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**Russian–Chinese–U.S. Relations and Security
in the Asia–Pacific Region**

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Russian–Chinese–U.S. Relations and Security in the Asia–Pacific Region¹

William E. Ferry and Roger E. Kanet

During the later stages of the Cold War, in the 1970s and 1980s, relations among the Soviet Union, China, and the United States were, as Robert Ross and Herbert Ellison have noted, “distinguished by a significant degree of strategic interdependence. The security of each state was significantly shaped by the nature of the relationship between the other two”.² Interactions within this “strategic triangle” affected not only relations among the three major powers involved, but also had profound implications for the Asia–Pacific region [APR] as a whole. China was by far the weakest member of this triad, because it was not a superpower in the same sense as either the Soviet Union or the United States. Yet China had the conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as the manpower, to present a challenge to superpower interests at a regional level. This was attested to by the enormous massing of Soviet troops and armaments on their border with China and by Washington’s acknowledgment of China’s power in its overall policy toward Asia. Thus the “China factor” played an important role in how both Moscow and the Washington approached the Asia–Pacific region. It complicated the struggle between the two superpowers in the Asia–Pacific area in a way that differentiated this region from what was occurring in Europe where no such influential third power existed.

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the nature of relations among the Russian Federation, the Peoples’ Republic of China, and the United States obviously changed, along with the influence of each on events in the APR. The relative power of the three legs of this triad shifted dramatically, with the role of the Russian Federation decreasing in the region and that of China increasing. As for the United States, although it has emerged as the sole superpower in the world, it has not shown the willingness to project that power to all regions of the globe, including the Asia–Pacific region. In part, this results from the way in which the end of the Cold War altered the environment in which international relations are conducted. No longer is the world a bipolar one where relations are defined primarily in ideological and military terms; rather, a multipolar world has emerged where countries are increasingly concerned about a broader array of issues. The struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States made it easier for countries to develop coherent policies toward one another based on each other’s position in a world of absolutes. Absent ideology as a frame of reference, economics and nationalism have become more significant in determining national policy.³ Moreover, domestic political developments have taken on added importance in the formulation of foreign policy, because in both Russia and the United States, at least, strong voices can be heard that demand that greater attention be given to domestic interests.

As is evident in the Asia–Pacific region, economic concerns have been joined by issues of security and national identity in influencing the foreign policy of countries. Frequently these issues clash with one another and make it difficult for a country’s leadership to formulate coherent policies toward other states. For example,

1. An earlier draft of this article was presented at a conference on “The Security Relationship Between the U.S. and Taiwan: After the March 1996 Mini-crisis” sponsored by the Institute of American Studies, Tamkang University, Taipei, Republic of China on Taiwan, 10 July 1996. The revised papers from the conference are to be published by Tamkang University Press, Taipei, in a volume to be edited by Dr. Wan-chin Tai, Director of the Institute of American Studies.

2. Robert S. Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policy Making in the Cold War* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 4. Another important and more current set of articles concerning developments in East Asia can be found in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *The Strategic Quadrangle: Russia, China, Japan, and the United States in East Asia* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1995). See, also, Gilbert Rozman, “A Regional Approach to Northeast Asia,” *Orbis*, 39, no. 1 (1995): 65–80.

3. For further discussion concerning the rise of nationalism in Asia and its effects on security in the APR, see Robert A. Scalapino, “Asia’s New Order: Implications for the United States,” in George T. Yu, ed., *Asia’s New World Order* (London: Macmillan Press, in press), pp. 259–290. On the impact of nationalism on Russian policy see Alexander V. Kozhemiakin and Roger E. Kanet, “Nationalism and the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation,” in William E. Ferry and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *Post-Communist States in the World Community* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s, in press).

China's leaders are committed to strengthening economic ties with the rest of the world and with the United States, in particular; but, at the same time, they do not want the United States to infringe on their national sovereignty by dictating how China should behave either in the treatment of its own citizens or in its relations with third parties. Thus although the West may have "won" the Cold War, this does not mean that countries such as China accept Western imperatives of economic and political liberalization. In the present essay, we use the evolving relationships among the United States, Russia, and China as a framework within which to examine how Asia-Pacific security has changed in the 1990s. In employing this framework, we do not mean to imply that these three actors are the only important ones in the region, because others—Japan, for example—are also of crucial importance for the long-term security of the region. However, we wish merely to point out that much can be learned by using the evolving mutual relations of the United States, Russia, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a basis of analysis.

U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union and Russia

Hostility and competition characterized relations between the United States and the Soviet Union throughout most of the four decades following W. W. II. By 1948 the two countries were engaged in a competition for political influence that extended from Central Europe, across the Middle East and Asia to the Pacific. The Berlin Crisis of 1948–49, the Western decision to establish the NATO alliance, and the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula were all driven, in part at least, by the competing visions of national interest and the future development of the world that were dominant in Washington and Moscow. The conquest of mainland China by the communists and the alliance between China and the Soviet Union were viewed by U.S. leaders as clear evidence of the expanding strength of the Soviet Union—even though, as we now know, Moscow had little to do with the communist victory in China, and the two communist giants would soon split because of the differences that divided them.

During the 1950s, although the major locus of the U.S.–Soviet confrontation remained Europe, the Korean War and the ensuing normalization of U.S. military relations with Japan and the creation of a special security relationship with the Republic of China (Taiwan) resulted in a dramatic increase of U.S. military capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the course of the next decade the superpower confrontation expanded to include competition for influence throughout the Third World. In locales as distant and diverse as Egypt and Zaire, South Asia, and Central America the United States and the Soviet Union sought to make allies and ideological converts and to gain strategic advantage against one another. The dramatic split in Sino-Soviet relations that occurred at the beginning of the 1960s had little immediate impact on U.S.–Soviet relations for several reasons. First, it took some time before official Washington understood the importance of the Sino-Soviet split. Moreover, expanding U.S. involvement in Vietnam, where the communists at that time were able to count on support from both China and the USSR, diverted U.S. interest away from developments in Northeast Asia.

Not until the beginning of the 1970s, after the establishment of diplomatic ties between Beijing and Washington, did the United States and the Soviet Union move to normalize their own relations. For the United States the primary objective was to "tame" Soviet behavior and to reduce Soviet willingness to support activities globally that undercut U.S. and Western interests. For Moscow the concern about a two-front confrontation with China in Asia and NATO in Europe, along with the goal of obtaining Western technology to help revitalize its increasingly moribund economy, were important factors leading to a policy of détente—a policy that was formalized in the Helsinki agreements of 1974. Even before the culmination of the détente policy at Helsinki, however, relations between the two superpowers began to deteriorate to the point that, only a few years later analysts spoke of Cold War II. Soviet efforts to take advantage of their new-found military capabilities by expanding their role in regional conflicts throughout the Third World (for example, Vietnam, Angola, the Horn of Africa, and finally Afghanistan) and their decision to introduce a new generation of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe were central elements in this deterioration. Important, as well, were the unrealistic expectations that had been raised in the United States about the impact that détente was likely to have on U.S.–Soviet relations and on world affairs more generally.⁴

4. For a discussion of this period in U.S.–Soviet relations see Roger E. Kanet, "East-West Political Relations: The Challenge of Detente," in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy and East-West Relations* (New York–Oxford: Pergamon Books, 1982), pp.

