and at the United Nations. The “big country” or “big power” mentality makes the Chinese uneasy in an alliance because China can not or does not want to be “big brother,” nor does it want to be a “small brother.” China’s reluctance to be the second brother was one reason for the failure of the Sino-Soviet alliance; in turn, from this alliance China drew the lesson to never again enter into an alliance with anyone. This is a major source of China’s “independent foreign policy” and is one of the major reasons Chairman Mao never visited another country after the one unpleasant foreign trip he took in his life.

Finally, Chinese memories of alliance are not good. The Chinese do not buy Americans’ argument that the U.S. alliances in Asia contribute to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the establishment of the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances, Asia has been troubled by the Vietnam War, Cambodian War, Sino-Vietnamese War, and civil wars in the Philippines (when the U.S.-Philippines defense treaty was in force) and other Asian countries. No matter who was right and who was wrong in these wars, the fact is the alliances did not prevent them from taking place. Therefore, saying that the U.S.-Japan security treaty has served to protect and contribute to Asia’s stability for the last four decades goes against the facts of history. An equally simple fact is that the fundamental cause of the prosperity that

Asians, including the Chinese, have enjoyed in the last two decades is those countries' policies, not the existence of the U.S.-Japan security treaty. Asia became peaceful only when Asian countries started to focus on economic development and thus improve the economic, political, and security relations between them in the 1980s and 1990s.

The "New Security Concept"

If opposition to alliances is an established Chinese security and foreign policy principle, recent developments in Chinese security and foreign policy also denounce the alliance approach. One of the most important developments in Chinese security thinking in the post-Cold War era was the introduction of the "New Security Concept" by the Chinese government. It was first stated by the Chinese foreign minister at ARF's Confidence-Building Conference in Beijing in March 1997, jointly sponsored by the Philippines and China. Later, in April, the "Sino-Russian Joint Statement on Multilateral World and Establishing the New International Order" was signed by presidents Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin during the Chinese leader's visit to Russia. The Joint Statement advocates the abolishment of "Cold War thinking" and opposes alliance politics; asserts that differences and disputes between states must be solved peacefully, not by force or threat to use force; promotes mutual understanding and trust through dialogue and consultation; and seeks peace and security through bilateral and multilateral coordination and cooperation. The two parties share concerns over efforts to expand and strengthen the military blocs, believing that this tendency poses a threat to the security of some countries and aggravates regional and global tensions.¹⁰

On April 25, 1997, *Renmin Ribao* published a commentary titled "The New Security Model of Neighborhood and Friendship." The commentary held up the "Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas" signed by China, Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan on April 24, 1997, as a model for the Asia-Pacific region and the world of the establishment of neighborly relations. This agreement and the "Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field along the Border Area" signed by the five in 1996 represent, according to the commentary, a totally new security concept. The new concept is based on mutual trust: the countries agreed to reduce, through dialogue and coordination, military forces and activities in border areas to the highest possible degree and promote transparency and friendly exchange—and thus to maintain national and regional security and promote the development of the relationship among the states. "Such a new security concept not only serves the fundamental interests of the five countries and their peoples, but also agrees with the trend and the needs of post-Cold War development of the international situation and international relations. It is favorable to international cooperation and development, world peace and security, and favorable to the establishment of a just, reasonable international political and economic order." Running counter to the New Security Concept, according to the commentary, is the old "Cold War thinking," which favors military alliances, the use of sanctions, and even the use of military force or threats to use force, and aims to establish a unilateral world through power politics. "This would jeopardize trust among states, increase regional and global tensions, even lead to a new arms race. And it is against the trend of our time."¹¹

In his speech to the fourth ARF meeting, in Malaysia, on July 27, 1997, Qian Qichen talked about the "New Security Concept." In the new international situation, he said, a new security concept is needed. Security cannot rely upon increasing numbers of weapons, nor can it be dependent on military blocs. Security should reside in mutual trust and common

interests. He urged a common effort to promote a new regional security concept appropriate to the diverse characteristics of the Asia-Pacific region. He outlined four primary components of a strategy to enhance regional security: equal, friendly, and stable relations among states as the political basis for regional peace and stability; economic development, exchange, and cooperation to deepen the interdependence among states and serve as the economic basis for regional security; peaceful means of resolving disputes to serve as the right way to maintain regional peace and stability; and dialogue and cooperation to serve as the major framework for promoting regional peace and development. ARF, said Qian, as a new experiment in regional security cooperation “represents a new security concept.”¹² Chi Haotian endorsed these ideas in speeches to the Japanese Defense Institute and the Australian Defense Academy in February 1998.¹³

The article “Concepts, Structure, Strategy and Asia-Pacific Security,” published in *Contemporary International Relations* in May 1997, addresses five major security concepts that China has promoted in recent years: comprehensive security, mutual security, equal security, security through cooperation (cooperative security), and common security.¹⁴

