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Why the San Francisco System
Endures**

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Assessing U.S. Bilateral Security Alliances in the Asia Pacific’s “Southern Rim”: Why the San Francisco System Endures

William T. Tow

At the turn of the century, the United States’ postwar alliance network remains a key component of its international security policy. That policy is fundamentally based on maintaining military superiority over current and potential rivals in the Eurasian landmass.

To achieve this goal, the United States must be able to sustain a force presence in Europe and Asia that can shape the balance of power in both regions during peacetime. During wars or crises, U.S. military forces must also be able to project a decisive level of military capability in either theatre. As an increasing number of states develop ballistic missile forces,¹ there has been recent speculation about the future utility of force presence and forward bases. Nevertheless, current U.S. military planning endorses overseas American military presence and basing as critical to ongoing strategic commitments.

Regional security alliances, U.S. military planners argue, promote joint and combined training, encourage allied defense burden-sharing, and allow U.S. military commanders a wider array of military options should crises erupt in key regions.² The effects of ballistic missile threats should be mitigated, at least over the short-term, by weak combat system integration and by concerted U.S. and allied efforts to develop countermeasures against them.³ Alliances and U.S. force projection strategies therefore remain an integral part of the “shape, respond, and prepare” American military strategy.

Understandably, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has captured the most public attention among the United States’ alliance postures. That alliance celebrated its fiftieth birthday while conducting the first regional military conflict in its history against Serbia. It is no less appropriate, however, to take stock of America’s bilateral alliances in the

Asia Pacific region, as they too approach their half-century mark. They provide the framework both for the maintenance of approximately 100,000 U.S. military personnel deployed in the region and for the United States' continued presence as the region's primary strategic balancer.⁴ Allied bases and logistical support in the Asia Pacific provide U.S. forces with essential strategic depth and mobility. Interoperability with allied forces is a key "force multiplier" that underscores how critical the United States' regional bilateral alliances are to American international interests and strategic objectives.

The most significant of the bilateral security relationships operating in the Asia Pacific are those embedded within the so-called "San Francisco System." This term originates from the United States' creation of a regional bilateral defense network during the Japan peace conference convened in San Francisco during September 1951. At the conference, separate defense accords were signed with Australia/New Zealand, Japan, and the Philippines. Over the ensuing two or three years, these accords were supplemented by additional bilateral defense pacts negotiated with South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.⁵ The treaties with Australia (New Zealand is no longer formally affiliated with the U.S. component of ANZUS), the Philippines, and Thailand presently constitute the Southeast Asian/Southwest Pacific or "southern rim" dimension of this security framework. U.S. defense relations with Singapore are increasingly comparable to those conducted between two formal security allies and thus are also included as part of the southern rim component.

Intra-regionally, the Northeast Asian subregion is arguably regarded as more integral to core U.S. strategic interests than its Southeast Asian counterpart.⁶ U.S. forces are stationed in Japan and South Korea to protect what are, respectively, the world's second and eleventh largest single-state economies. U.S. global interests may face their most formidable challenge during the twenty-first century from another Northeast Asian power—the People's Republic of China (PRC). Nevertheless, Northeast Asia remains the core of regional geopolitics. Chinese, Russian, and North Korean military capabilities and strategic diplomacy occupy central positions in U.S. thinking about Asia Pacific security.

Some American defense observers have labeled this Northeast Asian geopolitical orientation as a "built-in emphasis within PACOM [the Pacific Command] on Northeast Asia." The 1991 loss of Clark and Subic Bay bases in the Philippines, they assert, simply reinforced an American propensity to focus attention on the northern portion of the Asia Pacific region since the end of the Vietnam War.⁷ Indeed, no substantial U.S. force concentrations are currently deployed in a Southeast Asian country, although military education, rotating deployments, and joint military training constitute an "over-the-horizon" U.S. strategic presence. Despite recent political instability in Indonesia and milder socio-political repercussions in several other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) states emanating from the Asian financial crisis, Southeast Asia's security environment remains essentially stable. Even so, the survival of any single Southeast Asian state would not directly affect the survival of the United States or seriously erode America's economic prosperity. Precisely because their position at home remains secure, U.S. policy spokespersons or force planners from PACOM and elsewhere have yet to offer an updated and comprehensive "grand design" specifically addressing U.S. geopolitical interests in this subregion. Such interests have been delineated, however, in recent policy statements offered by U.S. defense officials.

First, as intimated in the 1995 *East Asia Strategy Report*, the United States, as the world's foremost maritime power, must maintain control of Southeast Asia's maritime routes. These are vital to the flow of Middle East oil and are central lifelines between the great industrial powers of Northeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littorals.⁸ Bilateral alliances

with Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia, as well as the U.S.-Singapore defense relationship, provide the U.S. Seventh Fleet and other components of PACOM with friendly way-stations to sustain a regional naval presence.

Second, as PACOM's commander-in-chief recently observed, it is not in the interests of any state (including the United States, despite its maritime dominance in Southeast Asia) to strive for regional strategic dominance or hegemony.⁹ In the view of PACOM and the overall U.S. strategic planning community, the bilateral alliances in Southeast Asia provide an effective balancing mechanism against the possibility of such dominance. In particular, these alliances are viewed as a way to deter China from converting Southeast Asia into its own strategic buffer zone.

Third, each "southern rim" ally facilitates U.S. strategic operations in ways that reinforce U.S. access to and influence within the growing economies and markets of Southeast Asia and throughout the entire Asian region. PACOM's commander-in-chief regularly cites the United States' increased trade interdependence with Asia (now over \$500 billion per year or 35 percent of the total U.S. trade volume) and notes that the Asia Pacific marketplace contains over 56 percent of the world's population. In his words, the American interest clearly lies in "a secure, stable and prosperous Asia Pacific."¹⁰

This paper will explore the essential characteristics of U.S. security relationships with Southeast Asia and with Australia. It asserts that U.S. bilateral alliances in this area, constituting what can be termed the Asia Pacific region's "southern rim," work most effectively in conjunction with the multilateral security diplomacy initiated by Australia and ASEAN to stabilize their part of the world. It takes issue with those who insist that security alliances must be threat-oriented if they are to survive and be credible. Instead, it underscores the order-building characteristics of these alliances and their potential to link bilateral and multilateral security behavior in constructive ways.

Southern rim alliance viability is sustained through "alliance mutuality." This is defined as those collective or shared interests that cross the boundaries of bilateral alliances to reinforce cooperation throughout an entire alliance network. Alliance mutuality contrasts with the purpose and behavior of U.S. alliances in Northeast Asia (specifically with Japan and South Korea) which are sustained through mutual threat perception. Four key factors of alliance mutuality operate within the San Francisco System's southern rim. First, the United States' active and relatively benevolent alliance leadership stabilizes the alliance system and minimizes the prospect of alliance defection. Second, mutual allied desires to preclude hegemonic competition in the Southeast Asian subregion underpin the system. Third, alliance participants share (though they do not always implement) a commitment to underwriting continued regional prosperity. Finally, there exists a common desire to defuse security crises throughout the Asia Pacific.

Because of these four factors, the absence of a mutual or commonly understood threat has not substantially affected the relevance or cohesion of the southern rim's U.S. alliance network. Relating each factor to specific policy challenges presently confronting Australia and ASEAN bilateral friends and allies (the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) will illustrate their individual validity. First, however, it is useful to offer a brief survey of each southern rim ally's recent security policies and ongoing defense ties with the United States.

Background

A major feature distinguishing the southern rim alliance from U.S. security networks in, for example, Europe, has been (and still is) that each U.S. bilateral security relationship in Southeast Asia addresses a different “general interest.” This contrasts with NATO’s binding purpose of responding to a Soviet military threat during the Cold War and, more recently, of building a mutually acceptable European security order.¹¹

Extended deterrence has played a much less central role in U.S. bilateral security treaties operating in the southern rim. The rationales underlying each southern rim defense relationship will be examined more fully in the subsequent discussion of each country’s alliance background. At this point, it is worth noting that no unifying threat perception constituted a general purpose for the formation of the United States’ mutual defense treaties with Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand in the 1950s. Similarly, in the early 1990s, the upgrading of U.S.-Singapore defense ties did not relate to common threat perceptions Singapore shared with the other southern rim allies.

Australia

When the Australian, New Zealand, and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) was signed in September 1951, Australian-American security relations were formalized without a clearly demarcated, shared general interest. As a *quid pro quo* for Australia and New Zealand’s support of the Japanese peace treaty signed at that time, U.S. officials reassured the Antipodes that they would be protected against any resurgent Japanese military threat. The U.S., however, was more concerned about plugging what it viewed as tactical holes in the strategic posture of global containment it was then implementing against the Soviet Union. ANZUS was a tactical piece in this international puzzle. It was negotiated during the Korean War, when the Truman Administration’s concern about communism’s potential for global expansion was at its apex. Consequently, the ANZUS treaty was signed over the objections of many in the U.S. military establishment who wished to limit the influence of smaller allies on U.S. strategic planning.¹²

In subsequent years, the focus of ANZUS shifted from how Australia could supplement U.S. and British military strategy and power in defending Southeast Asia into emphasizing “strategic denial” of hostile, anti-Western forces from the South Pacific. Most American policy-makers still regarded Australia as simply a distant island-continent, useful for hosting U.S. intelligence tracking operations and providing recreation centers for American troops stationed in Indochina.¹³ New Zealand was a staging post for minor intelligence facilities and for U.S. operations in the Antarctic. New Zealand’s defection from U.S. global extended deterrence strategy in the mid-1980s was particularly irritating to the Reagan Administration. New Zealand did not have any special strategic value, but its defection was poorly timed. America was then attempting to persuade NATO countries to deploy U.S. theater nuclear missiles as a deterrence measure against a new generation of similar Soviet missiles, which themselves had just been deployed. At that time, if it wished to retain its own strategic affiliation with the United States, Australia had little choice but to support the U.S. initiative to expel New Zealand from ANZUS in 1986.¹⁴

During the latter stages of the Cold War, and particularly under the Whitlam Labor

government in the early 1970s, Australia began to turn toward Asia and to develop more independent postures from its “great and powerful [American] friend.” These postures included a formal normalization of relations with China, and the endorsement of nuclear-free-zone politics. The following decade, under yet another Labor government, Australia undertook a comprehensive review of its alliance. It concluded that security relations with the U.S. remained useful primarily as a means for Australia to affiliate with U.S. *global* security agendas, such as arms control verification and the strengthening of international institutions, rather than as a mechanism for strategic reassurance within the region. Successive Australian governments, both Labor and Coalition, have adopted an aggressive brand of “middle power diplomacy” designed to establish their country as a credible regional security actor without forsaking the American alliance as the ultimate guarantor of Australia’s survival.