From the late 1970s until the rise to power in Moscow of Mikhail Gorbachev, U.S.–Soviet relations were characterized by a renewed arms race and by increased tension and hostility. During this period the Soviets completed the installation of intermediate-range missiles targeted on Europe, but also on China and Japan in Asia. Soviet naval capabilities expanded significantly, especially in the Western Pacific where U.S. concerns arose about the growing Soviet challenge to U.S. predominance in the region. During the same period U.S. relations with China improved significantly—with full diplomatic relations established in 1979.

When Gorbachev took over the reins of political leadership in Moscow in spring 1985 he found a Soviet Union whose internal and external policies were in disarray. The economy was showing increasing signs of decline, as the USSR fell further behind the West and an increasing number of newly industrializing Asian states in the successful development and implementation of technological innovation.⁵ Increasing levels of environmental degradation, infant mortality, and alcoholism, along with declining life expectancy for males, were all indicators of serious problems facing the new Soviet leadership. In the foreign policy field the massive expenditure of scarce resources on new weapons systems had not succeeded in enhancing Soviet security. Although the Soviet Union had emerged as a global superpower with wide-ranging interests and capabilities, this position was based largely on military power. The nuclear stalemate with the United States, the renewed activism of U.S. policy, and the expanding role of other countries in global affairs, however, precluded turning this enhanced military position into effective political gains. The weaknesses of the Soviet economy raised questions about the possible over-extension of international commitments and limited relevance of the USSR for many of the most pressing of international problems—economic development, international trade, and hard currency debts.

Gorbachev committed himself to a major reform of the entire Soviet socio-economic-political system as a means of resolving those problems. The argument to support this reform can be summarized briefly as follows. The economic problems of the Soviet Union and the technology gap between the USSR and the West were expanding and implied a decreasing ability of the Soviet economy to support the legitimate needs of the population or to insure the military security and global standing of the Soviet state in the twenty-first century. Therefore, economic reform within the framework of socialism was essential, in order to overcome the economic problems and technological weaknesses that threatened to undermine the USSR's international status; required, as well, as a precondition for economic reform was a reform of the political process that would make officials more responsive to the needs of economic rationality.⁶ Moreover, to overcome entrenched bureaucratic forces within the Soviet Union that would resist change, a more open, but still controlled political system that encouraged criticism and “rationality” in support of reform was required. Finally, policies were needed that would permit the Soviets to benefit more fully from advances in the international economy and to accomplish, by means other than primarily military, major Soviet foreign policy objectives. In other words, soon after coming to power Gorbachev and his advisors laid out the justification for a major reform package that called for *perestroika*, *glasnost* (openness), and democratization of the political process; they also noted the interdependence of domestic reform and changes in Soviet foreign policy.

The primary objectives of Gorbachev's campaign of *perestroika* and *glasnost* were based on the recognition that the position of the USSR in the world depended upon a dramatic improvement in the functioning of the Soviet economy and also of the political system. *Perestroika* became Gorbachev's call for major reform with the goal of revitalizing the economy, closing the technology gap, and turning the USSR into a fully competitive global superpower. In retrospect it is evident that Gorbachev underestimated the difficulty of reforming the Soviet Union and that he failed to reach his primary objective. In the foreign policy field, however, he introduced substantial changes that were to have a major impact on the future security of East Asia.

39–55. For most of the period under discussion, former Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin has much to offer in his memoirs entitled *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents (1962–1986)* (New York: Times Books, Random House, 1995).

5. See Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 19. See also the analysis of Abel Aganbegyan, Gorbachev's chief economic advisor in 1986–87, in *The Economic Challenge of Perestroika* (Bloomington–London: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 1–3.

6. Two noted Soviet analysts made this argument explicitly. See Alexei Izyumov and Andrei Kortunov, “The USSR in the Changing World,” *International Affairs* (Moscow), no. 8 (1986): 29.

The result of the new approach to world affairs was a reorientation of Soviet foreign policy between 1986 and 1989 that included major initiatives in relations with the West and path breaking agreements on arms reductions, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe and the acceptance in 1989 of the anti-Communist revolutions throughout the region. The Soviet Union even supported the military operations of the United States and its Western allies in 1991 that drove the troops of its erstwhile ally Iraq from occupied Kuwait. These initiatives contributed substantially to the liberation of the Communist states of Eastern Europe from Soviet dominance and to ending the global confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. They also resulted in the opening up of political and economic contacts between the Soviet Union and the West.

By the end of 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved into its constituent parts, the Cold War between the two superpowers had come to an end. Central to Gorbachev's new foreign policy had been the effort to normalize relations with the West and to reduce the tensions and the costs that had been inherent in U.S.–Soviet relations for four decades. The arms reduction agreements that represented the first successes of this policy resulted in the withdrawal and dismantling of both U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe. Moreover, the Soviets committed themselves, as part of the agreement, not to redeploy the weapons in Asia. In fact, the Soviets reduced appreciably the number of the nuclear weapons deployed in Asia.⁷

In the final years of the Soviet state and the first year, or so, of the Russian Federation, the primary focus of Moscow's policy—under both Gorbachev and Yeltsin—was the normalization of relations with the West and full entry into what Russian leaders were now terming the community of civilized nations. But, almost immediately after President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev proclaimed a policy that emphasized Russia's full integration into the Western-dominated international community, voices arose in Russia that condemned them for abandoning the interests of the Russian state and pursuing policies determined in Washington.