Comprehensive security. The Chinese learned this concept from Japan in the 1970s when the Japanese government published its “Comprehensive Security Strategy.” It became the official thinking of the Chinese government on security after Deng Xiaoping advocated the concept of “comprehensive national power” in the early 1980s, and is thus China’s most important doctrine for dealing with challenges to its security and pursuing its security interests in the post-Cold War era. The “Comprehensive Security Strategy” has been China’s approach to security since the end of the Cold War. According to this strategy, security is no longer solely a military issue. Security in the post-Cold War era involves political, economic, and diplomatic factors as well as military ones. Therefore, the pursuit of security interests cannot rely solely on military means; it must employ a comprehensive approach that involves political, economic, and diplomatic efforts. Drawing lessons from the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and Sino-Soviet confrontation in the Cold War era, the Chinese know all too well that more weapons do not bring more security; security must also include many non-military means.

Mutual security. Mutual security means that parties engaged in dialogue on security issues must consider not only their own security but also the security of the other parties, as in the almost decade-long talks between China and the Soviet Union (later Russia and the Central Asian republics). No country can realize real security gains without addressing the security concerns and interests of the others.

Equal security. Equal security recognizes that security is everyone’s interest and right. While a security arrangement enhances the security of one party, it should not undermine the security of the others. All have equal rights to security.

“Cooperative security.” Chinese officials do not accept the Western concept of “cooperative security,” in which cooperation on security matters entails some loss of sovereignty by participating states; instead, they support “security through cooperation,” wherein states recognize that security is a shared concern and cooperate in pursuing their security interests. Security through cooperation means participating in and promoting multilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Our world is different today. Economic and technological development have led inevitably to interdependence. To pursue security interests in the new world, we need multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Common security. The most important goal of regional and global security should be common security, which means a security arrangement that meets the security interests of each country and that is welcomed by all.¹⁵

An article in *Jiefangjun Bao* (the People's Liberation Army Daily) points out that the core of the "new security concept" is the search for common security through consultation, coordination, and cooperation.¹⁶ A conference held in Beijing in December 1998 to discuss the "New Security Concept" identified "four nos" as the center of the new security concept: no hegemonism, no power politics, no arms race, and no military alliance.¹⁷

Some argue that the Chinese are advocating such a "new security concept" in order to undermine the American military presence in Asia and the U.S.-Japan security alliance. This argument is partially correct, because China's new security concept does stand against the "old thinking" represented by military blocs. Yet the search for a new security concept, doctrine, and strategy also represents a Chinese view of the region and the world which is different from that of the past and reflects China's search for a national security strategy and a regional security arrangement for the Asia-Pacific region for the future. Thus the new security concept encompasses much more than simple opposition to the American military presence and U.S.-Japan security alliance in Asia.

The Alliances and a Regional Security Structure

Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, Asians have made great efforts in searching for a new structure for maintaining peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Various designs, plans, ideas, and arguments have been offered. Working with other Asian countries, the Chinese government and scholars have also tried to find the best way to enhance regional security and stability in the post-Cold War era.

The ASEAN Way

In the search for a security structure for the Asia-Pacific region, the Chinese laud ASEAN's approach as both positive and fitting for the region. The ASEAN way means, according to the Chinese understanding, maintaining and strengthening regional peace and stability through economic development and the promotion of economic, political, and security dialogue and coordination among Asia-Pacific countries. Today Asian officials, military officers, and experts on security are busy shuttling among Asian capitals attending ARF meetings, Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) conferences, and various other activities. It is calculated that about two hundred gatherings on Asian security take place in Asia each year as "track one," "track two," or even "track three" efforts.

The ASEAN way seems workable. First, it has promoted mutual understanding and trust among Asian countries. Those intensive meetings and contacts among foreign affairs and military officials and academics help them to reach a better understanding of one another, reducing suspicion and building consensus and trust. The relative quietness of "hot" issues such as the dispute in the South China Sea is partially the result of these intensive contacts among Asian countries.

Second, the ASEAN way has a mechanism to deal with specific problems and is not just a "talk shop." One example is the Cambodian peace settlement. The Paris Agreement in 1993

and the peace settlement are the result of cooperation and consultation among three parties in Cambodia, the ASEAN countries, China, the United States, and the United Nations. This approach not only resulted in the Paris Agreement but also ensured that elections took place in Cambodia in 1993. It has not worked perfectly, but it has fundamentally worked.

Another example is the Korean nuclear issue. While resolution of this issue was not ASEAN's job, the ASEAN way worked there too. People tend to forget that when the issue was critical, in 1993 and 1994, economic sanctions and possible military actions were put forth as means to deal with the problem. The agreement of 1994 was reached through talks, consultation, and coordination among the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the United Nations. Once again it was proved that this way is better than any other approach.