Neither Australia nor the United States faces an immediate post-Cold War threat that would activate the ANZUS alliance against Australia’s regional neighbors in Southeast Asia or in the South Pacific. Australia’s great strategic depth and the general lack of force projection capabilities within the region indicate that this country is immune from a major military attack for a decade or more. Only Indonesia is large enough among Australia’s nearer neighbors to constitute a military threat (a concern in some Australian quarters) if the Jakarta government changes in a way inimical to Australia’s interests. The crisis in East Timor that exploded in September 1999 has certainly strained Australian-Indonesian bilateral ties to levels not seen in decades and has led to Jakarta’s abrogation of the 1995 Agreement on Maintaining Security (AMS) between those two countries.¹⁵ Indonesian military acquiescence to (or even support of) the oppression of East Timorese who voted for independence from Indonesia by anti-independence militia forces has generated widespread international condemnation. It has also caused at least some Australian policy-makers and analysts to question the continued utility of their country’s alliance with the United States following the Clinton administration’s reluctance to commit troops to a multinational peacekeeping force for East Timor.¹⁶ Indonesia’s size and strategic proximity to Australia mandate continued Australian efforts (and American support for such efforts) to defuse the intensifying Australia-Indonesia crisis that country strategically when opportunities to do so arise. Importantly, the credibility of the core tenet underwriting the Australian-American alliance—protecting or defending Australia from an external attack—has not been, and is unlikely to be tested during this crisis. Indonesia cannot project sufficient military power to threaten its southern neighbor in such a manner.

In its 1997 strategic review, *Australia’s Strategic Policy*, however, the Australian Department of Defense justified its defense modernization programs on the grounds that warning times for regional threats to materialize could be shorter than expected and ambiguous in nature. The most obvious threats would include: interdiction of Australian shipping either by submarines or sea-mines; attacks from ballistic or cruise missiles; and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.¹⁷ The American alliance is viewed as a policy instrument that effectively complicates the calculations of any would-be aggressor, and is particularly relevant in scenarios where Australia might be facing the prospect of a nuclear attack. At the regional level, Australia views ANZUS as an important support component for ensuring a continued U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia.¹⁸ The U.S. Defense *Department’s East Asian Strategy Report 1998* concurs with this assessment, citing the United States’ “robust” combined military and training schedule as evidence of Australia’s relevance to U.S. force presence and preparedness in the region.¹⁹ For its part, Australia contributes to U.S. global

nuclear arms control and intelligence capabilities by hosting the joint installation at Pine Gap that monitors international strategic military developments.²⁰ As noted by a Joint Security Declaration released at the Australian-American Ministerial (AUSMIN) summit in July 1996 (subsequently known as the “Sydney Statement”), the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is one of the key security objectives shared by Australia and the United States.²¹

More than any other southern rim ally, Australia has worked with other regional countries to advance cooperative and collective security in multilateral institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). It has endeavored to integrate bilateral and multilateral security approaches by shifting the bilateral process away from its traditionally strong emphasis on threat-orientation, while striking a judicious balance between collective defense and collective security at the multilateral level.²² Bilaterally, recent Australian governments have cultivated a series of annual political and military consultations with almost every other government in the Asia Pacific region and have also conducted extensive security discussions with Japan and South Korea.²³

At the multilateral level, Australia has introduced collective defense initiatives into the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA) that involve itself, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (largely through coordinating military exercises among those states), and through the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, directed toward South Pacific Forum states. In the ARF, it has supported collective security processes such as confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution. It has coupled these with stepped-up efforts to forge greater politico-security ties with China, and to become the *de facto* manager of UN operations designed to facilitate East Timor’s peaceful transition to independence.²⁴ Initially wary that such Australian initiatives would undercut the “hub and spokes” framework of the San Francisco System by diluting U.S. political control of its bilateral alliances, the United States has now become more (albeit still cautiously) supportive of Australia’s “middle power diplomacy” and its efforts to find common ground between bilateral and multilateral security.

In accordance with these developments, Canberra has recently calibrated a “constructive engagement” posture towards Southeast Asia with one of “alliance reinvigoration” towards the United States.²⁵ Forging a separate bilateral security accord with Indonesia illustrates the former “constructive” approach; consistent support and intermittent participation in U.S. military action in the Persian Gulf, the East China Sea, and in Southeastern Europe reflect the latter trend. Both policy tracks, as will be discussed later, fall within the confines of alliance mutuality.

The Philippines

As an archipelagic state with the second largest maritime area in ASEAN, the Philippines’ geopolitical outlook and external threat perceptions are inherently sea-oriented. A high level of strategic dependence upon the United States—the world’s dominant naval power and the Philippines’ colonial master until it was granted independence in 1946—was ingrained into the country’s strategic logic from the outset of the Cold War.²⁶ The 1947 Military Bases Agreement, the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (which gave the Philippines the status of “official” southern rim ally) and the 1953 Mutual Defense (military aid) agreement were all predicated on colonial foundations. The Subic Bay naval installation was the major repair/

logistics facility for the Seventh Fleet, as well as the largest naval supply depot in the world. Clark Air Base was the largest American overseas airbase and headquarters for two tactical fighter wings and one utility transport squadron. In the apt words of one American observer, the two bases were “conspicuous enclaves of American affluence and technological prowess.”²⁷ They also reinforced the Filipino elite’s propensity to accept U.S. containment strategy without much dissent or attention to modernizing the Philippines’ own defense forces beyond levels needed to quell domestic insurgencies.²⁸

Throughout the Cold War, U.S.-Philippines security relations were undermined by Filipino elites using American economic and military assistance to perpetuate their own power base and personal wealth. “Crony capitalism” and polarized political factions engendered domestic instability that overshadowed external threats. High population growth, combined with a lack of effective land reform, monopolistic industries, and outright corruption stagnated national growth for decades. Never was the phrase, “we have seen the enemy and he is us” more applicable than to the Philippines’ situation during the Marcos regime and that of its successor, the Aquino government. In retrospect, only its own internecine wars prevented the New People’s Army (NPA) communist movement or other insurgency groups from overwhelming the central government. Muslim insurgents in Mindanao still threaten to rupture the country.

Despite this internal turmoil, Subic Bay and Clark Air Base comprised the postwar nerve center for Seventh Fleet operations until the United States’ basing presence was discontinued in 1991. These bases were only marginally geared toward protecting the Philippines’ own sovereign interests. Instead, their efforts were directed toward defending the larger “Pacific island chain” in the event of a new world war or Asia Pacific theater-wide conflict.²⁹ Many Filipino leaders and political factions gradually came to resent this motive as neocolonial, along with the American insistence that the bases (occupying three-quarters of a million acres) remain sovereign U.S. territory. In September 1991, nationalist sentiments eventually intensified to the point where the Filipino Senate decided to reject a renegotiated Military Base Agreement.

Less than a decade after the basing changeover, the Philippines is now clamoring for a revival of U.S.-Philippines security relations. Chinese military presence in the Spratly Islands (a part of which is claimed by Manila) has expanded to such an extent that the Estrada government has pleaded with the U.S. to include the Philippines’ territorial claims within the purview of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT). In November 1992, President Fidel Ramos argued that American forces should continue to have at least intermittent access to Subic Bay and other installations in the Philippines. His successor, Joseph Estrada, has moved forcefully to implement this right of entry.

It is clear that China’s growing presence in the Spratly Islands has galvanized most Filipino political leaders’ interest in strengthening MDT. So, too, has the dawning realization (in this case, by a wider constituency) that the Philippines’ defense forces are, for all intents and purposes, incapable of responding effectively to *any* form of external aggression. A new Philippine-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was passed in May 1999 by the same Filipino Senate that previously rejected the 1991 Military Basing Agreement. This new accord will facilitate the full resumption of joint U.S.-Philippines military exercises. These had been suspended in 1996, after the Filipinos rejected American requests for U.S. forces committing crimes in their country to remain exempt from the Philippines’ jurisdiction.³⁰

Despite these rapprochements, the United States has still not responded to Filipino entreaties to strengthen the MDT on “threat-oriented” rationales. On the one hand, the

Clinton administration has issued a strong declaration backing continued international access to the South China Sea's critical sea lines of communication (SLOCs). But, on the other hand, it has rejected incorporating contested territory into the MDT, for fear of unnecessarily antagonizing Beijing over a territorial dispute in which it has no direct stake. It has also resisted anti-China factions in the U.S. Congress that are pressuring for more explicit American guarantees to be extended to Manila, solely because a "China threat" could possibly emerge.