During the first four and a half years of its existence the foreign policy of the Russian Federation toward both the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (or “near abroad” as Russians term the region) and the world beyond, shifted appreciably. For millions of Soviet people who proudly regarded the USSR as their own state and homeland, its disappearance was seen as a disaster. But for imperial-minded Russians it was also a national catastrophe that caused a deep psychological trauma. Russian grievances over the collapse of the USSR were further intensified by the highly publicized stories (both true and false) of violations of human rights of those ethnic Russians who found themselves outside the boundaries of the Russian Federation after the Soviet disintegration. Various constraints on acquiring citizenship imposed by local authorities, language discrimination, the loss of former privileges, and other explosive issues concerning the rights of the 25 million Russians in the “near abroad” have substantially radicalized the political process within Russia itself, thus providing a fertile soil for the growth of nationalist sentiments.⁸

The nationalist shift in Russian foreign policy manifested itself in more assertive statements about Russia's role in influencing political developments in neighboring states. This rhetorical toughness was also supplemented by the actual expansion of Russia's influence in the “near abroad”—through a variety of means that range from economic pressure to military support for opposition group.⁹

Besides a more assertive stance concerning the “near abroad,” Russian foreign policy also shifted on a number of other issues. On the matter of the civil war in former Yugoslavia, for example, the Russians have consistently supported Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs against Western pressures. Although they initially voted for economic sanctions, they soon began calling for their reduction or elimination. In addition, as part of an effort to have Iraq and Libya pay large outstanding debts to Russia, the Russians have improved relations with the two

7. See Roger E. Kanet, “Improving Sino–Soviet Relations and U.S. Policy in Asia and the Pacific,” in Thomas B. Lee, ed., *China and World Political Development and International Issues* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Book Co., 1992), pp. 18–19; translated as “Sulian dui zhong gong zhi zheng ce: Fu za er zhan xin zhi quan xi,” in Thomas B. Lee, ed., *Zhong Gong yu quoji Shehui xilun* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Book Co., 1992).

8. An estimated 3.5 million of the original 25 million Russians who found themselves in the “near abroad” in December 1991 returned to Russia by the end of 1995.

9. See, for example, Alexander V. Kozhemiakin and Roger E. Kanet, “Russia and Its Western Neighbors in the ‘Near Abroad,’” in Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin, eds., *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation* (London: Macmillan Publishers and New York: St. Martin's Press, in press).

countries and have worked to have international sanctions modified or lifted. In fact, the issue of relations with states viewed by the United States as international outcasts—including especially the sales of both nuclear technology and military equipment to these states—is relevant to both Russia and China.

By summer 1996 the most critical issue-area in which the nationalist tilt of Russian foreign policy was most conspicuously felt—and the issue that divided it most clearly from the United States—concerned prospective full membership of Central European states (that is, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic) in NATO. Although initially accepting the possibility of NATO's enlargement, Yeltsin's policy toward NATO changed dramatically by 1994 under the influence of conservative and nationalist political actors at home. Indeed, many Russians still see NATO through a historic lens of suspicion and consider the alliance's activities as directed against their country. As a result, Moscow's leaders have made a strong effort to impede the process of NATO's expansion. Thus for example, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev announced in November 1994 that "Russia may give up [its participation in] NATO's Partnership for Peace Program if that bloc is enlarged," and that he "might forego submitting Russia's presentation document" [on its cooperation with NATO under the Partnership] if the next NATO council meeting adopted "a bloc enlargement calendar".¹⁰

Overall the progressive "toughening" of Yeltsin's foreign policy, in large part as a response to the growing strength of conservative and nationalist forces in Russia, indicates that the severity of Russia's problems at home, aggravated by the country's international misfortunes, has been driving Russia to behave more assertively abroad. Nostalgia for the old empire has grown among many Russians disillusioned by the harsh reality of the reforms. Although Andrei Kozyrev, one of the most consistent advocates of a Western orientation in Russian policy, repeatedly denied any shift in Russian policy, it became increasingly clear—even prior to the appointment of Evgenyi Primakov as his successor in early 1996—that Moscow was much more eager to respond to the nationalist mood of the Russian public than to the preferences of the international community.¹¹ Statements by both communist leader Gennady Zyuganov and new Foreign Minister Primakov about reestablishing the great power status of Russia, including the "voluntary" reintegration of the CIS states under Russian tutelage, and Russia's refusal to remove its troops from Moldovan territory, despite a treaty commitment to Moldova and the conditions set for its admission to membership in the Council of Europe, raise serious concerns about the future orientation of Russian foreign policy. Similarly, the impasse that has emerged in Russian relations with Japan over the issue of the Southern Kuril Islands (Northern Territories) can be traced to the more nationalist and assertive nature of Russian foreign policy.¹²

It is within the context of the strained relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation across a broad range of issue areas that their roles in the triangular relationship in East Asia must be seen. Although the Cold War is long over, some of the attitudes and assumptions that underlay Soviet relations with the United States during the Cold War period remain—in both Moscow and Washington. A number of issues of importance to both countries—from political developments in former communist Europe to arms sales in the developing world—are likely to continue to create tensions in their bilateral relations and, therefore, influence their policies in East Asia. But, as many have already argued, Russia's future in Asia and the Pacific will depend on its successful entry into the Asia-Pacific regional community that includes both the United States and Japan (which we will discuss briefly below).¹³

Chinese Relations with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation

Relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have fluctuated since the establishment of the PRC in October 1949—something that one might not have expected, given the fact that initially both

10. RFE/RL Daily Report (1 December 1994). Russia's furious public opinion campaign against NATO enlargement and its threats to retaliate should NATO expansion go forward has raised serious concerns in Central Europe.

11. Volodymyr Zvigliyanich, "Primakov and the Ambitions of a Great Power," Prism, (26 January 1996).

12. On recent Russian policy toward Japan see A. Markov, "Chto zhe Dal'she? (O Razvitií Rossiisko-Iaponskikh Otnoshenií)" (What Now? On the Development of Russian-Japanese Relations), Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, no. 6 (1995): 10–18. See, also, Klaus Fritsche, Rußlands Außenpolitik: Die Asiatisch-pazifische Dimension. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, no. 40 (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 1995).

13. See, for example, Vladimir Ivanov, "Russia-U.S. Relations on the Pacific: Missing Links," in Leon Aron and Kenneth M. Jensen, eds., The Emergence of Russian Foreign Policy (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1994), pp. 151–163.

countries were ruled by communist regimes. Yet, one of the main reasons that the “strategic triangle” was such an important structural factor in influencing the foreign policy of the three countries was the fact that China remained a non-aligned power. After a brief period of cordial and fraternal ties between the two communist giants in the early and mid-1950s this relationship soon soured by the late 1950s—to the point of open hostilities a decade later.¹⁴

Tensions along the long Soviet–Chinese border remained extremely high throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as an independent China refused to place itself in a subordinate position following the Soviet lead. Hostility between the two resulted in a major border confrontation in 1969 that was a catalyst for further Soviet militarization of its borders with China.¹⁵ The Soviet military presence in the Far East and the Asia–Pacific grew throughout the 1970s, including the creation of a massive fleet in the North Pacific and naval bases in Vietnam. As a consequence of this military buildup and of increasingly negative tensions between the two communist states, China sought closer ties with the United States and Japan as a way of balancing the Soviet threat.