Will the ASEAN way or ARF or CSCAP be a workable arrangement for maintaining peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region? It is too soon to know. But other arrangements are even more uncertain. Unilateral domination is neither desirable nor acceptable to everyone. Bilateral arrangements make the two parties involved feel more secure but make others feel less secure and would not be desirable to everyone in the region. Only a multilateral approach seems widely acceptable.

“China highly commends and fully supports ASEAN's role in promoting peace and development in the region,” stated Chen Jian, assistant foreign minister of China, at the first general meeting of CSCAP in Singapore in June 1997.¹⁸ Qian Qichen also praised ARF for its role in promoting peace and stability in the region. “Since its inception, the forum in its unique way has played an active role in promoting regional peace and stability as well as building up confidence among its members,” Qian said. He called on the forum to focus on regional peace and security and base the participants' relationship on principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in one another's internal affairs. The regional forum should take the maintenance of regional peace and security as its objective, living together in peace and treating one another as equals as its purpose, confidence building as its core task, and dialogue and cooperation as its means to achieve the objective. Qian noted that the meeting of the twenty-one participants is “not to defuse a common threat, but rather to achieve a common goal; that is, regional peace and stability.”¹⁹

An article published in *Jiefangjun Bao* called the ASEAN way a “security through dialogue” model. ASEAN is one of the major models used widely today by the international community. Conducting bilateral and multilateral security dialogue and consultation officially and unofficially, formally and informally, regularly or irregularly; preventing and responding to emergent issues; coordinating positions, policies and strategies; and engaging in comprehensive and multi-field security cooperation have all played significant roles in preventing crises and the escalation of conflicts. ARF is a successful example of such a model.²⁰

China has become more and more active in participating in and promoting multilateral regional security cooperation. It has become a member of all regional multilateral forums on security dialogue and cooperation—ARF, CSCAP, and NEACD (Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue).

A New Model of Security: Security through Confidence-Building Measures

China does not only talk about “new security concepts,” nor does it only participate in and encourage security dialogue and coordination. It also has undertaken a number of serious efforts to enhance the security of China and the Asia-Pacific region. Among these efforts, the

Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field along the Border Area (Shanghai Agreement) in 1996 and the Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas among China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, and Tajikistan in April 1997 (the Moscow Agreement) are the most significant.

The major points of the Shanghai Agreement are

- military forces deployed in the border region will not attack each other;
- military exercises will not be targeted at each other;
- the sale, scope, and number of military exercises will be restricted;
- there will be information exchanges and notification of important military activities carried out within 100 km of the border, with individual concerns receiving proper explanations;
- invitations will be extended to each other to observe military exercises of certain scales;
- efforts will be made to prevent dangerous military activities; and
- friendly exchanges between military forces and frontier guards in the border region will be strengthened.²¹

The Moscow Agreement requires the five countries to reduce their military forces in border areas to “the lowest level conforming to good neighborliness and friendliness, and capable only of defense.” They will not use nor threaten to use force against one another, and none will seek military superiority over the others. The military forces stationed in border areas will not conduct offensive actions and will reduce and limit the number of troops and weapons along the common border. The five countries also agree to exchange information on military forces along the border area. The agreement establishes a ceiling on the number of troops and weapons each side can deploy along the border areas, establishes the means and the deadline for the arms reduction, and contains procedures for implementation and supervision. The agreement will be valid until 2020 and can be extended with the consent of all the parties.²²

The agreement establishes 100-km (or 62 mile)-wide zones on each side of the border in which limits are placed on armaments and personnel. The limits are 3,900 tanks for Russia and the three Central Asian states (of which 3,810 are Russian) and 3,900 for China. The agreement also allows up to 4,500 other armored vehicles. It calls for a 15 percent reduction in troops over two years and allows each side to keep 130,400 troops in the border zone along the 7,000-km border.²³

Jiang Zemin has pointed out that the Moscow Agreement is the first agreement on mutual military reduction among states in the Asia-Pacific region, and thus has great political and military significance. The agreement not only helps the five countries maintain peace and stability in their border areas and enhance good-neighborliness, trust, and mutual benefit and cooperation, it also provides a security model that is different from the Cold War thinking. This model, which opens a constructive road to mutual trust among nations, will help to maintain peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world.²⁴

Countries should increase mutual understanding and trust through dialogues and consultations and gradually iron out their differences and problems by way of multilateral or bilateral coordination and cooperation. The Cold War mentality and all other practices detrimental to world peace and development must be resolutely discarded. The agreement to be signed by our five countries on the reduction of military forces gives

full expression to a new security concept that is completely different from the Cold War mentality.²⁵