At present, therefore, any overriding strategic rationale for U.S.-Philippines security ties cannot be viewed as threat-oriented. PACOM has already adjusted to the loss of its Philippines basing presence by implementing a "places, not bases" strategy of dispersing U.S. naval and air assets throughout Southeast Asia, and by utilizing "more flexible, less infrastructure-intensive mechanisms to maintain its forward-military presence" in the subregion.³¹ In a regional war, the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea could be defended from Singapore and possibly even from Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay, albeit not as efficiently as from Subic Bay. Clark Air Base remains unusable in the aftermath of the Mount Pinatubo eruption. In any case, Article IV of the MDT limits the U.S. security commitment to one of consulting, in accordance with the "constitutional procedures" of both countries. The Mutual Defense Board that meets intermittently to coordinate defense ties between the two countries has explicitly stated that no radical change will take place in the Philippines-U.S. bilateral security relationship.³²

The primary value of the Philippines security tie, in the estimates of U.S. policy-planners, is more political than strategic. An increasingly stable and self-confident Philippines democracy represents a positive development for ASEAN's long-term willingness to examine ways for all of its member-states to accelerate the political liberalization of their own societies.³³ Second, even with MDT constraints and limitations, the United States and the Philippines retain mutual interests in accessing key subregional sea lanes. Both are also engaged in regional confidence-building, by coordinating their efforts in the so-called "grey area" security sectors: anti-piracy, narcotics control, and refugee-related activities. These, in turn, dovetail with the multilateral security agendas of the ARF, and provide complementarity between bilateral and multilateral security approaches. For example, to check Chinese ambitions in the Spratlys *and* relax its excessive dependence on U.S. military power, the Philippines could usefully work with other ARF affiliates to strengthen preventive diplomacy. In doing so, the Philippines would condition China to modify its South China Sea posture gradually, thereby avoiding a bilateral confrontation with Beijing, in which it could not prevail without unqualified U.S. support. Participating fully in regional intelligence-sharing arrangements; establishing standard procedures for notifying other regional powers about the purposes, venues, and duration of military patrols it conducts in the Spratlys; and hosting centers or projects for "bridging" ARF-sponsored studies on regional security with PACOM studies and conferences are all feasible options for Manila to pursue.³⁴

Singapore

The rising importance of Singapore in U.S. defense calculations is directly related to the decline of the Philippines alliance. Singapore's location at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, its relatively advanced economic infrastructure, and its willingness to host U.S. air and naval contingents effectively support both U.S. global and its own foreign policy and security interests. Indeed, Singapore's interests have been recently and aptly summarized by

Jean-Louis Margolin: (1) seeking protection via a secure Western “umbrella,” with the United States serving this purpose since Britain’s departure “East of the Suez;” (2) seeking acceptance from potentially hostile neighbors through diplomatic activities in ASEAN and other regional and extra-regional institutions; and (3) seeking prosperity, compensating for its small size and population by becoming an indispensable regional economic center.³⁵

The Singapore-United States security nexus began in earnest in November 1990 when Lee Kuan Yew and U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Tokyo, which allowed U.S. air and naval units temporary access to Singapore’s port and selected air fields for maintenance and training. No permanent stationing of U.S. combat forces was to be permitted (a condition that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir reinforced by putting pressure on Lee when they discussed the issue during the 1992 ASEAN summit).³⁶ In January 1992, this MOU was amended to allow for the transfer of a U.S. Navy logistic command office from Subic Bay to Singapore. In February 1998, another MOU was negotiated granting the U.S. Navy use of piers in a new naval base at Changi that, when completed, will be able to berth aircraft carriers and other large ships. The American navy already uses Singapore as a hub for three months of the year, when it deploys vessels to Southeast Asia to exercise with regional maritime forces.³⁷ As noted above, Singapore hosts approximately 65-70 permanently stationed American military personnel attached with the Commander Logistics Group, Western Pacific (COMLOG-WESTPAC) at the Sanbewang terminal. It also supports PACOM’s 497th Combat Squadron that deploys near Changi airfield six times annually, for six weeks at a time.

Singapore shares ASEAN’s general perception that the United States has not had a coherent regional strategy under the Clinton administration. Nonetheless, it values a continued U.S. military presence as a tacit counterweight to increasingly self-confident Chinese geopolitical posturing and as a check against Japanese remilitarization. It has an unavowedly realist perspective of international security, however, that accentuates threat perception as a basis for diplomatic behavior. Since its founding in 1965, Singapore has adhered to a posture of strategic self-reliance. “Total defense” is merely the latest variant of this approach. The Singaporean government rationalizes that the survival of a city-state can only be achieved by harnessing the entire population and infrastructure to the defense effort.³⁸ It also believes in maintaining sufficiently high levels of military preparedness to render very costly any attempts by potential adversaries to challenge Singapore’s existence or vital interests.

Indeed, unlike its ASEAN counterparts, Singapore is in a position to maintain substantial defense spending in the face of the Asian financial crisis. Its FY 1999 defense spending is projected to remain at 5.1 percent GDP and 25 percent of the total national budget, despite the recession.³⁹ Its defense industries enjoy impressive economies of scale and scope, allowing them to assimilate the transfer of foreign military technology efficiently and cost-effectively.⁴⁰ It is now in the best position of any Southeast Asian state to project air power and land mobile forces into the subregion’s archipelagos.

Singapore has conducted its major power relations by carving out specific niches of mutual interest with both China and the United States. It has moved in a low-key fashion to develop these, lest it intensify Malay and Indonesian apprehensions that Singapore might defect from ASEAN’s diplomacy of “regional resilience.” It is intent on balancing the interests of the United States, Japan, and China through multilateral regional institutions such as the ARF. But it hedges this strategy by maintaining extensive bilateral ties with China and the U.S. as a means of compensating for intermittent anti-Singaporean (i.e. anti-Chinese, as three quarters of Singapore’s population is of Chinese extraction) sentiment that wells up in its large Malay neighbor-states, Malaysia and Indonesia. In late 1998, for example,

Singapore hosted Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao and military leader Chi Haotian, praising them and other Chinese leaders for exercising fiscal restraint during the Asian financial crisis.

Intermittent flare-ups of tensions in Singapore's relations with Malaysia and Indonesia have little relevance to the U.S. security relationship. Most independent observers believe that Singapore's formidable and highly modern military forces would be more than capable of responding effectively to any Malay aggression, itself a highly unlikely event, against the city-state. Prospects of U.S. force involvement in any such scenario are very low, a reality Singapore has underscored by its conspicuous efforts to emphasize the limited aspects of its defense ties with the United States.

It is worth noting that differences in the two countries' social outlooks occasionally spill over to undercut the good will which the United States and Singapore derive from their politico-security ties. Singapore remains sensitive to U.S. human rights organizations' criticism of its selective press censorship and tight enforcement of its Internal Security Act. This factor, combined with Singapore's concern for minimizing geopolitical tensions with its larger Malay neighbors, reinforces its official posture of avoiding more formal U.S. bilateral security associations.

All of these developments underscore the primacy of confidence-building and engagement over threat responses in Singapore's approaches to security relations with its regional neighbors and the United States. Singapore collaborates selectively with Australia and the United States—the region's greatest military power—while taking special care not to alienate China, America's most likely strategic rival in the Asia Pacific.

Thailand

Traditionally renowned for its diplomatic agility, Thailand has maneuvered adroitly between China and the United States in the 1990s to preserve cordial relations with both major powers while retaining its status as ASEAN's key "front line state." If China hopes eventually to dent or even jettison the U.S. regional alliance network, however, Thailand may be the most promising target in the southern rim. Accordingly, background analysis of this southern rim U.S. ally will be more extensive than that offered on the three previous security partners.

Thailand's geographic location has been central to shaping its national security interests and strategies. Located predominantly in the central plains of Southeast Asia, Thailand has been vulnerable to land-based invasions originating from its western and eastern frontiers, with Burma and Vietnam constituting the two primary threats from these respective areas.⁴¹ In 1954, Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese communist forces moved to occupy large sectors of Laos stretching along the Mekong River. The Thai military government entered into the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in pursuit of a "forward strategy" to deter similar forays by the Viet Minh into their country. This marked a significant departure from the traditional Thai diplomatic policy of maintaining national independence by balancing its relations with great powers, and leaving enough room to maneuver so that alignments could be shifted at opportune or appropriate intervals.

From the outset, however, Thailand was disappointed with the nature of the United States' SEATO commitment. Its wish was for the U.S. to assume a more transparent commitment to military action in response to Thailand incurring either an overt attack or covert subversion. Like the other American mutual defense treaties negotiated in Asia

during the early Cold War, the U.S. merely committed itself to “consult” with Thailand if such contingencies were to arise.⁴² In March 1962, however, Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman secured additional assurances from the U.S. that it would not seek to gain unanimous consensus from other signatories of the Manila Pact before committing itself to defending Thailand.

The effects of this attempt to instill strategic reassurance were short-lived, and ultimately overridden by the Nixon Doctrine in 1969, along with the pullout of U.S. forces from Vietnam during the early 1970s. Writing for an American journal in 1970, Khoman complained that “it is all too apparent that the power equation in Southeast Asia is out of balance.”⁴³ Thailand proceeded to withdraw its own troops—which it had originally deployed in Vietnam to support the American war effort. U.S. troops and aircraft stationed in Thailand were also withdrawn, and by mid-1975, diplomatic relations with the newly established communist governments in Indochina had normalized. Sino-Thai relations simultaneously warmed, as Thailand sought to increase its politico-strategic ties with Beijing, and thereby, to counterbalance Soviet and Vietnamese regional power. By the mid-to-late 1980s, Thailand was buying Chinese armor and artillery to strengthen its border defenses against Vietnam, and moving in a number of directions to institutionalize Sino-Thai security relations.⁴⁴ The Manila Pact was retained, but in name only: by strengthening its ties with China, Thailand was able to return to its traditional maneuvering posture between the great powers. The U.S. defense tie remains part of that strategy, but it is no longer the dominant component.

With the end of the Cold War, Thailand’s security concerns have become increasingly local, rather than international or even pan-regional in scope. For example, Thailand is increasingly preoccupied with Myanmar and its growing military power. It also remains at odds with Cambodia and Laos over refugee flows instigated by Cambodian factional strife and by Laotian suppression of its Hmong ethnic minorities. For its part, Washington has even less interest in becoming involved with Thailand’s local security agendas than it does in affiliating with the Philippines’ Spratly Islands’ claim. This is reciprocated by Thailand’s increased reluctance appear too compliant with American global strategic objectives. Although still supporting U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf by allowing American units in transit to refuel in Thailand, the Thai government rejected a 1996 U.S. request to pre-position military supplies in the Gulf of Thailand, which could be used for future Gulf contingencies.

China, in contrast to the U.S., has a direct long-term strategic interest in securing Thai acquiescence to its growing influence over and presence in Myanmar, and in ensuring Thailand’s passivity in its South China Sea disputes with Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines. ASEAN unity produced the 1992 South China Sea resolution; ASEAN fragmentation during the next century’s first decade may allow China to circumvent that proclamation. To encourage this scenario, China has offered Thailand a number of incentives. These include building a road between Bangkok and China’s Yunan Province, via Myanmar; working with Thailand to strengthen the latter’s merchant marine; selling small arms to the Thais at cut-rate prices; extending economic assistance to the beleaguered Thai economy via low-interest loans; and purchasing substantial amounts of Thai rice, rubber, and tapioca.