The 1980s brought a gradual improvement in Sino–Soviet relations, especially after the ascension of Gorbachev to power in 1985. Gorbachev recognized the fact that closer political and economic ties with China and other Asia–Pacific countries would be a key factor in revitalizing the Soviet economy. Until then, as Hongchan Chun points out, “Soviet policies toward the Far East and Asia–Pacific were conducted largely within the framework of political and security concerns”.¹⁶ Gorbachev announced a redirection in Soviet policy toward China and the Asia–Pacific region in a speech in Vladivostok in 1986. In this and subsequent speeches in which he elaborated on Moscow’s “new thinking” and new policy initiatives toward the APR, he emphasized several points. First, he stressed the fact that the Soviet Union was an Asian, as well as an European country and that the country’s future development would depend heavily on its relations with Asia. Second, these relations would have to include greater economic interactions between the Soviet Union and this economically dynamic region. Third, he proposed the formation of a multilateral security system—an “All Asian Forum”—modeled after the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Europe to bring countries together in the APR to deal with common concerns. Finally, he made some concrete gestures toward China, accepting some of the latter’s claims concerning border demarcation and making some limited unilateral troop withdrawals from Mongolia and the Far East.¹⁷

The opportunity for improved Sino–Soviet relations expanded in the late 1980s with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1988–1989, the decision by Moscow to decrease its aid and support for the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, and the further reduction in its troop levels and armaments, including nuclear weapons, in the Far East. Vastly improving U.S.–Soviet relations most likely proved to be a further impetus for China to ensure for itself a favorable position within the triangular relationship among the Soviet Union, the United States, and China. Thus the Soviet Union and China agreed to normalize formally their overall relationship by scheduling a summit for May 1989.

Although the establishment of full and normal diplomatic relation between the two countries was reached at the summit, the Tiananmen Square massacre and the Soviet role in and response to political revolutions in East–Central Europe in 1989 complicated Sino–Soviet relations. More specifically, Chinese leaders accused

14. See Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino–Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) and Klaus Mehnert, *Pekin und Moskau* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962).

15. See, for example, Thomas W. Robinson, “The Sino–Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development, and the March 1969 Clashes,” *American Political Science Review* 66, no. 4 (1972): 1175–1202. See, also, Tsien-hua Tsui, *The Sino–Soviet Dispute in the 1970’s* (Oakville, Ontario: The Mosaic Press, 1983).

16. Hongchan Chun, “The Russian Federation and a New Security Order in the Asia–Pacific Region,” in William E. Ferry and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *Post-Communist States in the World Community* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s, in press). The authors wish to note the influence that Dr. Chun’s analysis has had on portions of the following discussion. See, also, the two excellent books by Gilbert Rozman which document the respective debates related to the improvement in Sino–Soviet relations during the first half of the 1980s: *A Mirror for Socialism: Soviet Criticism of China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and *The Chinese Debate about Soviet Socialism, 1978–1985* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

17. See Roger E. Kanet, “Soviet Policy in East Asia and the Pacific: Implications for U.S. Policy,” in Thomas B. Lee, ed., *U.S. Asian Foreign Policy* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Book Co., 1991), pp. 45–81; also translated as “Chang mei-kuo li-ch’ang P’ing-hsi Su-lien ti Ya-t’ai Cheng-ch’e,” in Thomas B. Lee, ed., *Mei-Kuo Ya-chou Wai-chaio Cheng-ch’e* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Book Co., 1991) pp. 61–100; and Kanet, “Improving Sino–Soviet Relations and U.S. Policy in Asia and the Pacific,” pp. 13–30.

Moscow of abandoning communism and feared that events in the Soviet Union and East-Central Europe could potentially spill over and threaten the continued existence of communism in China. Nevertheless, the PRC leadership realized that good relations with the USSR were beneficial in allowing China to focus more attention on its economic progress in the South and Southeast. Also, Beijing saw improved relations with the USSR as a way of gaining leverage against the United States. Washington's response to Gorbachev's initiatives was negative, for U.S. leaders saw Soviet proposals for a multilateral security arrangement in the APR as a way of driving a wedge between the United States and its allies in the region.

If anything, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 made relations with China and the APR even more important to the newly established Russian Federation. First, there are overriding economic factors. Moscow's geographic center has shifted eastward and, in the process, left Russia without many of its economic resources and ports in the West. This made opening the ports in the North Pacific for expanded commercial use that much more important. Furthermore, the poor record of economic transformation has had a devastating impact on the Russian economy, making Moscow even more eager to expand its ties with China and other countries of the economically dynamic APR.¹⁸

Although the potential for stronger economic links between Russia and the PRC are limited because of the lack of infrastructure and development in the Russian Far East, China does offer Moscow a large market for its military goods. However, the relationship provides China with an opportunity to obtain military hardware and technology the likes of which it cannot acquire elsewhere. For example, among other things, the Chinese have acquired Su-27 jet fighters for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force and Kilo-class diesel submarines for the Navy, thereby helping to modernize the PRC's overall military capabilities.¹⁹ As for closer economic interactions, the two sides have discussed the joint development of energy deposits in the Russian Far East and the use of Russian expertise and technology in the construction of the \$30 billion Three River Gorges hydropower dam project on the Yangtze River.²⁰

Second, stronger relations between Russia and China give both countries a chance to demonstrate that they can act independently of the United States. Both countries have seen their relationship with the United States become strained recently and have used relations with each other to provide them with some leverage. In Russia, after a brief "honeymoon" period during which Russian foreign policy was strongly pro-American and pro-Western in content, a nationalist upsurge in Russia has resulted in a growing series of differences between the Russian Federation and the United States. NATO's plans to expand eastward are a part of these growing differences. Former Russian defense minister, General Pavel Grachev, commented in November 1995 that "if NATO looks east, then we will also look east and find allies with whom we can solve security problems".²¹

Both Russia and the PRC have increasingly come under pressure from the United States. In the case of Russia, the war in Chechnya and the issue of Russian arms sales—including sales of rather sophisticated weaponry—to countries viewed as international outcasts are two issues that have challenged the relationship. In the case of the PRC, the United States has criticized its human rights record, its coercive actions toward Taiwan prior to the latter's presidential elections in spring 1996, its continuing coercive policies in Tibet, and its sales

18. In an excellent discussion of Russian-Chinese relations Aleksei Voskresenskii argues for the crucial importance of the relationship. "Kitai: Soiuznik ili novyi protivnik? (China: Ally or New Opponent?) Segodnia, no. 186 (30 September 1995): 6.

19. Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, *A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific: Building a Multipolar Balance-of-Power System in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 36–37. See, also, Paul Dibb, "Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia," *Adelphi Paper*, no. 295 (May 1995). Concern has been voiced in the United States about the long-term implications of the new Russian-Chinese military relationship. See, for example, Richard D. Fisher, "China's Purchase of Russian Fighters: A Challenge to the U.S.," *Asian Studies Center Backgrounder*, The Heritage Foundation, no. 142 (31 July 1996).