Praising the “new model for peace,” *China Daily* issued a commentary on the third meeting of leaders of China, Russia, and the three Central Asian nations in Almaty, Kazakstan, in July 1998. “The frequent summit talks among these leaders with the pioneer trust-building agreements have set a good example for countries in other parts of the world to develop multiple good-neighborly and cooperative relations and safeguard peace and stability. It is a model different from the Cold War thinking, since the five-nation agreements are not aimed at forming an alliance nor are they directed against a third party.” The Chinese believe that this new security model will become increasingly acceptable on a planet where people aspire to build a peaceful world.²⁶

The 1996 Shanghai Agreement on confidence-building measures and the 1997 military reduction agreement between the five countries are significant to China’s security. It was the Soviet Union that was the major threat to China for the almost three decades from the early 1960s to the later 1980s. Through decade-long talks on normalization, confidence-building measures, and military reduction, the Chinese have finally gotten rid of the “Russian threat.” This is a great achievement for Chinese foreign and security policies and an equally great achievement for the relationships between China and the other four former Soviet states. It is also a great achievement in promoting peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, for when people across the Pacific Ocean are busy talking about confidence building, peace, and security, it is the Chinese, Russians, and other Central Asians who do the real work to enhance peace and security, to promote confidence building, and to resolve a major security issue by peaceful means. And this is not a easy job when one understands how serious and dangerous the border issue had been in Sino-Soviet relations and thus for regional and global security.

Security Alliances and the Regional Security Structure

If, to the Chinese, the five-country agreements on confidence-building measures and military reduction in border areas are among the most positive developments in the Asia-Pacific region, the strengthening military alliance between the United States and Japan, especially the issuing of the guidelines on U.S.-Japan security cooperation, is the most negative development. The Chinese believe that security cooperation is totally different from bilateral military alliances stemming from the Cold War, like that between the United States and Japan. Such a bilateral military alliance can by no means safeguard security in Asia.²⁷

The Chinese find the strengthening U.S.-Japan security alliance and the guidelines for military cooperation between the two countries threatening and dangerous for four reasons. First, the military alliance goes against the trend in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world of promoting peace and security by increasing political and economic ties, not by strengthening military alliances between states. Second, the scope and function of the U.S.-Japan security alliance has changed from protecting Japan to assuming responsibility for protecting the entire Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese believe that “the U.S.-Japan agreement in fact puts the vast Asia-Pacific region, far beyond their own territories, under its protection.”²⁸ Third, the guidelines now give Japan a regional security role in “surrounding areas,” which can be as large as the entire Asia-Pacific, rather than restricting it to self-defense. According to an article in *China Daily*, “It is dangerous for the United States to encourage Japan to go further in this regard. Japan could develop its military strength for ‘justified’ reasons. In this way, it

makes the peace and stability of this region uncertain.”²⁹ Last and most unacceptable to the Chinese is that the area the bilateral security arrangement covers includes Taiwan, which is part of China. Thus it is clear that the strengthening of the security alliance is targeted at China.

Chinese leaders and government officials have on many occasions in recent years publicly expressed their concern over the renewal of the U.S.-Japan alliance. On June 10, 1997, after “the midterm report” of the guidelines for U.S.-Japan security cooperation was issued, Cui Tiankai, a spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, issued a statement in response. The Japan-U.S. security alliance was a bilateral arrangement formed during the Cold War era, he said. With the collapse of the Cold War structure, such an arrangement should not go beyond its bilateral framework. One should avoid arousing disquiet among neighboring states in the Asia-Pacific region and complicating the security situation there. For historical reasons, Japan’s Asian neighbors have always been highly sensitive to the orientation of its security policy. Therefore, China hopes that Japan can draw a lesson from history, act cautiously, and stick to the road of peaceful development.³⁰

On September 24, 1997, after the final report of the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation was issued, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Shen Guofang stated again that defense cooperation between Japan and the United States, a bilateral arrangement formed as a result of certain historical circumstances, should be kept strictly within the bilateral scope in order to avoid arousing unrest among Asian nations. “We believe that the practice of strengthening military alliances and expanding military cooperation runs counter to the trends in the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, which is witnessing relative political stability, sustained economic growth, and an active security dialogue,” said Shen.³¹ On the same day Shen issued this statement in Beijing, in New York Qian Qichen also said that “this security arrangement, this security alliance” should be restricted to a bilateral arrangement between the United States and Japan.³² In January 1998 Defense Minister Chi Haotian said to visiting U.S. defense secretary William Cohen that in the new international situation enlarging military blocs and strengthening military alliances are not helpful in maintaining peace and safeguarding security.³³