In early February 1999, a comprehensive Sino-Thai Plan of Action for the 21st Century was signed by the two countries’ foreign ministers. Among the many policy dimensions addressed, the document called for tightening their security cooperation through upgraded consultations between diplomatic and military personnel and strategic studies experts;

exchanges of military science and technology; and “strengthening their consultations and cooperation over regional and international issues of common concern.” Thailand also acknowledged China’s “New Security Concept” by concurring with Beijing that “the trend toward a multipolar world is gaining momentum.”⁴⁵

Thailand is aware, however, that it cannot move too far or too fast toward a full rapprochement with China without risking the alienation of other ASEAN member-states. In response to this concern, Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumphan Boriphath has recently observed that intensifying Sino-Thai cooperation could be viewed as a conduit for facilitating closer Chinese security cooperation with other ASEAN members in the interest of “promoting regional peace and prosperity.”⁴⁶

Given the evident divergence of American and Thai strategic focus, along with the recent momentum of Thai-Chinese relations, it would be understandable to conclude that there is little basis for sustaining Thai-U.S. alliance relations. Indeed, this conclusion is reinforced by recent strains in broader Thai-U.S. bilateral relations. Thai perceptions that the United States has been reluctant to deal directly with Bangkok on the Asian financial crisis have intensified tensions. Washington is seen as distancing itself from Thailand’s economic doldrums, initially refusing to extend direct financial assistance, and using the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to impose overly stringent economic remedies.⁴⁷ By contrast, China’s extension of modest economic assistance, and Japan’s introduction of the Miyazawa Plan for Southeast Asian economic recovery, were well received as sensitive and timely policy measures.⁴⁸ U.S. opposition to Deputy Prime Minister Supachai Panitchpakdi, Thailand’s candidate to become the head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) created additional hostility towards the United States among a substantial number of Thai politicians. Supachai was deemed unacceptable by various U.S. legislators and labor union officials due to insufficient Thai sensitivity to environmental and labor issues.⁴⁹

Military relations between Thailand and the United States are hardly exempted from the overall trend. For example, with its national budget strained to unprecedented levels by the Asian financial crisis, Thailand had to cancel purchasing American F-18 fighter aircraft (it is now considering the purchase of used F-16s).⁵⁰ The annual *Cobra Gold* naval and marine exercise was whittled down to a simulated “peacekeeping scenario” in 1997, and in 1998, the number of U.S. and Thai forces participating was scaled down by more than half.⁵¹ The 1998 defense budget was reduced by 17 percent from the previous year, and Thailand’s current debt burden still remains unprecedented. A Ministry of Defense Study, *Vision 2030*, projected that as Thailand’s strategic importance to the United States declined, China would fill the void by offering cheaper weapons systems and increased opportunities for bilateral military cooperation.⁵²

Notwithstanding all these developments, the Thai-U.S. bilateral defense alliance perseveres for several reasons. First and most importantly, Bangkok understands that to dissolve security relations with the United States now would be tantamount to burying multilateralism as a security facilitator in Southeast Asia. The balance of power would sway too much toward Beijing. Except during the height of the Cold War, when it joined the ill-fated Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Thailand has been distinctly uncomfortable with courting only one major power to achieve its national security interests. Second, Thailand’s objective is to bolster the ARF, rather than undercut it by leaning too far in China’s direction. America’s strategic power and regional military presence is still sufficiently formidable that Thailand cannot afford to allow rampant nationalism to overwhelm longer-term considerations for retaining security relations with the United States. As one

Thai commentator recently argued: “the crafting of foreign policy cannot—and must not—be guided by emotion, but by wisdom and the long-term interests of the country.”⁵³ Washington’s superpower status is the only acceptable balancing mechanism for rising Chinese power. The prospect of Japan’s rearmament is still unacceptable to virtually every other regional security actor. The U.S. market for Thailand’s exports still holds greater longer-term appeal to most Thai traders and investors than do intermittent and, at times, highly calculative, Chinese loan packages which seem geared as much toward extracting politico-strategic dividends as to building foundations for long-term market relations.⁵⁴

From the American perspective, Thailand remains important as a staging post for rapid deployment of U.S. forces to distant theaters of operation. As a bilateral security ally in the Asia Pacific, Thailand provides refueling and transit arrangements that have enhanced the United States’ ability to operate within the region.⁵⁵ *Cobra Gold* and other joint military exercises are designed to sustain a relative high level of interoperability between U.S. and Thai forces “to serve . . . common interests should we have to conduct joint military operations in the region.”⁵⁶ In an address before the Royal Thai Armed Forces in May 1997, the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC) praised the Thai-U.S. “productive partnership” and ventured that the two security allies’ consultations on regional military concerns and military-to-military exchange programs helped facilitate a “solid foundation” for overall U.S. regional security cooperation. The levels of American military presence and activities, he concluded, were “about right.”⁵⁷

The most likely scenarios involving Thai-U.S. military collaboration are relatively low-key operations sanctioned by the ARF—antipiracy, or antiterrorism and peacekeeping ventures—“order-building” or “order-sustaining” operations, rather than defense against a common adversary. This concurs with alliance mutuality rather than with traditional deterrence rationales for continued alliance affiliation. As Kusuma Snitwongse has noted, the present security environment in Thailand’s environs is best “described as one of ‘risk’ rather than ‘threat.’ The risk comes from uncertainties that accompany the transition from bipolarity to multipolarity.”⁵⁸ By entering into the Plan of Action for the 21st Century with China, Thailand has acknowledged that bilateral alliances will need to adjust to the new modalities generated by this structural change. It is less clear that the United States is ready to make this adjustment. U.S. policy analysts still insist that Thai access to advanced U.S. conventional weapons systems, high technology, and to U.S. and Western markets, still outweigh China’s overtures to entice Thailand and other ASEAN states into its own sphere of influence.⁵⁹ To what extent Washington’s security relationships with Thailand, and throughout Southeast Asia, are underwritten by the policy consistency and resource commitments necessary to command ongoing confidence in the U.S. alliance posture, however, remains uncertain.

Alliance Mutuality: Testing the Criteria

There is a tendency for even the most highly respected American and allied strategists to argue that because more American economic and security interests are concentrated in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific are becoming areas of relatively declining American strategic concern.⁶⁰ However, the United States continues to defy this “common wisdom” by signaling its determination and capacity to maintain a viable southern rim alliance component. In 1996, President Clinton visited Australia, the Philip-

piners, and Thailand specifically to strengthen alliance ties. U.S. defense officials negotiated expanded defense arrangements with Australia. U.S.-Philippines bilateral defense relations promise to be revived via ratification of the aforementioned Visiting Forces Agreement, and by resumption of joint military exercises. Singapore's readiness to host U.S. aircraft carriers and other naval units—once its massive pier, now under construction at the Changi naval base is completed—also underscores this trend.

America's alliance politics in Southeast Asia posit an additional, highly critical benchmark for regional security: whether the San Francisco System can support the growth of a viable multilateral regional security framework throughout the Asia Pacific region, and eventually be integrated into it. If so, the arguments of the Clinton administration—namely, that “realist-based” alliance politics can buy the time and security environment to cultivate enduring multilateral instruments for regional security management, as envisioned by more “liberal” policy analysts—are credible.⁶¹

The United States increasingly views bilateralism and multilateralism as complementary regional security strategies. The bilateral posture is underwritten in fundamental terms by the San Francisco System's southern rim component. As is the case with its southern rim allies, Washington also pursues a different form of bilateralism through cultivating a separate set of security ties with other friendly Asian states as well as with possible regional adversaries. Each such relationship has its own set of dynamics and is predicated on fulfilling different and very specific U.S. interests. The United States wishes, for example, to “engage” China by conditioning it to accept norms and practices that support stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific. Dialogue and confidence-building measures are thus encouraged to overcome clear Sino-American policy differences over political ideology, human rights, and strategic priorities.

Recent American efforts to strengthen its southern rim alliances support the argument that these relationships remain central to U.S. interests and policies in the Asia Pacific region. Barring the deterioration of Sino-American relations to a point where strategic bipolarity once more becomes the dominant structure of regional security politics, the effective maintenance of bilateral relations remains the best approach for building a viable, enduring, cooperative security order in the region. The critical factors, which underlie harmonious, ongoing bilateral relations, are discussed below.

A Benign Alliance Hegemon

American leadership on southern rim security issues is usually measured by how actively it supports its allies' security interests (the *intensity* of alliance hegemonic behavior), and how effectively it convinces them that its own strategic interests converge with theirs (how *benign* the hegemon appears to its lesser allies). In reviewing how these two factors interrelate in the southern rim, one may reach a preliminary conclusion that the United States is a benign, albeit involved, alliance hegemon.

The U.S. Pacific Command's “cooperative engagement” strategy allows for the development of substantial levels of communication and interoperability between U.S. and southern rim allied forces. Australia, for example, relates most closely to U.S. global strategy by hosting U.S. operations at the Pine Gap joint installation. The two allies have built a complex infrastructure of allied interaction with well over a hundred separate memorandums of understanding (MOUs) governing various aspects of alliance cooperation, and with an

expanding annual package of Australian-American joint military exercises.⁶² Thailand still hosts thirty-five combined U.S.-Thai military exercises annually, while both Thai and Singaporean pilots receive advanced training at various air bases in the United States. Singapore is weighing expanded defense industrial collaboration with U.S. firms, including participation in the Joint Strike Fighter Program. With the Philippines' approval of the May 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement (in May 1999), large-scale joint military exercises (such as the *Balikatan* series) will be resumed between the forces of that country and their U.S. counterparts.

Despite the relatively substantial intensity of military interaction taking place in a southern rim context, the United States defers from blatantly encroaching on its allies' sovereign prerogatives to conduct independent security relations. Indeed, it views allied cultivation of such ties as mostly positive, and constituting a trend of "security pluralism": cooperative and complementary frameworks in which nations seek to address their particular security concerns through the establishment of bilateral and multilateral relationships and dialogues.⁶³ The Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand are all key member-states of ASEAN, as well as and valuable contributors to ARF multilateral security deliberations. Australia is the United States' closest regional ally, enjoying unusual access to the U.S. security policy-making community. In Washington, Australia is viewed as a valued, "middle power" interlocutor, often translating and responding to regional security trends with greater sensitivity than its senior ally, by virtue of its location and its diplomacy.

