

Policy Analysis

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OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES ***The Pentagon's East Asia Security*** ***Strategy Report***

by Doug Bandow

Executive Summary

To contain Soviet-led communism and, secondarily, to prevent a militarily resurgent Japan, Washington established a network of alliances, bases, and deployments throughout East Asia after World War II. By the 1990s the Soviet Union had imploded, China had become a reasonably restrained international player, and other communist states had lost their ideological edge. At the same time, the noncommunist nations had leaped ahead economically. Despite such momentous developments, however, U.S. policy remains fundamentally the same.

The Pentagon's new report, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region: 1998*, released last November, confirms that the Clinton administration intends to perpetuate the policy of U.S. military preeminence in the region indefinitely. Indeed, Washington intends not only to increase security ties with traditional military partners but also to extend them to such previously irrelevant countries as Laos and Mongolia.

The end of the Cold War has eliminated any

justification for a dominant U.S. military role in East Asia. U.S. policy, centered around the deployment of 100,000 military personnel throughout the region, is both expensive and risky. The United States now is expected to dampen potential conflicts that lack even a tangential link to America's own security.

Washington should instead phase out its military presence in East Asia, transferring to its Cold War era allies responsibility for dealing with local security problems. Washington should maintain a mid-Pacific military presence and cooperate with friendly states but intervene directly only if a potential hegemon arises that cannot be otherwise contained.

Some instability in the region is inevitable no matter what the U.S. role—as evidenced by the turbulence in Cambodia and Indonesia today. Acting as the balancer of last resort rather than the meddler of first resort, however, would make America more secure by insulating it from such strategically and economically marginal disorders.

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Introduction

After World War II the United States established an extensive forward military presence and fought two wars in East Asia as part of its strategy for containing communism. The Cold War ended a decade ago, but America's defense posture has changed little. The Clinton administration is determined to keep at least 100,000 military personnel in East Asia and the Pacific, apparently forever.

The Pentagon's 1995 assessment of U.S. security policy in East Asia (the so-called Nye Report) made the astonishing assertion that "the end of the Cold War has not diminished" the importance of any of America's regional security commitments.¹ Last November the U.S. Department of Defense released an updated report that reflected the same outdated analysis, reaffirming support for every one of America's treaties and deployments throughout the region.²

The administration's watchword is simply more of everything. America's already substantial military ties to Japan and South Korea must be strengthened. Loose links with Australia, Singapore, and Thailand must be expanded. Recently sundered relationships with New Zealand and the Philippines must be rebuilt. Minimal to nonexistent cooperation with such countries as Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, and Vietnam must be invigorated or initiated. DOD gives a nod to multilateralism and cooperation among the countries in the region, but it is clear that the United States is to remain East Asia's dominant actor.³ And that dominance must be demonstrated in military terms. Explains the Pentagon, "Today we must deter actions in critical localized areas such as the Korean Peninsula while maintaining our capability to respond to crises should they emerge anywhere around the world."⁴

The report's commitment to permanent, promiscuous intervention was preordained. Secretary of Defense William Cohen admitted, "When I first took over, I said everything is on the table for review, except we are going to keep 100,000 people in the Asia-Pacific region—that is off the table."⁵ In short, the

Pentagon conducted a supposedly searching review that ignored the most important issue.

Indeed, Washington has actually been increasing U.S. military ties in the region, pushing a new security agreement with the Philippines, for instance, and offering an implicit defense guarantee to Taiwan against China. Rather than expand America's military presence in East Asia at a time when security threats against the United States have dramatically diminished, the administration and Congress should together initiate a phased withdrawal of American forces from Korea and Japan, center Washington's reduced military presence in the central Pacific rather than East Asia, and adopt the role of ultimate balancer rather than constant meddler.

Changed Threat Environment

U.S. taxpayers spent roughly \$13 trillion (in current dollars) and sacrificed 113,000 lives (mostly in East Asian wars) to win the Cold War. For five decades Washington provided a defense shield behind which noncommunist countries throughout East Asia were able to grow economically (despite their recent setbacks) and democratically. That policy achieved its objective. Japan is the world's second-ranking economic power; Taiwan's dramatic jump from poverty to prosperity forced the leaders of the communist mainland to undertake fundamental economic reforms. South Korea now outstrips communist North Korea on virtually every measure of national power. After years of failure, the Philippines seems to be on the path to prosperity, while the economies of countries like Thailand have grown significantly and will eventually recover from their current travails.

At the same time, the threat environment has become more benign. The Soviet Union has disappeared, and a much weaker Russia has neither the capability nor the will for East Asian adventurism. Elsewhere, tough-minded communism has dissolved into a cynical excuse for incumbent officeholders to maintain power. A decade after the Tiananmen

Square massacre, China is combining support for greater economic liberty with (admittedly inconsistent) respect for greater individual autonomy, if not political freedom. So far Beijing's military renewal has been modest, and China has been assertive rather than aggressive—although its saber rattling toward Taiwan remains of concern.