The Chinese media has been more vocal than the government in criticizing the U.S.-Japan security alliance. An article published in *China Daily* argued that the U.S.-Japan security treaty, a product of the Cold War, should have vanished with the end of the Cold War. But for different reasons Japan and the United States, instead of giving up the Cold War legacy, greatly strengthened it, with the scope of defense expanding to “Japan’s surrounding areas.” By strengthening this treaty, the United States wants to maintain its leading influence in the Asia-Pacific region and make Japan the assistant “world cop.” Some Japanese want to rely on U.S. power to realize Japan’s ambition of expanding its influence and becoming the political power in this region. A military alliance must have an enemy. That is why some political celebrities in the United States and Japan actively spread the “China threat theory.”³⁴

Another article on the guidelines, written by Cong Ya, demands that “the two countries keep their security cooperation plan bilateral rather than targeting a third nation.” Cong does not believe statements by American and Japanese officials that their security cooperation is not aimed at a third party; according to the author, a senior U.S. official said that, like the Persian Gulf War over Iraq’s attempt to annex Kuwait, a threat to Japan’s security “cannot be predicted.” “The words of the U.S. official reveal the obvious target of the arrangement,” wrote Cong. The author points out that a large number of Japanese senior officials and scholars have stated that possible areas of conflict include the Taiwan Strait, the South

China Sea, and the Korean peninsula. And the new military agreement could permit Japanese minesweepers to clear international waters or allow Japan to supply fuel and spare parts to U.S. aircraft and ships.³⁵

The Alliances and Bilateral Relations

China's foreign policy and security doctrine and its preliminary design for a regional security system in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific region all indicate that military alliances or security blocs are not desirable to the Chinese. Whether the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances will be acceptable to China, however, is not determined solely by principles and designs. As long as China continues to judge everything according to its implications for China's national interests, not emphasizing a grand regional or global strategic design as superpowers do, future Chinese policy toward the security alliances depends much more on the bilateral relations between China and other powers in Northeast Asia.

Sino-U.S. Relations: The Strategic Relationship and Taiwan

The major theme of post-Cold War Sino-U.S. relations in the first seven years since 1989 was conflict. The two countries engaged in confrontation in three fields: human rights, nonproliferation, and Taiwan. The high points of this confrontation were the Tiananmen sanctions after June 4, 1989, the F-16 sale in 1992, Clinton's linking of Chinese most-favored-nation status and human rights in 1993, Lee Teng-hui's U.S. trip in 1995, and the United States sending two aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in spring 1996. Things have changed dramatically since spring 1996. The "Taiwan crisis" woke both sides to the danger of their confrontation. President Jiang Zemin's U.S. visit in 1997 and President Clinton's China trip in June 1998 found that their "common interests" were broad and deep and that areas for cooperation between the two countries existed. Both governments have made up their minds to pursue cooperation in their post-Cold War relationship, denouncing confrontation between them. That is what the "constructive strategic partnership" is all about. According to Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan, "The common goal of establishing a constructive strategic partnership between China and the U.S. sets a clear direction and framework for the relationship."³⁶

After seven or eight years of heading off confrontation, today both the United States and China have concluded that they can neither bury one another nor force the other to accept orders. Both would suffer from a confrontation; all will benefit from cooperation. Therefore, the strategic goal and the direction of post-Cold War Sino-U.S. relations is once again clear: cooperation. "China and the United States are cooperative partners instead of adversaries," President Jiang Zemin announced during the joint press conference with visiting U.S. president Bill Clinton on June 27, 1998.³⁷

When the two sides decide to cooperate, differences on human rights, religious freedom, and trade will not be too dangerous. Few countries have engaged in war over human rights or trade differences. The Chinese and American positions on human rights, nonproliferation, and trade are growing closer. Cooperation on economic development, nonproliferation, and regional stability and more consensus on human rights, judicial cooperation, environmental

protection, and international affairs will characterize U.S.-China relations in the early twenty-first century.

The only remaining area of confrontation between China and the United States is Taiwan. It is on the Taiwan issue that China judges U.S. China strategy, its position toward the U.S. military presence in Asia, and American alliances with others in the region. American officials have tried to maintain a “strategy of ambiguity,” avoiding stating whether the scope of the treaty includes Taiwan or not. When speaking about the function of the U.S.-Japan security alliance and U.S. troops in the region, however, American officials always indicate that both exist to deal with uncertainties in the region. And they always list three major “uncertainties” that the alliances and troops are dealing with: the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea. It is clear that of the three, two refer directly to China—or, in other words, target China.