At the multilateral level, the United States supports "first track" security dialogues between government representatives in the ARF, and employs less formal multilateral arrangements for officials to address specific issue-areas. The latter include the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Four-Power Talks between the two Koreas, China, and the United States. The United States also participates in informal, "second track" meetings between officials and independent experts in the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), and in other venues to pursue regional confidence-building, preventative diplomacy, and conflict resolution as mandated by the ARF's endorsement of these policy approaches.

To summarize the first factor of alliance mutuality, current U.S. alliance management strategy directed toward the southern rim has been both active and benign. Despite doubts entertained in some allied capitals about its policy consistency and perseverance, America's overall alliance leadership has been stable and, thus far, has minimized alliance defection.

Anti-Hegemonism

The above element of U.S. alliance politics poses a significant strategic question for policy-makers: Are the southern rim alliances effective agents, providing strategic reassurance and conflict avoidance, or merely anachronisms lingering while new threats emerge in the region? Balancing against a mutually perceived security threat does not appear to be an important feature of current southern rim alliance behavior.⁶⁴ With the possible exception of the Philippines, all the southern rim allies are still more interested in engaging China than containing it.

Power balancing, however, still functions as a key rationale for southern rim preservation. As previously noted, Thailand has reverted in recent years to its traditional posture of balancing off great powers. Even as it currently explores closer alignment with China as the most likely ascendant hegemonic contender in Southeast Asia, it also retains significant

security ties with its Cold War mentor, the United States. Singapore maintains “correct” ties with Beijing, but keeps them sufficiently distant to avoid further alienation from its Malay neighbors, Indonesia and Malaysia. The government of the Philippines—following a highly nationalist decision to close U.S. basing operations in the country—is now moving to strengthen what until recently had become a moribund alliance. Anti-American sentiment is still strong in some quarters of the Philippines, but its territorial dispute with China leaves it less room to maneuver among the great powers than it might otherwise wish.⁶⁵

Australia’s now moribund bilateral security treaty with Indonesia, negotiated in late 1995, is a particularly graphic illustration of southern rim balancing to avoid hegemonic competition. To culminate this arrangement, the Keating government capitalized on strong personal relations between the Australian Prime Minister and President Suharto. The AMS also represented the epitome of clearly intensified Australian-Indonesian political and security relations over the previous decade, signified by the 1989 East Timor Gap treaty, and by accelerated joint military exercises between the two countries.

Interestingly, what was *not* in the AMS treaty’s formal text may have been its most important component.⁶⁶ The alliance was not directed toward a specific threat but rather, offers an expression of confidence-building and strategic reassurance on the part of Australia, underscoring its support for Indonesia’s national security and economic development as integral to its own security and prosperity. By assigning Indonesia “pride-of-place” in its own vision of a preferred regional order, Australia calculated it could better contribute to long-term stability in the Southeast Asian subregion. Successive Indonesian governments, it was hoped, would tend to view Australia as a cooperative, supportive state with a positive, foreign independent foreign policy, rather than as a mere strategic proxy of the United States. The East Timor crisis immensely complicates this objective over the short-term, as both Australia and Indonesia come to grips with their starkly different approaches for managing issues of self-determination and human rights transgressions. This episode, however, has also set the context for Australian policy planners to review the means by which their country may become less strategically dependent on American power in dealing with its Southeast Asian neighbors. How Australian-Indonesian tensions evolve over the next few years will be integral to shaping the future context of Australian perceptions and policies.

In considering various independent initiatives, southern rim alliance partners pay close attention to their political impact on bilateral security relations with the United States, and thereby, to southern rim hegemonic politics as a whole. For example, Canberra elected not to involve the United States in consultations leading to the AMS signing, primarily to underscore Australia’s determination to interact independently with its Asian neighbors.⁶⁷ It also took great pains to emphasize that the Indonesian treaty was not an “anti-China” agreement. Subsequent concern did arise in some Australian quarters that the AMS would introduce an unnecessary dimension to ANZUS, thereby complicating the Australian-American security relationship. The United States expressed apprehensions that the AMS would undercut American efforts to impose human rights penalties against the Suharto regime, by severing Indonesia from International Military Education and Training (IMET) program funds and blocking sales of advanced jet fighter aircraft.⁶⁸ In general, however, the American response was positive. The United States viewed Australia’s Indonesian initiative as a genuine order-building measure, intended to stabilize Southeast Asia’s overall security environment.⁶⁹ That it did not endure is clearly a source of immense disappointment in Washington as well as in Canberra.

If an admittedly more nationalist Indonesia remains preoccupied with domestic eco-

conomic and political stability instead of threatening its Southeast Asian neighbors, China emerges as the only obvious candidate capable of aspiring to regional hegemony (Japan has opted to remain under the U.S. defense umbrella, its security relationship predicated upon the approval of updated defense guidelines). ASEAN and Australian concerns were especially aroused during 1995-96, as China intensified its “active offshore defense strategy,” projecting more aggressive postures in Taiwan and the South China Sea. Although Chinese diplomacy has since been designed to alleviate such apprehensions, it is clear that “the vision of a strong middle kingdom with potential hegemonic ambitions never entirely disappears.”⁷⁰

Anti-hegemonic sentiment directed toward the PRC is purposely downplayed and almost never explicitly expressed by the southern rim allies and other Asia Pacific security actors. Once more, the Philippines appears to be an exception to this trend, but one could argue that Manila’s rhetoric is intended to use a “China card” to extract American strategic concessions and economic assistance. The Estrada government has admitted that it cannot now defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea and in any case, it has seldom matched its rhetoric with the military action that could only escalate its disputes with the Chinese.⁷¹ In the area of Sino-Australian relations—and particularly since the March 1996 Taiwan crisis, when ties deteriorated after the newly elected Howard government supported U.S. military actions in the East China Sea—Australia has been careful to ensure that it projects its diplomacy toward China in ways that make clear its opposition to building anti-China coalitions. Thailand and Singapore, too, have long tempered their relations with other major powers to take Chinese sensitivities into account. As the Thai Deputy Foreign Minister described the overall approach: “[ASEAN] would like to see stable and cooperative structural relations developing between China and the other major powers, particularly the United States and Japan, to provide the needed anchor for stability in the region.”⁷²

Southern rim nations thus tend to pursue anti-hegemonism tacitly rather than explicitly. The United States, Japan, and ASEAN balance Chinese power by their collective identification and implementation of diplomatic initiatives through various politico-security networks. These are designed to induce China to modify its strategic interests and behavior, and to undertake the building of a credible multilateral regional security framework. Time and circumstances, it is hoped, will work in this strategy’s favor, particularly as China becomes more genuinely integrated into regional markets.

China, for its part, regards this strategy as a kind of “conditioning behavior.” It is concerned that its interest in becoming a regional power broker equal to the United States—if not supplanting it entirely—will be neutralized by what amounts to nothing more than a tacit anti-China coalition. This thinking is apparent in recent Chinese assessments of the reasons underlying the Philippines’ confrontations with Beijing over the Spratly Islands territorial dispute. From China’s perspective, Manila is being goaded by the United States, which is looking for renewed basing access in the Philippines. Seeking to counteract what it views as the American-led coalition strategy against itself, China has embraced a posture which explicitly rejects the politics of alliances and coalitions against both superpowers, which it intermittently during the Cold War. It now favors a “New Security Agenda,” which condemns the “strengthening of military alliances,” and endorses cooperative security and multilateralism in East Asia. Skeptics perceive China’s policy transition more as a means to degrade the American alliance system than as an endorsement of multilateralism.⁷³

If it opts to compel the southern rim allies to take sides between Washington and Beijing, China will have confirmed the arguments of those who contend that a “China threat” does

occur in the region. The Philippines and Australia would most likely move quickly to transform their security alliances with Washington from instruments of strategic reassurance back into agents of deterrence and containment—the very outcome Beijing most fears. Singapore would confront immense pressure from China to discontinue its defense association with the United States, and equally compelling counterpressure from its Malay neighbors to keep its distance from the PRC. Retaining its access to state-of-the-art weapons systems and participation in the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), would be an incentive for Singapore to maintain its strategic affiliation with Washington. Thailand, on the other hand, would come under even greater Chinese pressure. Clearly, for all four southern rim allies, dealing with the United States and China on the basis of alliance mutuality to prevent all-out hegemonic competition in the region, is a far more appealing prospect.

The Commitment to Regional Economic Prosperity

The Asian financial crisis has highlighted the fragility of liberal institutionalism and economic interdependence in a region where economic asymmetries and resource competition abound. ASEAN, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation group (APEC), and other proponents of multilateralism entertained an optimistic vision which was shattered by the ASEAN states' heavy and unexpected dependence on great power assistance—via the IMF—to withstand the recent economic recession. During this crisis, a clear shift in the Asia Pacific region's balance of power occurred in China's favor. By avoiding the devaluation of its currency, China was suddenly viewed by its neighbors as a “responsible” regional power.⁷⁴

Of great concern to the United States and its southern rim allies was the perception that the United States had actually mismanaged the financial crisis at key intervals.⁷⁵ The U.S. interventionist posture, as orchestrated through the IMF, alienated Thailand (as discussed above) and Indonesia. Although the latter country is not a formal southern rim ally, its political and economic stability is critical for ASEAN's survival. Australian intermediaries ultimately succeeded in persuading the IMF to moderate its terms for loans to Jakarta, but the initial damage was done, and the United States' credibility as an economic security partner declined throughout Southeast Asia. President Clinton's absence at the 1998 APEC summit, along with his vice president's poorly received remarks about Malaysian human rights practices at that conclave, were unfortunate, untimely episodes, reinforcing the region's generally negative U.S. image, engendered during the financial crisis. Throughout 1999, American efforts to work constructively with Indonesia's current government to ensure a peaceful national election, and to strengthen the country's “social safety network”—by training election monitors and promoting military-civilian dialogues—have slightly recouped the ill-effects of its financial crisis mismanagement.⁷⁶

At the bilateral level, America's southern rim allies are increasingly allowing their economic relations to “spill over” to affect security ties. Thailand's intensification of security relations with China has been discussed above. Singapore has appeared increasingly reluctant to extend financial assistance to Malaysia and Indonesia. While Indonesia has become too preoccupied with its own domestic political crisis to be anything other than resentful, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir has taken more concrete action: he pulled out of joint military exercises conducted under the auspices of the Five Power Defense Arrangements, and rescinded Singapore's long-standing overflight rights for their military aircraft in Malaysian air space. Australia has also entertained long-standing grievances against the

American “economic enhancement program” (EEP), which subsidizes U.S. wheat and dairy products in the international marketplace, at the expense of Australian agricultural products. Nor did the Clinton administration win any friends in July 1999 when it announced additional strict tariffs on Australian and New Zealand lamb exports to the United States. Finally, Filipino nationalism, linked with resentment over its excessive economic dependency (which marked the U.S.-Philippines relationship throughout much of the Cold War) continues to be a factor, albeit a declining one, in U.S.-Philippines bilateral ties.