Southeast Asia is roiled by economic and political instability, but such problems threaten no one outside the immediate neighborhood. Only North Korea constitutes a current East Asian security threat, but that totalitarian state, though odious, is no replacement for the threat once posed by the Soviet Union. Pyongyang is bankrupt and starving, essentially friendless, and, despite its willingness to wave the threat of an atomic bomb to gain respect, will only fall further behind its South Korean rival.

Some analysts privately, and a few publicly, believe that Japan poses a potential threat to regional peace. Such fears are unwarranted. Tokyo has gained through peace all of the influence and wealth that it had hoped to attain 60 years ago through war and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Moreover, the lesson of World War II remains vivid in Japan. In recent years the nation has been convulsed by divisive political debates over such modest initiatives as sending medical personnel to the Gulf War, providing troops to the U.N. peacekeeping operation in Cambodia, and authorizing military participation in civilian rescues. Even mainstream politicians committed to a somewhat more assertive posture have routinely sacrificed military spending to budget concerns. Those are hardly the actions of a society flirting with a new round of military conquest.

So far, neither the Clinton administration nor Congress seems to have noticed those critical changes. Despite the dramatic diminution in security threats and the equally dramatic growth in allied capabilities, U.S. policy looks very much like it did during the Cold War. Washington's motto seems to be, "What has ever been, must ever be."

Indeed, the Clinton administration repeatedly emphasizes its allegiance to the status quo. The administration states that its latest East Asia "report should provide a sense of U.S. continuity and stability in the midst of regional change and transition." America's "strategy and commitment are long-term and will continue even after the period of change and transition is complete."⁶

Interests, Interests Everywhere

DOD's security strategy report envisions an American security interest in virtually every East Asian country.

Australia

Opines the Clinton administration, "The U.S.-Australia alliance remains as close as any alliance we maintain in the region."⁷ Combined military training and exercises are backed by the Australia Ministerial agreement, which provides for regular visits by the U.S. secretaries of defense and state. Washington "envisions continued expansion and deepening of the U.S.-Australia alliance over the coming years."⁸ This is an alliance "not just for this time, it is for all time," President Clinton told the Australian parliament.⁹

Cambodia

Washington uses money as well as troops for security purposes in East Asia. The United States has provided security aid to Cambodia, though the funds have been suspended since mid-1997 because of Prime Minister Hun Sen's de facto coup d'état. Of course, DOD is disappointed at the lack of contact. As it explains,

Prior to suspension of U.S. military assistance, the United States has stressed the importance of comprehensively reforming the RCAF [Royal Cambodian Armed Forces], including reducing the number of troops, instilling and sustaining discipline, providing consistent pay to the military, and eliminating corruption. U.S. military assistance to Cambodia fea-

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tures non-lethal humanitarian assistance including English-language training, training for military engineers, medical exercises, and assistance to the Royal Government's efforts to reintegrate Khmer Rouge defectors into society. The United States has a strong interest in, and willingness to support, Cambodian military reforms.¹⁰

Hong Kong

The administration worries that "China's rise as a major power presents an array of potential challenges." Yet DOD continues to conduct 60 to 80 port calls in Hong Kong, now administered by China. Explains the Pentagon, doing so "serves as symbolic support for the continued autonomy of Hong Kong."¹¹

Japan

America's alliance with Japan is described as "the linchpin of our security strategy in Asia."¹² Secretary of State Madeleine Albright insists the alliance is "rock solid for the 21st century."¹³ DOD acknowledges that global changes have challenged "some assumptions about the purpose and role of the alliance." But never mind: "Both sides have moved actively over the past three years to update the framework and structure of joint cooperation to reflect the new environment."¹⁴

The latest report boasts that "we have strengthened our alliance with Japan through the April 1996 Joint Security Declaration and the September 1997 revised Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation."¹⁵ Although the Marine Expeditionary Force stationed on Okinawa is primarily intended as backup for a renewed Korean war, Defense Secretary Cohen visited Japan and asked, "Who in the U.S. administration has ever said they would pull out troops after the unification of the Korean peninsula?"¹⁶

Korea

Washington's most dangerous commitment remains that to South Korea. Nowhere else are so many U.S. soldiers so vulnerable to

military attack. Despite the risk, no deployment seems more important in the view of the Pentagon: "The security alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) serves as the foundation on which all U.S. diplomatic, defense, and economic efforts on the Korean Peninsula rest." DOD acknowledges the decline in Pyongyang's military capabilities but nevertheless warns that "North Korea is still capable of inflicting terrible destruction on South Korea."¹⁷ Which, of course, in the Pentagon's view, justifies maintenance of the American presence to help deter an attack.