20. Tony Walker, Peter Montagnon and John Ridding, "Li Peng Backs Trade with 'More Lenient' Europeans," *Financial Times* (11 June 1996): 1.

21. Tony Walker, "Yeltsin Gains with Sino-U.S. Strain: Beijing and Moscow have much riding on the Russian President's visit," *Financial Times*, 24 April 1996, p. 3. See, also, Alexander V. Kozhemiakin and Roger E. Kanet, "Nationalism and the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation," in Ferry and Kanet, eds., *Post-Communist States in the World Community* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, in press). The importance of U.S. efforts to influence Russian and Chinese behavior in strengthening Sino-Russian relations is emphasized in Vladimir Miasnikov, "Vtoroe 'Khozhdzenie' Prezidenta v Kitai," (The Second 'Coming' of the President in China), *Segodnia*, no. 66 (18 April 1996): 5. See, also Evgeny Afanasiev, "Russian-Chinese Relations: From Normalisation to Partnership," *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow), no. 1 (1994): 3–8.

of nuclear materials to “pariah” states.²² Russia and the PRC regard the pressure that the United States has placed upon them concerning these issues as infringements on their national sovereignty. In a joint communiqué in June 1995, Chinese Premier Li Peng and Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin expressed their feelings on the subject in stating that “Russia and China are two great powers in the world and we will not allow anyone to teach us how to live and work”.²³

More recently, in April 1996, Russian President Boris Yeltsin paid a three-day visit to China to solidify the “strategic partnership” between Russia and China.²⁴ The meetings between Yeltsin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin produced fourteen agreements covering a wide array of economic, political and security related issues. Both sides were again adamant about their opposition to Western interference into their internal affairs. Beijing was supportive of Moscow’s policy in Chechnya, while Moscow expressed its support for Beijing’s actions in regards to Taiwan and Tibet. In June 1996, Russian Foreign Minister Evgeny Primakov reiterated Moscow’s commitment to building relations with China, warning “. . . against excessive focus on relations with the United States . . . [and arguing] that Russia should not seek to join ‘the club of civilized nations’ at any price”.²⁵

With Russia heading slowly in the direction of political liberalization and democracy, domestic political dynamics have begun to have an influence on the formulation of foreign policy and this trip for Yeltsin was a way to appeal to voters as a nationalist or someone who did not follow the U.S. lead but rather could act independently and even criticize the United States for its interference in strictly Russian affairs.

Also, it seems that both Russia and China see their relationship as a way of ensuring against U.S. hegemony in the APR. The stability that good Russian–PRC relations create for both countries allows them to concentrate their energies elsewhere. Nonetheless, the new collaborative relationship between the two is not without its problems. The issue that is most sensitive for the Russian Federation concerns Chinese migration north into the Russian Far East through the latter’s porous borders. Given the fact that this area is sparsely populated, Russians there fear that they will be overwhelmed by these newcomers. Furthermore, although Moscow seems to have come to an agreement with Beijing over border demarcation, local officials in the Russian Far East (for example, Primorskii Province Governor Evgeny Nazdratenko) have voiced their strong opposition to these agreements.²⁶

Overall, however, relations between Russia and the PRC remain positive. Yet, one should not expect Russian–Chinese relations to deepen or go much beyond where they stand at present because of the limited potential for significant further economic collaboration. Moreover, although the two have recently joined in criticizing U.S. interference in their internal affairs, one should not, as Greg Austin explains, consider this relationship an alliance against the West.²⁷ In the end, both these countries have a greater interest in maintaining favorable relations with the West and with the United States in particular, because it is these relations that promise to provide the needed capital, advanced technology and economic partnership for economic development and growth.

22. For a Russian assessment of China’s efforts to intimidate Taiwan in spring 1996 see Pavel Fel’gengayer, “Rossiia i Konflikt v Taiwan’skom Prolive,” (Russia and the Conflict in the Taiwan Strait), *Segodnia* (13 March 1996): 5.

23. Matthew Kaminski, “China and Russia Join to Criticize the West,” *Financial Times* (27 June 1995): 6. See, also, Miasnikov, “Vtoroe ‘Khozhdenie’ Prezidenta v Kitai.”

24. For more details on the meeting, see Tony Walker, “Yeltsin backs ties with China: Moscow and Beijing Resolve to Form ‘Strategic Partnership,’” *Financial Times* (26 April 1996):5.

25. Peter Rutland, “Primakov Outlines Foreign Policy Goals,” *OMRI Daily Digest*, no. 124, part I (26 June 1996).

26. Seth Singleton, “Russia and Asia: The Emergence of ‘Normal Relations’?” in Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin, eds., *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation* (London: Macmillan Press, forthcoming). See, also, Piotr Boltuc, “Russia and Stability in Europe and Asia: An Institutional Model of Change,” in Ferry and Kanet, eds., *Post-Communist States in the World Community* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s, in press). See, also, Eric Hyer, “Dreams and Nightmares: Chinese Trade and Immigration in the Russian Far East,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 10, no. 2 (1996): 289–308.

27. Greg Austin, “Russian Influences and Mutual Insecurity,” in Stuart Harris & Gary Klintonworth, eds., *China as a Great Power: Myths, Realities and Challenges in the Asia–Pacific Region* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), p. 111. See, also, Klaus Fritzsche, “Russia: Looking for New Allies in East Asia,” unpublished paper presented at the international Seminar “Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy—West, South, or East?” Stockholm, National Defence Research Establishment, 3–4 June 1996, and Vladimir Shlapentokh, “Russia, China, and the Far East: Old Geopolitics or a New Peaceful Cooperation?” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 28, no. 3 (1995): 307–318.

The main problem for the Russian Federation regarding its ties with the Asia–Pacific region as a whole is staying engaged and remaining an important player in the future development of the region. This has been made difficult for two reasons. First, Russian military power has been drastically reduced in the region. Moscow simply can no longer afford to maintain the same level of military capability and presence in the APR as was the case when the Soviet Union still existed. Second, because of the dire economic conditions that now prevail in Russia, it currently does not have much to offer to other countries in the APR, at the very time that economic strength is quickly becoming the benchmark by which to measure a country’s power and significance.

To combat its own reduced presence in the region and to mitigate that of the United States, Moscow has continued to back a multilateral security system for the APR,²⁸ a policy that was first pushed by Gorbachev in 1986. However, Yeltsin has departed from Soviet policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s by making this initiative merely one part of a dual approach to the region. The second part is a much more intense effort to develop better bilateral relations with APR countries. In addition, the focus has become narrower with Moscow directing its attention first and foremost toward countries in Northeast Asia.