Perhaps the two most important outcomes of the Asian financial crisis as it relates to southern rim security are that (1) although battered, the subregion’s bilateral and multilateral institutions still survive; and (2) the United States remains the “balancer of the last resort” if the Malay states, Vietnam, or Thailand find Chinese power in Southeast Asia to be too onerous. This is, however, far from an optimal situation. The United States has not demonstrated the will or capacity to exercise effective leadership in integrating economic security with military strategy; it is now paying the price of decreased credibility. Australia and the Philippines have declined to link economic issues and defense concerns in an alliance context because they really have nowhere else to turn. Singapore could gravitate closer to China, but doing so overtly would only fuel additional Malaysian and Indonesian resentment. Thai-U.S. trade remains viable, even as Thai-U.S. political relations become more strained.

In summary, the shared commitment of the United States and its southern rim allies to underwriting continued regional prosperity must be strengthened to maintain southern rim alliance viability. Despite their continued difficulties in reacting in a timely, decisive fashion to fast-moving economic developments, the bilateral U.S. security alliances and the region’s existing multilateral institutions, such as ASEAN and APEC, are the only real instruments currently available for these allies to embrace common approaches to economic coordination and development.

Defusing Regional Security Crises

An essential factor in the United States’ successful maintenance of effective bilateral security relationships in Southeast Asia is the relevance of those ties in defusing regional security crises. The southern rim allies’ record in supporting the United States in this context has been mixed in Southeast Asia—but no less so than that of the region’s multilateral institutions!

Increasingly, “security crises” include episodes of turbulent regime transformation or challenges to regime legitimacy. The Suharto government’s demise in Indonesia was hardly smooth, and the arrest and trial of Malaysia’s Deputy Prime Minister for moral transgressions threatened to destabilize that country’s polity substantially. In a signal failure to rise to the occasion, Southeast Asia’s key multilateral political organization did not discuss how such events could affect regional stability. At ASEAN’s foreign ministers meeting, held in Manila during July 1998, Thailand and the Philippines proposed softening ASEAN’s cardinal principle of noninterference in other member-states’ internal affairs by adopting a “flexible engagement” approach. If passed, this would have permitted discussion of one another’s internal affairs if specific domestic issues threatened overall regional security. Instead, the foreign ministers ultimately adopted a watered-down version of the approach—“enhanced interaction”—which committed ASEAN “to work on increasing the transparency of its deliberations.”⁷⁷

A similar tendency to sacrifice candor for expediency has manifested itself among southern rim allies who are also ASEAN member-states. Despite passing a previous resolution for the defusing of the Spratly Islands, no other ASEAN state, including Singapore or Thailand, vigorously supported the Philippines when it expressed outrage over China's occupation of Mischief Reef. When China intensified its "missile testing" proximate to Taiwan just before the Taiwanese presidential election in March 1996, no other Southeast Asian state—apart from Australia—publicly stated its support for the American deployment of aircraft carriers in the East China Sea. China's tough response to Australia's overt support has since modified Canberra's "alliance reinvigoration" posture in Washington. It is questionable to what extent Australia would extend similar public support to the United States if the Taiwan Strait crisis were to intensify once again.⁷⁸ Given this legacy, realists might reasonably ask how one could expect the United States' southern rim allies vigorously to support U.S. interests in future crises or flashpoints that may erupt in the Asia Pacific. That skepticism, however, could also be extended to multilateral experiments in regional security. For example, KEDO has what can, at best, be described as a mixed record in funding commitments to provide fuel for North Korea and in guaranteeing that country's nuclear restraint. The Four-Power Talks in Geneva on the Korean Peninsula's unification remain stymied. And the ARF has declined to become actively involved in defusing the nuclear brinkmanship between India and Pakistan.⁷⁹

In the absence of more effective multilateral security cooperation in the region, it may be all the southern rim allies can do to preserve and cultivate one respected ASEAN diplomat has described as a "web of interlocking bilateral relationships" which relate their participants' respective interests effectively to the entire region and beyond.⁸⁰ In this sense, the southern rim bilateral alliances fit well as a security network that emphasizes regional maritime security, political stability, and strategic reassurance. The southern rim defense accords also enhance crisis response by allowing for maximum flexibility in consultations and coordination between the United States and its allies, as prescribed in the Mutual Defense Treaties' language. This allows them to counter specific acts of aggression via *ad hoc* arrangements that can be sustained or dissolved as the situation warrants.⁸¹ Given their members' common desire to defuse security crises in the Asia Pacific, the southern rim bilateral alliances currently seem the most effective instruments for this purpose—alliance mutuality can succeed better in this context than ongoing multilateral organizations in the region.

Conclusion

The San Francisco System's continued relevance depends upon the extent to which the United States and its Asia Pacific allies share common security interests that can be pursued and implemented through that alliance network. Over the longer term, it also rests on how successfully that alliance network will integrate bilateral and multilateral security approaches throughout greater Southeast Asia and beyond.

Much has been written about the Clinton administration's Asian travails, from its ill-fated "enlargement" campaign to "democratize" the region, to its more recent image

problem incurred while responding to the Asian financial crisis. However, its fundamental interests in maintaining the San Francisco System—including the southern rim—still outweigh the negatives. These include cultivating mutual economic growth and the expanded markets necessary to realize it; deriving ways to interact positively with a stronger, more ambitious China while precluding its development into a hostile regional hegemon; and implementing regional confidence-building measures that effectively modify future regional crisis and security dilemmas.

The strategic environment that confronts the five southern rim partners today, as opposed to when their strategic affiliations commenced at the height of the Cold War, is significantly different. “Security” has evolved into a much broader phenomenon than the restrictive, zero-sum, and exclusively inter-state concept which shaped that prolonged conflict. It is an environment that is more receptive to pursuing national security objectives with good diplomacy and a sustained political commitment, than to perpetuating force capabilities in response to seemingly intractable regional and global threats. The challenge posited to alliance mutuality is to avoid a return to an earlier, threat-oriented milieu.

How successfully this challenge will be met may hinge, in large part, on the continued evolution and growth of multilateral security diplomacy in Southeast Asia. The last two years have not been ASEAN’s most auspicious. Myanmar’s contested and acrimonious membership accession; debate about the continued relevance of that grouping’s time-honored principle of “noninterference”; increasingly brittle tensions among the Malay states over the fate of Malaysia’s former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim; and disagreements between Singapore and Malaysia over issues of banking, border controls, and cultural identity issues have all undermined ASEAN’s previous image of a coherent, regional institution spearheading “the Asian Way.”⁸² The turmoil engendered by Indonesia’s crisis over the East Timorese independence referendum and the subsequent multilateral peacekeeping response by the UN merely confirms ASEAN’s overall pattern of institutional lethargy.

ASEAN, however, is still the closest thing Asia has to a pluralistic security community, in which all-out war between its member-states remains highly improbable. ASEAN also continues to be the primary basis for Southeast Asian states to resist great power encroachment against their sovereignty and independence, while still maintaining a low-key but coveted American strategic presence that most of its member-states regard as critical insurance against just such a contingency. Until such time as ASEAN and ARF move beyond their currently modest processes of dialogue and confidence-building, this nexus constitutes the basis for an ongoing American-sponsored bilateral security network. That step forward will be achieved when both Chinese and American policy interests are satisfactorily accommodated.

If regional multilateral security arrangements remain flawed, one cannot assume that bilateral alliance networks can linger indefinitely. To avoid returning to a conflict-prone environment in Southeast Asia (involving Australia as well), *all* of the region’s key actors, whether major or minor powers, must dedicate themselves to negotiating and sustaining rules that underwrite the subregion’s security consistently and credibly. Alliance mutuality can and must buy time for cooperative security mechanisms to take effect. It remains for other security approaches to complete the process.

Notes

¹ The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) has noted that even less advanced ballistic missiles armed with chemical or biological weapons can have a “devastating impact” on military support personnel and can disrupt one’s military operations even if they do not cause heavy casualties. IISS, *Strategic Survey 1998/99* (London: Oxford University Press for the IISS, 1999), p. 43. See also Paul Braken, “America’s Maginot Line,” *The Atlantic Monthly* vol. 282, no. 6 (December 1998), pp. 85-93. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr. views a greater divestiture of responsibility for fighting major regional conflicts (MRCs) to allies on the grounds that the United States will not have sufficient resources or technology needed to maintain current mission priorities in a revolution of military affairs (RMA) and a global strategic environment. See Krepinevich, “Needed: A Smaller and Very Different U.S. Military,” *Policy Sciences* vol. 29, no. 2 (1996), especially pp. 103-104.

² See the Combined Joint Chiefs of Staff, *1997 National Military Strategy*, reprinted on the Internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/jcs/core/executiv.htm>. See also the section on “Principles of U.S. Military Presence in Asia” in Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, “The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region,” *East Asian Strategy Report 1998*, (Washington DC: GPO, 1998), pp. 9-13.