But that is not all. The administration "welcomes the public statements of ROK President Kim Dae-Jung affirming the value of the bilateral alliance and the U.S. military presence even after reunification of the Korean peninsula."¹⁸ Reunification would presumably end the only serious threat against the South, but no matter. According to Washington, "The U.S. strongly agrees that our alliance and military presence will continue to support stability both on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the region after North Korea is no longer a threat."¹⁹

Laos

America's loss in Vietnam and Cambodia was accompanied by a different kind of loss in Laos, where the communist Pathet Lao took control without as destructive a civil war. Like many other communist states, Laos has moved away from doctrinaire Marxist-Leninism. Now, declares the administration, the United States not only wants to improve economic and political relations (a perfectly legitimate objective) but also "remains committed to exploring ways of broadening and developing our military relationship with Laos."²⁰

Mongolia

The Clinton administration does not believe itself confined to traditional security relationships. The Pentagon titled one section of its report "Enhancing Nascent Relations with Mongolia." A distant nation surrounded by China and Russia (and long dominated by

the latter), Mongolia has never before figured in U.S. defense strategy. However, explained DOD,

The United States supports continued specialized military training and education through the IMET [International Military Education and Training] program, future joint training in such areas as disaster preparedness, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, expansion of our nascent policy dialogue on international and security issues, and the establishment of regular high-level political and military visits between our countries.²¹

New Zealand

Defense relations between America and New Zealand remain in limbo, having been suspended in the mid-1980s after the latter nation barred U.S. nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered vessels from its waters. Still, “the U.S. hopes that in the future conditions will allow full restoration of military cooperation with New Zealand.”²²

Pacific Islands

Washington makes no pretense that its relationships with these entities entail mutual responsibilities. For instance, the DOD report asserts that the United States has an obligation to protect the security of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.²³ Those were among the ties that Washington had declared as important as ever in its previous report.²⁴

Philippines

Washington still pines for its former military bases in the Philippines. It took a volcanic eruption that covered Clark Air Base with a layer of ash and mud and a subsequent rejection of a lease renewal for Clark and Subic Bay Naval Base by the Philippine senate to cause the United States to relinquish those installations. The Philippines is about the only nation

in East Asia with which America’s security ties are weaker today than a few years ago. Naturally, Washington is dissatisfied with that situation and is moving to “solidify the U.S.-Philippines security partnership in the coming years.” One aspect of that is negotiation over a Visiting Forces Agreement to govern “routine combined exercises and training, and ship visits.” Moreover, new training activities are planned. Reports DOD, “We are gradually establishing a post-bases relationship that is consistent with our activities elsewhere in the region—exercises, ship visits, exchanges, and policy dialogues.”²⁵

Singapore

America has forged important military ties with this city-state, which offered to upgrade base access in the wake of America’s departure from the Philippines. (For instance, the Changi Naval Station can now accommodate U.S. aircraft carriers.) Moreover, reports DOD, “Singapore has been Southeast Asia’s leading advocate of a continued U.S. military presence. Singapore actively searches for ways to keep the United States engaged in the region.”²⁶

Taiwan

Reports the Pentagon, “The United States maintains robust but unofficial relations with the people on Taiwan.”²⁷ The administration cites defensive arms sales to the Republic of China (ROC). Unmentioned is the ambiguous but seemingly serious commitment to defend the island nation from Chinese attack.

In late 1995 and early 1996 Beijing combined verbal threats with missile tests in response to what appeared to be Taiwan’s increasing moves toward independence. Washington responded with a warning of “grave consequences,” meaning military intervention, should hostilities erupt between the two Chinas and sent an aircraft carrier through the Taiwan Strait, allegedly because of weather conditions. During his 1998 visit to Beijing, the president seemed to tilt in favor of the PRC’s position regarding Taiwan, yet administration officials insisted that U.S. policy had not changed. As a result, the overall

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impression left by Washington is that the United States would probably go to war if the PRC attacked Taiwan.²⁸

Thailand

U.S. security relationships extend deep into Southeast Asia. Contends the Pentagon, "Our long-standing alliance with Thailand remains strong and serves a critical function in enhancing our strategic interests worldwide." DOD is not interested only in traditional defense issues; it quotes the president as declaring, "Whether we are fighting drugs, combating AIDS, trying to pen bright new futures for our children, or working to protect the planet we share, Thailand and the United States are making our partnership work for our people."²⁹

Vietnam

Washington's most bitter recent strategic setback was the failure of its intervention in Vietnam. Presumably, it is for that reason that Washington "has kept the initial state of the U.S.-Vietnamese security relationship purposefully modest in pace and scope."³⁰ Yet DOD proclaims its commitment to even its onetime archenemy; the Pentagon wishes to expand the relationship between the two militaries and nations.