Sino–U.S. Relations during the Cold War and Beyond

As with Sino–Soviet relations, Sino–U.S. relations experienced their share of ups and downs from the 1950s through the 1980s. U.S. policy toward the PRC and the APR region in general has been driven by both domestic political developments and international structural issues, including what has occurred between the other two legs of the “strategic triangle”. From the establishment of the PRC in 1949 until the 1960s, Sino–U.S. relations were bad and, at times, directly confrontational as during the Korean War in the early 1950s. However, these relations did improve somewhat with the growing recognition on the part of American leaders that China was not simply a puppet of Moscow and could act independently of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, with China’s first nuclear test in 1964, the United States could no longer neglect the PRC’s considerable military power, its quarter of the world’s population and its potential as a useful partner against Soviet aggression. Nevertheless, relations between the two remained hostile, in part because of the PRC’s continued support for and aid to the North Koreans.

Finally, in 1969, with the outbreak of open hostilities between the Soviet Union and China along their common border, President Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger realized the strategic potential that existed in building closer ties to the Chinese. Kissinger’s trip to Beijing in 1971 marked the initial rapprochement between the two countries. Washington declared its adherence to a “one China policy” in the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, although the United States continued to maintain a keen interest in political, economic and security developments on Taiwan.

The early 1970s also witnessed the beginning of a period of tripolarity in East Asian international relations that lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1989.²⁹ At the time—with Sino–Soviet relations still tense—the United States occupied a pivotal position in the triangular relationship. However, problems began to emerge between the two countries, as China became more and more critical of Washington’s growing détente with Moscow. China was vulnerable to superior Soviet military capabilities and felt its national security threatened. Moreover, Beijing suspected that Washington was using its relationship with China primarily as a way of pressuring Moscow to accept certain agreements concerning arms controls and proliferation.

The full normalization of Sino–U.S. relations took place in 1979, as the United States agreed to abrogate its 1954 defense treaty with Taiwan. Yet, later that year, against the wishes of the Carter Administration, the

28. This argument is developed in Chun, “The Russian Federation and a New Security Order.” On the recent effort of Russia to reestablish its frayed ties with North Korea see Klaus Fritsche, *Neue Annäherung Moskaus an Pjöngjang? Rußland und die koreanische Halbinsel*. *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, no. 13 (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 1996).

29. For more detail on the period of tripolarity (1971–1989), see Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union*, and Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia–Pacific, 1945–1995* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996). Given the central role of Japan in world and regional commerce and trade, one could easily refer to the current situation in East Asia as a strategic quadrangle. See, for example, Mandelbaum, ed., *The Strategic Quadrangle*. On China’s concerns about Japan see Thomas F. Christensen, “Chinese Realpolitik,” *Foreign Affairs*, 75, no. 5 (1996): 37–52.

U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, the purpose of which was to dissuade the PRC from trying to take the island by force by establishing Taiwan's welfare and security as one of Washington's top priorities. The Act also obliged the United States to provide Taiwan with weapons of a defensive nature. Needless to say, this was not viewed positively by the Beijing regime. The Taiwan issue continued to plague Sino-U.S. relations throughout the 1980s and, in fact, to the very present, as was evident during the security crisis that culminated in spring 1996.

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the massacre at Tiananmen Square in 1989, Sino-U.S. relations have become more complex and rocky, at the same time that the PRC has established closer ties with the Russians. The shift from a bipolar to a multipolar international structure has resulted in an expansion of issues that now form the basis of U.S. relations with China and with the APR in general. Recent U.S. policy toward the area could arguably be characterized as being more *ad hoc* and reactive in nature and less cohesive. In fact, in early 1994 U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher "claimed that the United States did not require an 'overarching theme' to confront post-Cold War international security problems".³⁰ Michael Yahuda captures the significance of how the post-Cold War environment has impacted U.S. policy:

In retrospect the Cold War era provided the United States government with an organizing framework that bound together questions of global strategy with those of ideology, politics, and even economics. Now that that framework has gone it is proving to be much more difficult for Washington to develop a coherent strategy to address the new situation. It can no longer override domestic concerns and special interests by invoking the strategic imperatives of foreign policy. In fact, now that the global agenda has changed, it is the domestic arena that is claiming attention in the United States.³¹

In this new post-Cold War international environment, the United States appears to have three main objectives in its policies toward China and the APR. It is notable that these objectives often contradict one another. While one goal tends to bring the United States closer to China, another promises to tear the relationship apart. First, the United States wants to prevent the rise of a hegemonic power in the region, namely dominance throughout the region by China. This means that it is concerned about the military threats that China poses for U.S. friends and allies in the region (for example, Taiwan and Japan). As a consequence, the United States wants to maintain its "San Francisco system" of bilateral security arrangements with APR countries that was instituted in 1951, despite the fact that the United States has fewer resources with which to maintain its presence in the region because of budgetary cuts.³²

Although U.S. leaders have become more open to ideas concerning multilateral security arrangements in the APR, they still do not support the idea of forming an organization such as the CSCE in Asia for two reasons. First, they are concerned that ultimately such a development would further reduce the U.S. presence and influence in the area. Second, Asia is not Europe. It is much more diverse culturally, politically and economically than Europe. Also, in Europe there is no equivalent to the "China factor" that exists in Asia.

Although most officials and scholars do not see a multilateral security organization such as the CSCE emerging in the APR in the foreseeable future, there are also those who feel that the current security arrangement built upon primarily bilateral agreements needs to be adapted to the new environment. For example, Douglas Stuart and William Tow list two reasons why they feel the San Francisco system is not a viable alternative for the future. First, the Asia-Pacific region is rapidly "becoming too powerful to be either contained or controlled by the United States. . .".³³ The growing economic and military strength of countries in the APR (for example, China and Japan) means that, while the United States will still be needed to ensure stability in the region, Washington must adapt to the new environment there by formulating a new role for the United States, as more a balancer than a guarantor of security.

30. Stuart and Tow, *A U.S. Strategy for the Asia-Pacific*, p. 11.

31. Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, pp. 15–16.

32. For a discussion of U.S. policy objectives in relations with China see Gary Klintworth and Murray McLean, "China and the United States: Neither Friends nor Enemies," in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintworth, eds., *China as a Great Power: Myths, Realities and Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Melbourne: Longman Australia; New York, St. Martin's, 1995), pp. 65–90. See, also, Samuel S. Kim, "China in the Post-Cold War World," in Harris and Klintworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*, pp. 46–64, and Gerald Segal, "Tying China into the International System," *Survival*, 37, no. 2 (1995): 60–73.

³³ Stuart and Tow, *A U.S. Strategy for the Asia-Pacific*, p. 11.