³ On the combat system integration problem, see Paul Dibb, “The Revolution in Military Affairs and Asian Security,” *Survival* vol.39, no. 4 (Winter 1997-98), especially pp. 102-106. In August 1999, for example, the United States and Japan reached a formal agreement to collaborate on a full-fledged theater missile defense (TMD) system for this purpose. Don Kirk, “U.S. Plans New Missile In Project With Japan,” *International Herald Tribune*, 7 August, 1999. Also see U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress on Theater Missile Defense Architecture Options for the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Washington, DC: GPO, May 1998), and Peter Landers, Susan Lawrence and Julian Baum, “Hard Target,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* vol. 161, no. 39 (24 September 1998), pp. 20-22.

⁴ *East Asian Strategy Report 1998*, p. 10.

⁵ The term “San Francisco System” was perhaps first applied in the contemporary security literature by Peter Polomka, “East Asian Security in a Changing World: Japan’s Search for a ‘Third Way,’” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* vol. 4, no. 2 (Winter 1992), pp. 71-94, especially pp. 75-77. For comprehensive background of the U.S. bilateral alliance network during the Cold War era, consult William T. Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player: U.S. Extended Deterrence Strategy in the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

⁶ Daniel I. Okimoto, et. al., *A United States Policy for the Changing Realities of East Asia: Toward A New Consensus*, (Stanford: Asia/Pacific Research Center, Institute for International Studies, 1996), pp. 28-29.

⁷ Marvin C. Ott, “Policy Without Strategy.” Paper delivered to the Twentieth Annual National Defense University Symposium, cosponsored by the United States Pacific Command, in association with the Asia-Pacific Security Studies Center, March 1-2, 1999. A copy of the text can be found on the Internet at <http://www/apcss.org/pacsym99/html>.

⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, “United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region,” *East Asia Strategy Report 1995* (Washington, DC: GPO, February 1995), pp. 6-7. Donald Emmerson notes that the “region’s archipelagos still constitute a kind of strategic turnstile through which the Seventh Fleet would have to move quickly in response to renewed hostilities in the Persian Gulf-not to mention the dependence of America’s chief East Asian ally, Japan, on keeping these sea lanes open for commercial use.” See “Statement on Regional Security

in Southeast Asia,” submitted by Donald K. Emmerson to the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, *U.S. Interests in Southeast Asia*, 104th Cong., 2nd Sess., 30 May, 1996, pp. 99-100.

⁹ Adm. Joseph W. Prueher, USN, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, “Asia-Pacific Security: The U.S. Pacific Command Perspective,” *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum* (Fall 1998) reproduced on the Internet at <http://www.pacom.mil/forum/fall98/Prueher.html>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The concept of alliance “general interest” is introduced by Glenn H. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics* vol. 36, no. 4 (July 1984), p. 464. It “stems from the anarchic structure of the [international] system and geographic position of the state.” General interests “do not involve conflicts over specific issues with specific states but will be defended or acted upon against all comers.” NATO was formed to defend the West’s political and economic system against what was viewed as possible Soviet aggression to overthrow it in Europe.

¹² Terry L. Diebel, “Changing Patterns of Collective Defense: Security Commitments in the Third World,” in Alan Ned Sabrosky, ed., *Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Boulder and London: Westview, 1988), p. 109, and Dr. Peter Edwards, “History of the ANZUS Agreement” in Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *ANZUS After 45 Years: Seminar Proceedings*, (Canberra: The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, September 1997), pp. 11-12.

¹³ “Revisionist” literature on the Australian-American alliance, which emphasizes this overall trend, includes Joseph Camilleri, *Australian-American Relations: The Web of Dependence*, (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1980) and Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country*, (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1979).

¹⁴ Michael C. Pugh, *The ANZUS Crisis, Nuclear Visiting and Deterrence*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player*, pp. 369-380.

¹⁵ For Australian reaction to Indonesia’s cancellation of the AMS, see Greg Sheridan, “It’s a Blow to Lose the Pact We Had to Have,” *The Australian*, 17 September, 1999, p. 6; Don Greenlees and Robert Garran, “Jakarta Severs Ties with Canberra,” *The Australian*, p. 1; and Richard MacGregor, “A Deal Struck by Yesterday’s Men,” *The Australian*, 17 September, 1999, p. 6.

¹⁶ See, for example, Peter Hartcher, “Going It Alone in Troubled Waters,” and Paul Cleary, “Joint Army Exercises To Continue,” *The Australian Financial Review*, 10 September, 1999, p. 10. Noted Australian defense analyst Paul Dibb ruminated that “Within a few months of coming to office, this Government said it had reinvigorated the allianceWhere the hell is the reinvigorated alliance now? This raises very interesting questions about the reliability of the alliance. . . .” Other Australian analysts argued that “Indonesia is strategically important to the U.S. in a way Australia will never be. It controls the straits that 70 percent of Japan’s oil passes through. . . .Why would [the U.S.] anger Indonesia for the sake of one Indonesian province?”

¹⁷ Australia Department of Defence, *Australia’s Strategic Policy* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1997), pp. 30-31, 37-38, and Craig Snyder, “Australia’s Pursuit of Regional Security into the 21st Century,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* vol. 21, no. 4 (December 1998), p. 3.

¹⁸ *Australia’s Strategic Policy*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁹ *East Asian Strategy Report 1998*, p. 26.

²⁰ Australia Department of Defence, *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper 1994*, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1994), p. 98.

²¹ Joint Security Declaration text provided to the author by the United States Embassy, Canberra, Australia, August 2, 1996.

²² This point is noted and developed by Snyder, "Australia's Pursuit of Regional Security," p. 10.

²³ For background, see Rosemary Greaves, "Australia's Bilateral Regional Security Dialogues," in *Australia Member Board, Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific [AUS-CSCAP] Newsletter* no. 6 (May 1998), reproduced on the Internet at <http://www.coombs.any.edu.au/RSPAS/AUSCSCAP/Auscnews6.html>.

²⁴ "Australia Shifts to a More Aggressive Asian Foreign Policy," *Global Intelligence Update*, 25 June, 1999 as reproduced on the Internet at <http://www.stratfor.com/services/giu/062599.ASP>.

²⁵ The definitive statement on "constructive engagement" was a Ministerial Statement by the Hon. Senator Gareth Evans QC, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia's Regional Security*, (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, December 1989). Alliance reinvigoration is embodied in the "Joint Security Declaration: Australia-United States: A Strategic Partnership for the Twenty-First Century," July 1996 (manuscript copy in author's hands).

²⁶ For an incisive analysis of the strains underlying the U.S.-Philippines postcolonial relationship, consult Robert Pringle, *Indonesia and the Philippines: American Interests in Island Southeast Asia*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 56-61. Also see Wilfrido V. Villacorta, "Philippines: Nationalism and Regionalism," in Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds., *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Basingstoke/New York: Macmillan/St. Martin's, 1999), pp. 189-191, 194.

²⁷ Pringle, *ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁸ As Herman S. Joseph Kraft has observed, "The predominant AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] role as a national 'police force' undercut any propensity or ability it may otherwise have developed for projecting power beyond the Philippines' shore and laid the groundwork for Philippines dependence on United States security guarantees." See Kraft, "The Philippines-United States Security Relationship" in William Tow, Russell Trood, and Toshiya Hoshino, eds., *Bilateralism in a Multilateral Era: The Future of the San Francisco Alliance System in the Asia-Pacific*, (Tokyo/Nathan: The Japan Institute of International Affairs/Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, 1997), p. 121.

²⁹ In 1958, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that "These bases are therefore an essential part of a *worldwide* base system designed to deter communism." As cited in H.W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 270. Emphasis is mine.

³⁰ The VFA legal stipulations are complex but well covered in an article by Christina V. Deocadiz, "Visiting Forces Agreement: 'Very Passionate Negotiations,'" *Manila Business World* in English, as reprinted in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, East Asia Daily Report (hereafter cited as FBIS-EAS) -98-068, 9 March, 1998. Joint military exercises resumed in August 1998 with U.S. and Philippine naval vessel exercises near the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. See FBIS-EAS-98-217, 5 August, 1998.

³¹ David G. Wiencek, "The Philippines," in William M. Carpenter and Wiencek, eds., *Asian Security Handbook*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 210. Also see Ott, "Policy Without Strategy."

- ³² Kraft, "The Philippines-United States Security Relationship," p. 124.
- ³³ Author conversations with U.S. State Department personnel, Washington, DC, May 1999.
- ³⁴ Many of these proposals are contained in Kraft's "The Philippines-United States Security Relationship," pp. 128-129. J.N. Mak has noted that Manila is "faced with the problem of getting into the mainstream of ASEAN defense linkages." Pursuing these types of measures would help overcome this problem. See Mak, *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1995-1992*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, no. 103 (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 1993), p. 112.
- ³⁵ Jean-Louis Margolin, "Singapore: New Regional Influence, New World Outlook?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* vol. 20, no. 3 (December 1998), pp. 321-322.
- ³⁶ Larry M. Wortzel, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: ASEAN Security Without An American Umbrella," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 13 December, 1996, pp. 13-14 of Internet version located at <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usassi/ssipubs/pubs96/asean/asean.htm>.
- ³⁷ Michael Richardson, "In Asia, A New Mutual Defense," *International Herald Tribune*, 12 March, 1998.
- ³⁸ Ministry of Information and the Arts, *Singapore 1998*, pp. 93-94.
- ³⁹ "Singapore Budgets For Growth Beyond the Asian Crisis," U.S.-Singapore Business Committee Update, as reproduced on the Internet at <http://www.usis-singapore.org.sg/embassy/politics/budget99.html>. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Singapore spent \$US 4 billion on defense in 1995 and \$US 4.1 billion in 1997—approximately comparable levels to the latest defense budget figure. See *The Military Balance 1998/99* and *The Military Balance 1997/98*.
- ⁴⁰ See Ron Matthews, "Singapore's Defence-Industrial Model," *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter* vol.25, no. 3 (April/May 1999), pp. 22-24.
- ⁴¹ Panitan Wattanayagorn, "Thailand: The Elite's Shifting Conceptions of Security," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 436-438, and "Thailand" in Charles Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook 1997*, (Honolulu/Tokyo: East-West Center/Research Institute for Peace and Security, pp. 128-129.
- ⁴² For background, see R. Sean Randolph, *The United States and Thailand: Alliance Dynamics 1950-1985* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 31-33; Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player*, pp. 285-286; and Daniel Freeman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).
- ⁴³ Thanat Khoman, "The New Equation of World Power and Its Impact on Southeast Asia," *Orbis* vol. 20, no. 3 (Fall 1976), p. 618.
- ⁴⁴ See Tow, *Encountering the Dominant Player*, pp. 247-250.
- ⁴⁵ A text of the Plan of Action was disseminated by *Xinhua*, 30 April, 1999 as translated and reprinted in FBIS-CHI-1999-0503. Thai analysis is provided by a *Nation* editorial, "Steering Ties Into

the Next Century,” *The Nation* (Bangkok), 6 February, 1999, as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0423; Kati Chongkittavorn, “Thai Policy Meets China Challenge,” *The Nation* (Internet Version in English), 2 February, 1999 as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-99-033; and “Chuan Says PRC to Provide Military Aid to Thailand,” *Zhong Hua Ribao* (Bangkok), 2 May, 1999, as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0504. Providing background on the recent evolution of Thai-Chinese ties from a Western perspective is Charles E. Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook 1998*, (Tokyo and New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1998), especially p. 141.