Miscellaneous

The administration reports that Washington maintains "active, albeit limited, military interaction" with Brunei. America's "bilateral relationship with Malaysia has expanded and matured over the past decade," and the administration also intends to "look for ways to expand our access to, and engagement with the Malaysian defense establishment." In addition, the administration plans "to maintain a cooperative bilateral defense relationship" with Indonesia, which supports a "long-term U.S. presence in the region."³¹

Multilateralism

The administration extols the development of "security pluralism." But the term has a narrow, crabbed meaning to U.S. officials. The

strategy report explains that America "must increasingly emphasize regional cooperation with allies to address future challenges." According to the Pentagon, "The United States views the cumulative effect of bilateral and multilateral security relationships as establishing a diverse and flexible framework for promoting common security in the Asia-Pacific region into the next century." U.S. officials envision a very limited flexibility, however, since the Pentagon emphasizes that Washington intends to participate in any regional institution.³²

Nonmilitary Concerns

The Pentagon also devotes substantial attention to nonmilitary issues. In its report, formally titled *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, the Pentagon covers environmental degradation, infectious diseases, drug trafficking, energy, and humanitarian relief. The administration explicitly terms drug trafficking, terrorism, and environmental degradation "security interests." Humanitarian operations, contends the administration, "may likewise serve important U.S. security interests and values, including preservation of regional stability, and promotion of democracy and human rights."³³ That is a breathtakingly broad agenda for a report supposedly devoted to security.

Washington's Policy Inertia

The world has changed, but Washington's vision has not. If only American leadership prevented East Asia's domination by hegemonic communism in the past, only American leadership can preserve East Asia's stability in the future. States DOD, "In contrast to Cold War-era alliances, [the U.S. commitments] are not directed at any third power but serve the interests of all who benefit from regional stability and security." Washington's outsized military presence is "a stabilizing force in the midst of change." Indeed, maintaining such a structure "provides an opportu-

nity to help shape the region's future, prevent conflict and provide the stability and access that allows us to conduct approximately \$500 billion a year in trans-Pacific trade.”³⁴ Apparently the administration believes that all that commerce would vanish if the United States did not police East Asia.

A Permanent Presence

Moreover, the U.S. military presence is seemingly required forever. True, DOD says the troops are necessary only for “the foreseeable future,” but it is hard to imagine the circumstances under which they could depart, given the premise of the report. For instance, former assistant secretary of defense Joseph Nye, who authored the earlier Pentagon report, claimed that DOD envisioned stationing “about 100,000 American troops in the region only so long as security conditions required it.”³⁵ But if the end of the Cold War, the collapse of hegemonic communism, and the dramatic growth in the strength of democratic and quasi-democratic states throughout the region aren’t enough to warrant meaningful change, what would be? If Washington can’t step back when the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff says he sees no major military threat, when can it?³⁶

Indeed, it seems too convenient that a system of alliances and force deployments developed to meet one set of contingencies also happens to be the optimal arrangement for meeting a completely different set. One could be forgiven for suspecting that U.S. defense policymakers are merely looking for new reasons to preserve old commitments.

Of course, the Pentagon is sensitive to such criticisms, arguing that the figure of 100,000 troops “is not arbitrary—it represents the formidable capabilities of the U.S. Eighth Army and Seventh Air Force in Korea, III Marine Expeditionary Force and Fifth Air Force in Japan, and the U.S. Seventh Fleet, all focused on shaping, responding and preparing as necessary to achieve security and stability in the region.”³⁷ However, that merely moves the arbitrariness one step back. DOD says that 100,000 is not arbitrary because it represents

everything presently stationed in East Asia. But why must everything presently in the region remain? The vague specter of instability has replaced the demon of communism as America’s enemy, with a potpourri of nonmilitary objectives tossed in for good measure.³⁸

The Host Nation Support Rationale

Another argument for U.S. bases in East Asia—especially in Korea and Japan—is that the allied nations provide “substantial support for maintenance of U.S. troops.”³⁹ But so-called host nation support (HNS) helps pay only a small portion of basing costs; it does not cover the expense of the troops themselves.

For instance, the marginal cost of stationing 37,000 soldiers in Korea is about \$3 billion annually, while the expense of raising and maintaining the relevant units runs as much as \$13 billion. Including the cost of units intended for reinforcement as well as a proportionate share of Pentagon overhead raises the cost even more. The total bill for defending Japan probably exceeds \$20 billion a year.⁴⁰ Last year South Korea contributed only \$399 million toward HNS, and it is reducing HNS to just \$333 million this year.⁴¹ Tokyo, which reduced HNS from \$2.3 billion in 1997 to \$2.1 billion last year, is expected to consider further reductions as well.