Moreover, domestic political developments within the United States have put pressure on the President and Congress to deal with the federal debt, thereby reducing the funding that the U.S. government can commit to its foreign policy, including that in Asia. In addition, with the end of the Cold War and the shifting focus toward more economic issues, many in the United States insist that American allies pick up more of the cost for maintaining international order. They see Japan as one among many “free riders” that have and continue to take advantage of the collective good of security that the United States has and continues to provide, thereby enabling these other countries to allocate more money in support of domestic industries and companies. This issue is highlighted by the fact that most countries in the APR run significant trade surpluses with the United States, something that has been highly publicized in the United States.

As for the PRC, Beijing has not proven to be hesitant about projecting its increasing military and economic power in the region.³⁴ There is evidence of this in China’s actions in the South China Sea and the increasingly bellicose stance it has taken against Taiwan. The PRC has been able to manifest its growing military and economic influence in the APR, in part because of the dwindling power of Russia in the region and the decrease in the U.S. presence there. The Chinese leadership is especially sensitive to what it considers as U.S. meddling in the region and in Chinese affairs. Beijing is extremely sensitive regarding any action on the part of the West that it feels threatens China’s national sovereignty.

A second U.S. objective is to build upon its existing economic ties with the economically dynamic East Asia–Pacific region—this includes further integration with the PRC. China represents vast, still largely untapped markets for U.S. businesses. For China, the United States is a vital source of capital and technology, as well as a major importer of Chinese goods. Both countries realize that their mutual economic relations are essential for future economic prosperity in both countries. The problem that arises in regards to these economic ties is the fact that China has yet to accept many of the basic ground rules upon which the current Western-dominated world economic, trading, and financial systems operate.

Thus while the United States desires greater economic cooperation with China, its third objective is essentially to bring the PRC into the Western fold. This includes Chinese acceptance of both Western trade practices and, to some degree, Western values concerning political and economic development as well as state-societal relations. Washington’s push to expand the community of market democracies has been labeled the doctrine of “enlargement”. It is a policy that not only angers China, but has caused concern throughout the Asia–Pacific region where it has been portrayed as cultural imperialism. The focus on the individual that lies at the heart of how the Western model conceptualizes the organization of a legitimate political regime is rejected by the Chinese—and by most Asian states—that place greater emphasis on community and state rights.

The combination of the United States’ second and third objectives makes it hard for Washington to come up with a coherent set of policies toward the PRC. Although the Clinton Administration de-linked the granting of Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to China from the latter’s human rights record, Washington has continued its attempts to use China’s application for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership as leverage to steer the PRC in the “correct” direction (for example, toward improved market access). Furthermore, the United States has also threatened China with trade sanctions if the latter does not take further measures to protect intellectual property rights. In June 1996, for example, both countries averted reciprocal trade sanctions at the last minute by coming to an agreement concerning this issue.³⁵

In response, China has used its economic dynamism as leverage against the United States. Beijing has indicated that it is willing to reward governments that are “more lenient” toward China by favoring companies from these countries. More specifically, Premier Li Peng has suggested that the United States’ loss is Europe’s gain. As he has stated, “If the Europeans adopt more cooperation with China in all areas, not just in economic

34. Useful recent assessments of Chinese foreign policy include Harris and Klintworth, eds., *China as a Great Power*; David B. H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman, “China’s Security Strategy: The View from Beijing, ASEAN, and Washington,” *Asian Survey*, 36, no. 4 (1996): 422–439; Abul Kalam, “China’s Foreign Policy and Security Perceptions,” *BISS Journal* (Bangladesh Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies), 17, no. 2 (1996): 171–207; and the articles in a recent issue of *Survival* devoted to “China: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy,” 37, no. 2 (1995): 7–73.

35. For more details on this agreement, see Tony Walker and Jurek Martin, “Last-gasp deal averts US–China trade war,” *Financial Time* (18 June 1996): 1.

areas, but also in political and other areas, then I believe the Europeans can get more orders from China. They [Europeans] do not attach political strings to cooperation with China, unlike the Americans who arbitrarily resort to the threat of sanctions or the use of sanctions".³⁶ It appears that the Chinese leadership is intent on driving a wedge between the United States and its European allies by using its economic dynamism as a trump card against the former's effort to tie economic issues to political or value-oriented ones. What makes this card so effective is the fact that, as a region, Europe is in a period of slow economic growth and relatively high unemployment and links with Asia are seen by many as required for future economic revitalization. Moreover, the Europeans oppose growing U.S. efforts to sanction their firms that are involved economically in countries viewed by the United States as supporters of international terror—for example, Cuba, Iran, and Libya. In the United States the issue of MFN status has been decoupled from China's human rights record. Both President Clinton and Robert Dole, his competitor in the 1996 elections, agreed that these should be separate issues.

The Post-Cold War Environment and Security in the Asia-Pacific Region

The end of the Cold War has influenced relations among Russia, China and the United States in two primary ways. First, it has changed the basis upon which relations develop and are carried out. Even though China remains a communist country, ideology has taken a back seat to mainly economic issues in the relationships among the three countries, but also to ones of national identity and security. This is evident from issues discussed above that dominate the relations among these three major powers. While some may see this shift in emphasis as either a positive or negative one overall, the main point that should be stressed is that this new environment presents the region with many new challenges and countries will have to adapt to the new situation if a new regional order is to take hold.

This new regional order will be based on state sovereignty, but countries in the APR will have to find a way of reconciling their interests of developing a secure national identity and maintaining national sovereignty with their economic interests that force them to come face to face with an international economic system, the rules of which were created by the West.³⁷ During the Cold War, the United States and other Western countries were not as concerned that these countries play by the rules because Washington was more worried about counterbalancing the Soviets in the region. Now that this security concern has disappeared, the United States has begun to insist that China, Japan and others open up their economies and follow the rules that have been created and are represented by such organizations as the World Trade Organization. The United States sees no further need to permit countries in the APR to continue neomercantilist policies that enabled rapid economic growth in Japan and other East Asian countries at the expense of the United States. Unlike other market democracies, the United States has not stopped at prescribing economic policies, but has also pressured these countries in other areas too (for example, human rights). The fact is, however, that, although most countries in the APR accept the utility of using markets, to some degree, to organize their economy, there still is not a consensus that the Western models of political and economic systems are the best ways to order society.

Furthermore, a legacy of colonialization and foreign intervention has, at the very least, made countries in this region more hesitant in accepting Western models. As Richard Halloran notes, the long history of subjugation to foreign powers has "seared the soul of Asia and shapes Asian thought and actions to this day".³⁸ It has led countries in this region to cherish their independence and react negatively against anything that could be considered an infringement upon their sovereignty. In fact, the one relatively successful regional and multinational organization to spring up was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that was established in 1967, not to integrate its members economically or politically, but to help strengthen and ensure the independence of each.

36. Tony Walker, Peter Montagnon and John Ridding, "Li Peng backs trade with 'more lenient' Europeans," *Financial Times* (11 June 1996): 1.