⁴⁶ As cited in *Xin Zhong Yuan Ribao* (Bangkok), 2 April, 1999 as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0406. It should be noted that *Xin Zhong Yuan Ribao* is a pro-Chinese newspaper.

⁴⁷ For a typical statement illustrating this position, see *Bangkok Business Day* editorial, “A ‘Special Friendship’ That Rings Hollow,” *Bangkok Business Day*, 5 March 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0305, 5 March, 1999.

⁴⁸ Consider the following conclusion offered by a *Bangkok Post* editorial: “It is fair to say that the [Thai-American] relationship has not been a healthy one, especially given Washington’s reluctance to come to Thailand’s aid when we dived headlong into our worst-ever economic crisis in mid-1997. The mood in the White House and on Capitol Hill was that Washington already had done its part through contributions to the International Monetary Fund and its bailout package. But our real friends then and now appear to be China and, even more so, Japan which, apart from its contributions to the IMF, has come up with the Miyazawa Plan.” See editorial, “Let’s Try Not To Get Carried Away,” *Bangkok Post*, 5 May, 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0506, 5 May, 1999.

⁴⁹ Kamhaeng Pharitanon, “The True Nature of the United States,” *Bangkok Daily News*, 5 May, 1999, as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0506, 5 May, 1999. See also a series of *Bangkok Post* articles appearing on May 3, 4, 5, 1999 and reprinted as “Thais Urged To Express Feelings Toward U.S. in ‘Mature’ Way,” in FBIS-EAS-1999-0505, 5 May, 1999.

⁵⁰ “Albright: U.S. Prepared To Sell Used F-16s to Thailand,” *The Nation* (Internet Version in English), 5 March, 1999, as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0304, 5 March, 1999 and Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook 1998*, p. 141.

⁵¹ “Thai-U.S. Military Exercises To Take Place More on Land,” *Bangkok Post* (Internet Version in English), 10 April, 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0412, 10 April, 1999.

⁵² Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook 1998*, pp. 142-143.

⁵³ Editorial, “Let’s Try Not To Get Carried Away,” *Bangkok Post*, 5 May, 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0506, 5 May, 1999.

⁵⁴ Until 1996, the U.S. was Thailand’s largest export market (ASEAN superseded it in 1996-1997). With the uncertain status of ASEAN economies, America’s overall trade position should remain strong in Thailand. U.S. military assistance to Thailand is minimal, restricted mostly to subsidizing Thai officers’ education under the International Military Education Training (IMET) program. For relevant data prior to the onslaught of the Asian financial crisis, see Kusuma Snitwongse, “The Thai-United States Bilateral Alliance,” in Tow, Trood, and Hoshino, eds., *Bilateralism in a Multilateral Era*, pp. 113-114.

⁵⁵ *East Asia Strategy Report 1998*, p. 28.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁷ “Pacific Command Chief To Royal Thai Armed Forces: U.S. Will Stay Engaged Militarily in the Asia-Pacific.” Text available on the Internet at the United States Information Agency (USIA) website, under “The U.S. Commitment to Security in the Asia-Pacific” section. See <http://www.usia.gov/regional/ea/easec/prueher.htm>.

⁵⁸ Snitwongse, “The Thai-United States Bilateral Alliance,” p. 111.

⁵⁹ Author interviews with policy analysts at the U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, DC, May, 1999.

⁶⁰ Richard Betts has observed that within East Asia, “it is Northeast Asia that is the focus of U.S. concern. p.6. American strategic commitments are clearest there, given the long history of bilateral alliances.” See Betts, “Emerging Trends: An American Perspective,” in William T. Tow, ed., *Australian-American Relations: Looking Toward the Next Century*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. 134. Paul Dibb has further noted that “the United States will continue to have important economic and strategic interests in Asia, but they will be concentrated in Northeast Asia. Southeast Asia is now of reduced strategic concern to America.” See Dibb, *Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia*, Adelphi Paper 295 (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), p. 37.

⁶¹ Stanley Roth, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, argued in testimony before the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific in February 1999 that “. . .one of the main accomplishments of the Clinton Administration in Asia has been vigorous support for the establishment and strengthening of regional institutions.” See USIA, *Washington File* EPF 303, February 10, 1999.

⁶² The work of Thomas-Durrell Young and Desmond Ball has documented most of these arrangements. See Young, *Australian, New Zealand, and United States Security Relations, 1951-1986* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview, 1992) and Ball, *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate: American Installations in Australia* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1980).

⁶³ *East Asian Strategy Report 1998*, p. 42.

⁶⁴ Steven M. Walt has argued that a “balance of threat” is a key feature of alliance behavior. See his *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1987).

⁶⁵ See Paul Magnusson, “Asia Is Whispering: ‘Yankee Come Back,’” *Business Week*, 9 August, 1999, p. 53, who reports that the USS *Blue Ridge*, the 7th Fleet’s flagship, sailed into Manila Harbor in late July 1999 and was “greeted by red, white, and blue balloons and the Philippines Navy band.” This visit occurred three days after a Philippines patrol boat collided with a Chinese fishing boat in disputed waters of the South China Sea.

⁶⁶ A text of the treaty can be found on the Internet on the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s “Security Web Page” at <http://www.au7stlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/19960013.html>.

⁶⁷ David Lague, “Treaty Negotiations Surrounded by Secrecy,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December, 1996.

⁶⁸ For assessments on the ANZUS issue, see Duncan Campbell, “ANZUS Integrity Under Question,” *The Weekend Australian*, 16-17 December, 1994, p. 4. For assessments of implications with respect to U.S. embargoes of military equipment sales and IMET, consult Stewart Woodman, “Unraveling Australia’s Strategic Dilemma,” in Ian McLachlan, et. al., *Australia’s Strategic Dilemmas: Options*

for the Future, (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, 1997), p. 30. President Clinton also cut off U.S. military assistance to Indonesia in response to the East Timor crisis in September 1999.

⁶⁹ Author interviews with policy analysts at U.S. Department of State, May 1999.

⁷⁰ David B.H. Denoon and Evelyn Colbert, "Challenges for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)," *Pacific Affairs* vol. 71, no. 4 (Winter 1998-99), p. 512.

⁷¹ See "Estrada: Philippines Defenseless in Next 2 to 3 Years," *Manila Business World* (Internet Version in English), 29 March, 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0329; and "Philippines: Mercado Wants U.S. to Share Military Expertise with Manila," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Internet Version), 6 December, 1998, reprinted in FBIS-EAS-98-341, 7 December, 1998.

⁷² "Chinese Urged To Play Active Role in Regional Security," *The Nation* (Bangkok, Internet version), 2 April, 1999 as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-1999-0402, 2 April 1999.

⁷³ "China's National Defense," text of Defense White Paper in *Xinhua*, 27 July, 1998 as translated and reprinted in FBIS-CHI-98-208, 27 July, 1998.

⁷⁴ *Beyond the Asian Financial Crisis: Challenges and Opportunity for U.S. Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute for Peace, 1998), p. 15. See also Amitav Acharya, "Realism, Institutionalism and the Asian Economic Crisis," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* vol. 21, no. 1 (April 1999), p. 8.

⁷⁵ These are assessed by Acharya, "Realism, Institutionalism, and the Asian Economic Crisis," pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶ The American "social safety" strategy is outlined in testimony by Stanley Roth and reprinted on the United States Information Service *Washington File*, EPF404, 18 March, 1999.

⁷⁷ Kawi Chongkittawon, "Towards an Enhanced Interaction," *The Nation* (Internet Version), 27 July, 1998, as translated and reprinted in FBIS-EAS-98-208, 27 July, 1998, and Nussara Sawatsawang and Rhanravee Tansubhanol, "Thailand Urges ASEAN To Accept Flexible Engagement Policy," *Bangkok Post* (English version), 23 July, 1998, p. 6, as reprinted in FBIS-EAS-98-204, 23 July, 1998.

⁷⁸ The author has derived this conclusion based on extensive discussions with various Australian officials and policy analysts over the past two years.

⁷⁹ As one Indian press report characterized ARF discussions in Manila later in the year, "India was able to ensure it was not specifically mentioned in the thumbs down resolution. . . . There was a sense among the Southeast Asian members and, crucially, the United States, that a harsher condemnation would be a rhetorical act, a closing of the stable door after the nuclear horse had bolted." See editorial, "Among Locals," *The Telegraph* (Calcutta), 30 July, 1998, as reprinted in FBIS-TAC-98-218, 6 August, 1998.

⁸⁰ Former Malaysian Foreign Minister Tan Sri Gazhali Syaffie is credited with coining this phrase and he is cited by J. Soedjati Djiwandono, "The Strategic Dynamics of Post-Cold War Southeast Asia," in Denny Roy, ed., *The New Security Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Basingstoke/New York: Macmillan/St Martin's Press, 1997), p. 175.

⁸¹ This point is emphasized by Ralph Cossa, "United States—Asia-Pacific Security Policy: Engagement and Enlargement," in Tow, Trood, and Toshino, *Bilateralism in a Multilateral Era*, p. 157.

⁸² A concise but excellent summary of these trends is offered by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 1998/99*, pp. 220-221.

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