Moreover, the fact that other nations are willing to pay the United States to protect them is not an adequate reason for Washington to do so. If a commitment no longer serves American security interests, it should be ended. In that case, the troops are no longer needed, either overseas or at home. Contributions, even generous ones, from South Korea and Japan do not warrant hiring out the U.S. military as quasi-mercenaries to defend those nations.

For the same reason, the United States need not expand access to bases elsewhere in the region. Washington should drop proposals for a new bilateral military agreement with the Philippines, as well as efforts to increase defense ties with Singapore. The United States has suffered no damage from the demise of its

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bases in the Philippines, which had long before become expensive anachronisms. Instead of upgrading U.S. military ties, Washington should be transferring security responsibilities to its allies and friends.

Kitchen-Sink Justifications

The weakness of the administration's case is evident from its reliance on bottom-scraping, kitchen-sink arguments that can best be characterized as silly. For instance, the Pentagon contends, "The presence of U.S. military personnel in the region multiplies our diplomatic impact through engagement with counterparts and the demonstration of professional military ethics and conduct in a democratic society."⁴² However, U.S. training programs did not seem to prevent abuses by the Indonesian military in support of the brutal Suharto regime—or promote "the spread of democratic norms," as DOD desires.⁴³ The American military long worked closely with a series of ugly, military-dominated regimes in South Korea. Direct military aid, such as the International Military Education and Training program, appears to have had no moderating effect in Cambodia.⁴⁴ Even in countries such as Japan and the Philippines, the misbehavior of a few U.S. servicemen has had ill effects. Stationing troops in other nations is a dubious means of strengthening civil societies in those countries.

Even less compelling are DOD's nonsecurity "security" interests. "We must have the capability to . . . get American citizens out" of collapsed states, and we must be able to mount humanitarian operations, declares Secretary Cohen.⁴⁵ However, the possibility of expensive troop commitments' yielding some ancillary humanitarian benefits is no reason to maintain those commitments in perpetuity.

For instance, rescuing U.S. citizens is worth doing when practicable but does not warrant creating an extensive international military infrastructure. American businessmen, tourists, and others flood the world; they should understand that they are venturing abroad at their own risk. They have no right to expect a Marine Expeditionary Force always to be stationed nearby.⁴⁶

As for humanitarian operations, the Pentagon cites its responses to an earthquake in Japan, floods in China, and wildfires in Indonesia. In fact, DOD provides a map of "A Day in the Life of" illustrating U.S. soldiers building roads and schools and providing medical care.⁴⁷ Those are obviously worthy endeavors but hardly a prime responsibility of the U.S. military; the specific examples cited are especially dubious, since Japan is the world's second-ranking economic power and China is a rapidly growing state that is viewed as a potential threat. In short, being ready to help clean up after earthquakes in Japan is not a good reason to maintain nearly 50,000 servicemen in that nation.⁴⁸

Needed: An Alternative Strategy

Instead of enshrining the status quo, the administration and Congress should adjust U.S. overseas deployments. Policymakers should reduce the defense budget as well as overall force levels and foreign commitments; Washington should develop a comprehensive plan for the phased withdrawal of all forces currently stationed in East Asia and the termination of U.S. defense guarantees to allied nations.

At the same time, however, the United States should replace its bilateral defense treaties with Japan and South Korea with agreements that allow emergency base and port access. It should also maintain joint military exercises and intelligence cooperation. Where ties are looser—with Australia, the Philippines, and Singapore, for instance—the United States should eschew attempts to upgrade defense relationships and rely instead on informal consultations about security issues and intelligence sharing. In cases like Laos and Mongolia, Washington should focus on cultural and economic rather than military links.

The United States should also endorse regional security cooperation, including measures to involve Japan and South Korea, through ASEAN and other appropriate insti-

tutions. It would be useful for Washington to encourage nations to resolve boundary and territorial conflicts through negotiations, perhaps through such multilateral regional organizations.

The basic goal for America should be to step into the background as local actors take on prime responsibility for their own security and the stability of their region. Washington ought to make that process as smooth as possible, but America's ultimate goal should be to endorse a new security architecture that reflects the region's new reality—the absence of an overwhelming hegemonic threat combined with the opportunity for allied states to construct a local balance of power sufficient to constrain any potential aggressor.

Withdraw from Korea

The starting point for a new Asian strategy is disengagement from the Korean peninsula, the international flashpoint that has the greatest potential to involve the United States in a serious war. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) obviously remains unpredictable and potentially dangerous, and the Pentagon rightly warns that "North Korea has not relinquished its goal of establishing political primacy on the peninsula. Pyongyang continues to maintain a large, forward-deployed military with robust capabilities." Moreover, argues DOD, "Although the substantial deterioration in North Korea's economic conditions has inevitably affected its military forces, North Korea is still capable of inflicting terrible destruction on South Korea."⁴⁹ Other people embrace and even expand the administration's arguments. Three Heritage Foundation analysts argue that "the North's forward deployed forces require the continued presence of 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea."⁵⁰ Presumably, even a modest reduction in that number is unacceptable.