In the relationship between American alliances, American military forces in Asia, and Taiwan, the Chinese position has been clear and consistent and will remain unchanged in the future, no matter the state of the relationship between China and the United States. Shen Guofang, a spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, stressed on September 25, 1997, that an important reason for China’s concern about the guidelines for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation is their relationship to the Taiwan issue. He reiterated that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. “The Chinese government and people will never accept violations of or interference in China’s sovereignty by directly or indirectly including the Taiwan Strait in the scope of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation,” Shen said. China hopes that Japan and the United States will honor their commitments to China concerning the Taiwan issue, respect the solemn stance of the Chinese side in this regard, and refrain from doing anything that will in any way harm China’s interests or hurt the feelings of the Chinese people.³⁸

“On how to handle its internal affairs,” stated a Xinhua commentary on Sino-U.S. relations published a few days before President Clinton’s China visit, “the Chinese Government is not obliged to make any commitment to any foreign country or any other party, especially those aiming to split China.”³⁹ China’s defense white paper published in August 1998 expresses the same sentiment.⁴⁰

China-Japan Relations: History, Economics, and Taiwan

Difficulties and problems in Sino-Japanese relations always tend to be exaggerated. In fact, there are few problems between Japan and China and most of them are conceptual or symbolic problems rather than real policy differences.

Historical issues continue to be sources of emotion between Japan and China. The issue is created in Japan. There is always someone in Japan asserting that Japan did nothing wrong in China in the Second World War, and some Chinese officials coming out to respond to such noise. It is Japan’s responsibility to resolve the historical issues between it and other Asian nations. The Chinese tend to forgive and forget issues, but the Japanese must cease raising this issue. Both countries seem to have made progress on the historical burden they share.

There are strong economic ties between Japan and China. They could be stronger if China continues its economic boom and Japan is able to recover. Trade frictions are normal between big trade partners.

Taiwan is and will continue to be a real difficulty in Sino-Japanese relations. Japanese officials have been more frank than Americans on the question of whether Japan-U.S. security cooperation includes Taiwan. Japan’s cabinet secretary, foreign minister and deputy for-

eign minister, assistant to the prime minister, foreign ministry bureau chief, and others have stated that the treaty includes Taiwan or cannot exclude Taiwan.

On August 17, 1997, a senior Japanese official, Chief Cabinet Secretary Seroku Kajiyama, said on a television program that the term “areas surrounding Japan” does indeed include the Taiwan Strait. Deputy Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano said at a news conference that Kajiyama’s remarks were indeed based on the Japanese government’s views.⁴¹ Deputy Foreign Minister Shunji Yanai “confirmed” Kajiyama’s remarks on August 18, saying that the view of the Japanese government since 1960 has been that Taiwan lies within the “Far East” region defined by the Japanese-U.S. security treaty. The following day, Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda claimed that Kajiyama’s remarks were in line with the consistent position of the Japanese government.⁴²

On May 22, 1998, Takano Kigen, director-general of the North American Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, told Japan’s House of Representatives that the scope of the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation guidelines is limited to the “Far East” and “Far Eastern surrounding areas” as defined in the Japanese-U.S. security pact. This, in fact, included Taiwan in the pact.⁴³

From time to time in the last two years, high-level Chinese government officials and military leaders have made unambiguous statements regarding China’s strong position on U.S.-Japan security cooperation and its relationship with Taiwan. On August 19, 1997, the Chinese government expressed its serious concern over Kajiyama’s remarks and demanded that the Japanese government issue a full clarification of this statement.⁴⁴ “China will not accept any action designed to include the Taiwan Strait either directly or indirectly in the sphere of the Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation Guidelines,” said Defense Minister Chi Haotian on May 3, 1998, when he met with Fumio Kyuma, director-general of the Japan Defense Agency, in Beijing. He said that China has paid close attention to laws that Japan has amended or enacted with regard to the Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation Guidelines because they concern Taiwan. The Chinese government’s stand on the Taiwan issue is consistent and clear-cut. The Taiwan issue is part of China’s domestic affairs and attempting to include the Taiwan Strait in the scope of the guidelines would violate China’s sovereignty and be totally unacceptable to the Chinese government, people, and armed forces, according to General Chi.⁴⁵

On May 26, 1998, China expressed “grave concern” over the remarks by Takano Kigen and “strong indignation at the move made by the Japanese side that wantonly interferes in China’s internal affairs,” stated Zhu Bangzao, Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing.⁴⁶ Wang Yi, China’s assistant foreign minister, met Japanese ambassador to China Tanino Sakutaro on May 29 and again took exception to the remarks made by the Japanese official. Wang asked the Japanese to abandon their “Cold War” mentality in Japan-U.S. security operations and go along with the China-Japan Joint Declaration. Wang said the Japanese should confine Japan-U.S. security cooperation to bilateral relations and should not allow it to have anything to do with Taiwan or to do anything to harm China’s sovereignty.⁴⁷