37. David Wolff, "Regionalism, Russia, and Northeast Asia," in Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff, eds., *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 323–329; and A. Iakovlev, "Mezhdunarodno-politicheskaia obstanovka v Severo-Vostochnoi Azii i Polozhenie Rossii v Regione," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, no. 2 (1995): 3–13.

38. Richard Halloran, "The Rising East," *Foreign Policy*, no. 102 (Spring 1996): 8.

Relations among Russia, China and the United States have changed in another significant way. That is, the relative power and role of each in the APR is dramatically different in today's multipolar international structure than it was during the Cold War, when bipolarity made a particular country's role much simpler to define vis-à-vis other states. Russia's position within this triad has suffered the greatest. Because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been caught up in internal economic and political transformation. It does not have the financial resources to maintain a large sophisticated military force in the Far East and APR to rival what existed during the Soviet period. In fact, it has reduced tremendously the number of troops and armaments in the Far East. Moscow has been most interested in building its economic ties with the dynamic countries of the APR. In addition, it has sought to improve its bilateral relations with most APR countries, while simultaneously pushing for the establishment of a multilateral security system. However, because of its shrinking military presence and dire economy, Russia's role in the near future is likely to be centered more around the sub-region of northeast Asia as a marginal economic actor and a balancing force in regards to security issues. Two major issues, however, complicate Russia's policy in the area. First and most important is the damage that the ongoing confrontation with Japan over ownership of the Southern Kuril Islands has done to the prospects for full normalization of Russian relations with Japan. Moreover, the insecurity on Korean Peninsula resulting from a possible military confrontation between the two Korean states or from the possible implosion of North Korea is of concern to the Russians.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a transforming and weaker Russia has enabled China to worry less about the security of its northern borders. More than that, it has provided Beijing with a sympathetic ear and supportive voice in Moscow when it comes to rejecting what it sees as Western interference into its affairs. China's rising economic, political and military influence in the APR is arguably an even more important development than Russia's decline. It is no longer the third and weakest leg of the triad and must adapt to its new position in the APR. China's place within the APR seems to be more unstable and marked by more uncertainty than Russia's or that of the United States. This is not to say that China is not destined to be a heavyweight in regional affairs.

What is in question is how China will react to this emerging role. Much will depend on domestic political developments. Two issues stand out. First, there is the succession question that involves the turnover of political elites in China with a new generation slowly replacing the old guard. Second, what are the odds that China will suffer the same fate as the Soviet Union and collapse as a result of the decentralizing and distributive effects of economic reforms?

China's rise has caused some tension for smaller countries in the APR that have interpreted many of Beijing's recent actions—including its military modernization—as efforts to create its own sphere of influence throughout the area. Russia's decline has allowed China to shift its focus on building up its military resources in the south. This is sure to prompt further support for continued U.S. presence in the region as a balancing force. Yet, these countries see the United States as more an insurance policy than an active force in shaping future security arrangements in the region. Besides maintaining ties to the United States, ASEAN countries are also building up their own militaries as another way of enhancing their stability.³⁹ As with China, many of these countries are wary of U.S. cultural and military influence in the APR, especially because it is the sole superpower. They have also been interested in engaging China by drawing it into the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC)—established in 1989 to promote free trade—and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)—established in 1993 as a largely consultative security arrangement. However, China has shown only marginal interest in participating in any multilateral arrangements. Beijing views such arrangements suspiciously as a way of constraining its policy objectives in the APR.

How to deal with a nationalistic, economically dynamic, politically unstable and increasingly powerful China is an issue that the United States must now attempt to address—and at a time when the U.S. presence in the APR has been in relative decline. Without the clear enemy that the Cold War provided, Washington has turned its attention more toward domestic concerns and, more specifically, toward ways to stimulate the U.S.

39. For more on ASEAN security strategies and for an examination of security developments in Southeast Asia from a theoretical perspective, see Sheldon W. Simon, "Realism and Neoliberalism: International Relations Theory and Southeast Asian Security," *The Pacific Review*, 8, no. 1 (1995): 5–24.

economy. This includes dealing with the burgeoning federal debt and, thus cutting back on defense spending and overall support for foreign involvement. There is also increasing pressure, as we have noted, for politicians in Washington to ask U.S. allies to share some of the security burden that the United States has carried since World War II. This has raised concerns among ASEAN countries that the United States might soon substantially reduce its role in the region. With the circumstances that have emerged in the APR, the U.S. position has become more complex, as it tries to play the role of economic collaborator in the development of the region, but also as an economic competitor and balancing force in regards to regional security.

Although the United States still relies on bilateral security arrangements in the APR, it has recently become somewhat more open to various types of multilateral institutions. It has also supported an increased role for Japan as a balancing force, especially since U.S. forces and bases have been cut back. The shift of the balance of power in the region has made Japan's future role in the APR as a military force a highly debated issue. Because of its historical legacy, not many people outside or inside Japan are eager to see Japan rebuild its military power to the point that it can act as a major military force again. Most likely, a second triangular relationship among China, Japan, and the United States will grow in importance and be of great significance for the future security of the APR, with Japan replacing Russia as a more important balancer in the region.

In sum, it appears that stability in the Asia-Pacific region will increasingly depend on a balance-of-power type security arrangement. The United States has neither the desire nor the capability of using its position in the world as sole superpower to maintain a hegemonic position in all parts of the world. Rather, future prospects for the APR will depend, to a large degree, on domestic political developments in the United States, China, Russia—and Japan. The United States must resist pressure at home to abandon the APR, because its presence will be key to future security. The West in general must continue to try to engage China economically, drawing it into the international economic system (for example, WTO) and thereby having it both accept international norms and become more integrated and hopefully less willing to break its valuable economic ties with the rest of the world.

Of course, the path that China takes will reflect who succeeds the current Chinese leadership. The main and often opposing pressures are those in China pushing for economic interdependence and those who are more nationalistic and desire to take advantage of China's newly acquired influence in the APR.

Finally, there is the emerging role of Japan. As Anatoly Semin points out, the domestic debate in Japan consists of three approaches to Japan's future involvement. These points of view range from those who want to continue with the old arrangement whereby Japan focuses on economics and lets the United States continue to provide its security, to realists in the middle who see an increased role for Japan as a balancer for regional and international security, but also tight cooperation with the United States, and finally to nationalists who demand that Japan take its rightful position in the world in all aspects and rid itself of its dependence on the United States.⁴⁰

The picture that emerges in the APR is one of multipolarity, where a diverse set of largely consultative, multilateral arrangements are likely to become more important as a network that underlies and supports a regional security system that will be built upon bilateral legs into the near future and will rely on the balancing act of China, Russia, and the United States.

40. Anatoly Semin, "Japan-China: The Regional Aspect of Relations," *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow), no. 1 (1995): 53–58.