End South Korea's Free Riding

The North faces grievous weaknesses—inad-

equate or nonexistent training, replacement parts, equipment, and food and fuel for its military; an inefficient transportation network; and a lack of allies.⁵¹ Moreover, there is nothing unique to the southern section of the peninsula—say, a special gravitational field—that prevents the ROK from building a larger, more robust military than the North could ever hope to sustain.

However, Seoul's response to its temporary financial travails has been to *reduce* military expenditures—a curious action for a country facing a dangerous and unpredictable neighbor. South Korea's irresponsible decision doesn't seem to bother the Pentagon, however. Observes DOD, "Despite a substantial reduction of the ROK's defense budget, the ROK has assured the United States that it will maintain combined operational readiness and deterrent capabilities."⁵²

Although South Korea is suffering economic problems, they now seem to be easing.⁵³ In any case, the South's economic strength still dwarfs that of the North. Even with its economic troubles, the ROK possesses twice the population of, around 29 times the GDP of, and a vast technological lead over North Korea.⁵⁴ If the danger is as acute as claimed by the Pentagon, Seoul should be spending more, not less, on defense. Even in the midst of a recession, the ROK is well able to spend whatever is necessary to make up for the withdrawal of 37,000 American troops.⁵⁵ The North could then choose to engage in meaningful arms control negotiations or lose an inter-Korean arms race.

But the ROK will not make such an effort as long as it can rely on the United States. Despite a seemingly endless succession of promises to achieve military parity with the DPRK, South Korea never quite seems to do so.⁵⁶ In the event of war, Seoul is now planning on an American deployment of 640,000 soldiers, almost as many as the South has in uniform in all of its services.⁵⁷ If South Korea made anything close to Pyongyang's commitment to the military, the North could no longer pose a credible threat to the ROK's security.

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Washington should prepare a phased withdrawal program, during which Seoul could engage in an arms buildup or arms reduction negotiations with the North, or both. Upon completion of the troop withdrawal, the so-called mutual defense treaty between the United States and the ROK would terminate. At the very least, the United States should pull out forces that do little to augment the ROK's military capabilities but act as a tripwire for automatic American involvement. The 1998 security strategy report actually lauds that role: "Our treaty commitment and the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea help deter any North Korean aggression by making it unmistakably clear that the U.S. would immediately be fully engaged in any such conflict."⁵⁸ Immediate engagement, however, prevents any considered reflection about the best course to take to defend America's interests. Even if Washington wants to preserve the bilateral defense treaty, policymakers should at least protect this nation's freedom of action by eliminating the troop deployment.

Cautiously Manage the North Korean Nuclear Issue

The potential for a DPRK nuclear bomb is unnerving, but, despite disquieting events such as its failed satellite launch, Pyongyang has so far apparently lived up to the 1994 Framework Agreement on freezing its nuclear program. Washington should fulfill its own obligations under that agreement; the United States has been late in providing fuel oil (because of congressional opposition) and has failed to eliminate economic restrictions, as promised.⁵⁹ Washington should lift trade sanctions against North Korea and normalize diplomatic relations—modest concessions that would offer the North ongoing benefits for maintaining a peaceful course—and encourage Japan to do likewise. At the same time, the United States needs to work with China, Japan, and Russia to encourage continued DPRK compliance and resolve other questions, such as that of the construction of a new and suspicious underground site. Curiously, Seoul regards that construction

with significantly less alarm than does the United States.⁶⁰ ROK president Kim Dae-Jung has proposed a "package deal": improved commercial and political relations with the DPOK in return for an end to North Korean missile and nuclear development.

One may call such concessions bribes (or even appeasement) if one wishes, but it will be money well spent if it maintains the peace as the Korean endgame winds down. It is impossible to predict what course the North Korean regime will take—peaceful transition, violent implosion, or something in between. But Pyongyang's exact future is less important for all concerned than is avoiding war. The South will ultimately prevail, one way or another, and the goal of reunification, largely on Seoul's terms, is no longer a fanciful notion. Attempting to accelerate the inevitable is not worth an increased risk of conflict.