The major reason China is concerned by U.S.-Japan security cooperation is its relationship to the Taiwan issue, Defense Minister Chi Haotian told his counterpart when they met in Tokyo in February. “If the Japanese side can make more clear the relationship between the U.S.-Japan security treaty and Taiwan, that would help to clear up the Chinese suspicion of U.S.-Japan security cooperation and thus would be helpful in developing Sino-Japanese relations,” added Chi.⁴⁸ General Zhang Wannian made the same statement in Tokyo in September 1998 on his way back to China from his U.S. visit. Yet no matter how many times and how strongly Chinese leaders demand that Japan not include Taiwan in its security coopera-

tion with the United States, the Japanese side never says that the security cooperation does not include Taiwan. This Japanese position is backed by and consistent with the Americans'. "It would be irresponsible" if Japan announced that Taiwan is not included in the defense guidelines, said one U.S. official speaking anonymously. "The U.S. is not directly threatened by a change in Taiwan's status. It's Japan's interests that are at stake. It would affect the sea lanes, the flow of oil."⁴⁹ Therefore, the Taiwan issue will remain the single most critical issue in Sino-Japanese relations and in the Chinese position toward the U.S.-Japan security alliance in the future. How bad the issue will become depends on the United States, because the Japanese always follow the Americans in their policy toward Taiwan.

Japan's attempted inclusion of Taiwan in its "sphere of protection" reminds Chinese of sixty years ago when Japan occupied Northeast China and used it as a bridgehead to invade China. Said one writer in *China Daily*, "Taiwan had been under Japan's colonial rule for half a century, a 'glorious memory' for many imperialist soldiers and their followers who are still alive. It is reasonable to suspect the motives of Japan's inclusion of Taiwan in its defense areas."⁵⁰

The Japanese argue that the "covering area" of Japan-U.S. security treaty is not something new in the scope of the alliance, because when the treaty was introduced in 1960 the area of the "Far East" included Taiwan. Everyone knows, however, that in 1960 the United States and Japan did not have diplomatic relations with the PRC but with Taiwan. Today, when both countries have diplomatic relations with China yet at the same time say that they will not change something they did when they did not have diplomatic relations with China, they violate the "one China policy" that the United States and Japan have committed to in their communiqué and treaty with China.

Chinese policy toward Japan has been clear and consistent: to maintain and further develop the good-neighborly relations between the two countries. China recognizes the importance of Sino-Japanese relations and seeks a long-term friendly and cooperative relationship with Japan. The two countries agreed to develop a "friendly cooperative partnership" during Jiang Zemin's recent visit to Japan. The two sides have gotten nowhere, however, on Taiwan and history, the two key issues in their relationship.

China and the Two Koreas

China now pursues a balanced policy toward the two Koreas of maintaining better relations with both North and South. The Chinese believe this policy not only serves Chinese interests but also helps to maintain peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. China publicly supports the DPRK's suggestions regarding easing tensions on Korean peninsula and supports the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea through dialogue and consultation that will increase trust and improve relations between the two parts of Korea. The Chinese Communist Party and government have always valued the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK. "The further development of Sino-DPRK relations under the changing international situation is in accordance with the will and interests of the peoples of China and the DPRK, and helps to maintain peace and stability in Northeast Asia; therefore, China will continue its serious efforts," Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan told the visiting DPRK vice foreign minister in March 1998.⁵¹ At the same time, China would like to make efforts with South Korea to push for long-term, stable, and good-neighborly Sino-South Korea relations and to strengthen the economic ties between the two countries.

What of a united Korea? What will the relationship be between China and a united Korea? Few Chinese have thought or talked about this because doing so seems premature. The Chinese support reunification. And while no one could bet that the future relationship between China and a united Korea will definitely be good, there is no evidence that supports an expectation of a negative relationship between China and a united Korea.

First, there are strong and positive historical ties between the Chinese and Korean peoples. There is nothing negative in the memory of Chinese people when they think of Korea. Both nations are old states in East Asian history. For a thousand years the Korean people respected Chinese culture and China respected Korean sovereignty. Unlike another of Korea's neighbors, China never invaded and occupied Korea. The Korean War of the 1950s was a war against American imperialists, not against the Korean people. Between the Chinese and Korean peoples there is a strong feeling that the two societies share similar cultural roots, traditions, histories, and civilizations. Therefore there are no psychological or cultural barriers to Korea and China continuing to be good neighbors in the future.

Economically speaking, China and the two Koreas are already major economic partners. China is one of North Korea's largest trading partners and the third largest of South Korea. Sino-ROK bilateral trade reached \$20 billion in 1998, and economic ties will be even stronger in the future. Both Korea and China will become major economic powerhouses in the twenty-first century, and it is their national interests to maintain economic ties with each other.