Although we should remain cautious about any promises by Pyongyang, the well-named "Hermit Kingdom" is more open today than at any time in its 50-year history.⁶¹ Given North Korea's long period of economic and political isolation—and the regime's equally long history of recalcitrance—U.S. threats offer little prospect of success. Moreover, a strategy of attempted coercion risks plunging the peninsula into a new cold, or possibly hot, war.⁶² Engagement may not work either, but it offers far greater prospects of success.⁶³

There are no good options if Pyongyang ultimately attempts to develop an atomic bomb (as well as more advanced missiles), although one important step would be to offer to sell theater missile defense technology to friendly East Asian powers.⁶⁴ A continued American conventional presence would serve no purpose, however. U.S. ground forces in South Korea (and those in Japan as well) would become nuclear hostages, enhancing the North's leverage over Washington.⁶⁵

Reject the Phony Justifications for the U.S. Presence

Of course, neither the South Korean gov-

ernment nor the Clinton administration believes the eventual disappearance of the threat from Pyongyang should affect U.S. deployments. The ROK's defense white papers occasionally note with alarm Japanese military outlays, while Korean academics, policy analysts, and government officials privately advocate a continuing American troop presence to deter aggression by Tokyo.⁶⁶ That would have the ironic effect of transforming an alliance originally intended to protect South Korea from a totalitarian communist enemy into an alliance to protect South Korea from another democratic, capitalist U.S. friend.

Washington, more concerned than Seoul about Japanese sensitivities, is not quite so crass. Instead, DOD prefers the all-purpose threat of instability to justify perpetuating the Korea commitment. DOD warns of "heavy concentrations of military force, including nuclear arsenals, unresolved territorial disputes and historical tensions, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivery serving as sources of instability" in the region.⁶⁷ But what U.S. forces stationed on the Korean peninsula could do about such problems is not self-evident. A single Army division would be of little use in fighting major regional powers, attempting to disarm a new nuclear-weapons state, resolving regional disputes, or eliminating the internal causes of most instability. It appears that what was once a means, a troop commitment in the ROK, has now become an end in itself. That perverse policy should be repudiated.

The U.S. Commitment to Japan: Time for a Setting Sun

Washington should follow a similar strategy of disengagement from Japan, which no longer faces a serious security threat. Whatever dangers remain or might arise in the future, from, say, an aggressive China, could be met by a modest Japanese military

buildup. Of course, even during the Cold War many of Japan's neighbors viewed Washington's presence as an occupation force intended more to contain Tokyo than Moscow. That attitude has, unfortunately, not entirely abated, but there is no justification for making America's East Asia policy hostage to the exaggerated fears of Japan's neighbors. The Japanese do not possess a double dose of original sin; their nation along with the rest of the world has changed dramatically over the last half century. The Japanese people have neither the desire to start another conflict nor the incentive to do so, having come to economically dominate East Asia through peaceful means.

The "New" U.S.-Japanese Defense Guidelines

Tokyo certainly has the potential to contribute more substantially to the region's defense. The administration extols the September 1997 defense guidelines as "enhancing the alliance's capability to respond to crises."⁶⁸ However, Tokyo's new responsibilities look significant only in light of its extraordinary passivity of the past.

The principal change in the defense guidelines authorizes Japanese logistical support for U.S. military operations in "areas surrounding Japan"—a phrase that is never defined—that are relevant to Japan's own security. Previously, Japanese officials argued that Article 9 of Japan's constitution precluded such involvement unless Japan itself was under attack. Despite the official enthusiasm on both sides of the Pacific, the reforms fall far short of establishing an equal security partnership between Japan and the United States. As Ted Galen Carpenter notes,

In the event of an East Asian conflict that does not involve an attack on Japanese territory, Japan will merely provide nonlethal logistical support for U.S. troops and allow U.S. forces to use facilities in Japan for their operations. There is no suggestion that Japanese Self-Defense Forces will par-

What was once a means, a troop commitment in the ROK, has now become an end in itself.

The principal significance of the new defense guidelines is that Japan is now willing to provide body bags for U.S. soldiers killed defending Japanese interests.

ticipate in combat missions alongside their U.S. allies. American military personnel will still be expected to risk their lives to repel any act of aggression that threatens the security of East Asia while Japan merely provides such things as fuel, spare parts, and medical supplies. The new defense guidelines do nothing to end Japan's status as an American military dependent; they merely allow Japan to be a slightly more active and helpful dependent.⁶⁹

This is the crucial point: the changes entail providing greater access or resources for U.S. military operations.⁷⁰ A cynic might argue that the principal significance of the new defense guidelines is that Japan is now willing to provide body bags for U.S. soldiers killed defending Japanese interests.

Rising Japanese Resentment of the U.S. “Watchdog”

Tokyo is unlikely to continue supporting a permanent foreign watchdog that seems to be there to constrain Japan. Tensions will likely grow as the lack of other credible missions for the U.S. forces becomes increasingly obvious. Popular anger is already evident in Okinawa, where American military facilities occupy one-fifth of the island's land mass.⁷¹ As far back as March 1990, a Japanese newspaper columnist complained that the Japanese people “cannot feel good about paying for a watchdog that watches them.”⁷² Economic and political brawls already erupt between the two nations with disquieting regularity, and polls find rising popular anger in both countries.⁷³

Washington should develop a program for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Japan, starting with those in Okinawa. That withdrawal can and should be accomplished in no more than six years. At the end of that time, Washington and Tokyo should replace their mutual defense treaty with a more limited agreement providing for emergency base and port access, joint military exercises, and intelligence sharing.