Finally, China and the two Koreas have no major problems in their relationship. Unlike the relationship between Korea and Japan, there are no major historical or territorial disputes between Korea and China. Certainly it will be the Koreans' decision whether to let American troops continue to stay in a united Korea and whether to keep the U.S.-Korea alliance. Since there are no indications that China-Korea relations will be troubled in the future, U.S. troops in a united Korea are unlikely to play any function against China.

China and Russia: No Longer a Threat

Although it is not part of the American alliance system in Asia, Russia has something to do with Chinese policy toward the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Chinese welcomed the presence of American forces near the east side of the Soviet Union to counter the "Soviet threat." Such a situation will not reoccur in the foreseeable future, however, because the Chinese no longer need American forces to counter the Russian threat: it no longer exists and will not exist in the foreseeable future.

According to "threat theory," there are two parts to a threat, the will and the capacity, and linking the two variables is the source. In Sino-Russian relations today and in the foreseeable future there is no source of serious problems between Russia and China. Ideological differences were one of the major sources of Sino-Soviet conflicts in the 1960s and 1970s. While differences in ideologies and political systems between Russia and China still exist, they will not cause problems because neither side emphasizes ideological factors in their relationship and it is not likely that they will focus on them in the future.

Another major source of Sino-Soviet conflict in the past, territorial disputes, was the more real and serious problem between the two. Now, with the settlement of 95 percent of their common border and agreement on the rest of the border, China and Russia have resolved this historical problem, thus extinguishing one of the major sources of possible future confrontation. It is difficult to say how much closer the relationship between the two big neighbors will

become, but it is easy to predict with confidence that nothing will lead them into hostility again in the foreseeable future. Therefore, unlike in the 1970s and 1980s, future Sino-Russian relations will give no room for U.S. military forces to play a role.

The Alliances and Territorial Disputes

China's attitude toward the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea alliances is based on such basic factors as security and foreign policy principles, regional security designs, and bilateral relations, but several small events and specific incidents also affect the Chinese position. Among them, the U.S. position on territorial disputes China has been involved in is the most important "incidental" factor.

Diaoyu Islands

If the U.S. government takes no position on the territorial dispute between Japan and China, then the American security treaty and U.S. military forces will play no role in the dispute. If this position changes in the future and the United States does take a position in the dispute, and the treaty's function covers the disputed area, then American forces and the U.S.-Japan alliance would be used to support the Japanese claim. This would place the United States and its alliance with Japan in a position directly against China. Therefore, the Chinese would find the U.S.-Japan alliance a hostile force against China.

Potential Sino-Korean Territorial Disputes

Today China and Korea have differences over the sovereignty of some part of the East China Sea. This is not a serious problem now and with hope will not become serious in the future. Neither should the unification of Korea lead to any serious territorial disputes between China and Korea. If problems arise and the United States takes a position, the alliance will have some role in the dispute, and the alliance will then become one side of the problem that China has to face.

The South China Sea

The territorial disputes in the South China Sea are already serious and will be difficult to resolve in the near future. The United States is not taking a position in the disputes and the American defense treaty with the Philippines is not stated publicly to cover the disputed area. It is one thing to demand freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and a peaceful means of dealing with the dispute, but quite another to take a position and give the defense treaty responsibility for one side in the dispute.

Conclusion

In terms of China's security and foreign policy doctrine, theory, principles, and approach to a regional security mechanism, the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK security alliances are not desir-

able now or in the future. No matter how good the bilateral relations between China and the United States, China and Japan, and China and the Koreas become, the Chinese opposition to military blocs will not change in the foreseeable future. Because China itself is a big country, it does not want, nor does it need to be, allied with someone. And the experience of the alliances has not been pleasant for the Chinese. Doctrine and principles are important and serve as a basis for policy. However, doctrine and principles themselves are not policy. Because alliances are not desirable does not automatically mean that they are not acceptable. Whether China will accept the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances in a changing Northeast Asia depends heavily on the bilateral relations between China and the three allied countries and Russia. If the bilateral relations between China and the others are going well, then the alliances and the American forces in the region as a result of the treaties need not be perceived as against China's interests, as a threat to China's security, as a force containing China, or as a party to territorial disputes involving China. In such a bilateral and strategic situation, the alliances and American military presence may be acceptable to the Chinese, even though they still are not desirable.

To the Chinese, alliances are a thing of the past, and they have no future in the twenty-first century. Perhaps Americans, Japanese, Koreans, and all other Asians can find better arrangements or mechanisms through ARF, the Four-Party Talks, or other multilateral efforts for regional security, arrangements that can maintain America's important role in Asia based on multilateral agreement rather than today's bilateral treaties, arrangements that serve the security interests of all. Certainly this is a long-term goal, but it should be the direction of today's efforts toward regional security in the Asia-Pacific region.

Notes

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