Terminate Irrelevant Military Ties to Australia

Even less relevant than the defense agreements with South Korea and Japan are the Australia-New Zealand–United States (ANZUS) accord, which went into deep freeze in 1984 after New Zealand blocked port access by nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered American ships, and the annual Australia–United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN). ANZUS, created in the aftermath of World War II, was from its inception directed less at containing the Soviet Union, which had no military presence in the South Pacific, than at preventing a new round of Japanese aggression. But since Tokyo had been decisively defeated and completely disarmed, later to be fully integrated into the Western defense network, ANZUS was outmoded the day it was signed. The 1984 brouhaha merely confirmed its irrelevance.⁷⁴

Which leaves AUSMIN. Australia faces no meaningful threats to its security. The notion of an attack from a serious military power—China, India, Vietnam—borders on a paranoid fantasy. Canberra, blessed with splendid isolation and economic prosperity, can easily provide whatever forces it deems necessary to protect Australia from a lesser threat.

Washington should put ANZUS out of its misery and simply discard AUSMIN. Australia and America should maintain mutually beneficial military cooperation, such as intelligence sharing and emergency port access. At the same time, Canberra should enhance its military activities in cooperation with other nations in the area.

Foster Regional Security Cooperation

Indeed, the United States should encourage expanded regional security discussions and institutions in general. Through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) or other organizations, smaller countries throughout East Asia should develop a cooperative defense relationship with Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and especially Japan.

Tokyo could do much to improve regional security. A measured military buildup, focused on defensive weapons and conducted in consultation with regional neighbors, would help prevent the creation of a dangerous vacuum—feared by proponents of continuing U.S. dominance—after America's military disengagement. Washington's position should be that of a distant balancer, leaving friendly regional powers to handle their own affairs but poised to act if a hegemonic threat arises that those states cannot contain.

The United States should aid the creation of a more effective regional security framework by encouraging the peaceful resolution of various boundary and territorial disputes. None presently seems likely to lead to war, but all impede better bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Washington should offer its good offices to help mediate the Japanese-South Korean squabble over the Takeshima/Tokdu islands, the Japanese-Russian quarrel over the “northern territories” (the Kuril Islands), and the multifaceted territorial disputes over the Paracel and Spratly islands to help dissipate international tensions.⁷⁵ It is crucial, however, that the United States make clear that resolution of those and similar controversies is up to the interested parties, not to America.

Indeed, the Clinton administration acknowledges that regional institutions are arising to play a mediating role. For instance, reports DOD, “ASEAN has distinguished itself by tackling such issues as political instability in Cambodia and territorial disputes in the South China Sea.”⁷⁶ But such efforts will always be limited if America insists on preserving its dominant role. Just as the prospect of a hanging concentrates the mind, so the prospect of American military disengagement would concentrate the energies of squabbling countries on working through their differences rather than inflaming past hatreds for domestic political gain.

It is true that most East Asian states want Washington to stay, but the American people should not be expected to surrender more dollars and risk more lives to police East Asia for whatever length of time friendly states consider it convenient. Although it might be in the interest of other nations for Washington to defend them—and what country would not naturally desire that the world's remaining superpower subsidize its defense?—it is not necessarily in America's interest to do so.

A Realistic Approach to Dealing with China

Increased regional cooperation is particularly important, given the likely rise of China. The end of the bitter Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union allows Washington to take a more balanced position in regard to the People's Republic of China (PRC). In its new report, the Pentagon rightly treats Beijing with some unease: “China presents numerous challenges, as well as opportunities, in our regional security strategy.” As a result, “the United States, and indeed the rest of the Asia-Pacific region, has a substantial interest in China's emergence as a stable, secure, open, prosperous and peaceful country.”⁷⁷

In general, the administration takes a responsible attitude toward relations with the PRC, advocating increased confidence-building activities and bilateral cooperation.⁷⁸ Washington should continue to promote good political relations, expand military dialogues, push for a freer trade regime (including Beijing's inclusion in the World Trade Organization), and encourage additional economic and political reforms.⁷⁹

However, the United States need not be reticent about discussing China's foreign arms sales, human rights abuses, and attempted bullying of Taiwan. America should speak frankly on those issues, though Congress should resist pressure to limit trade with and investment in China. While nothing is inevitable, economic ties offer a powerful

Tokyo could do much to improve regional security.

America does not have sufficient interests at stake to risk war with a nuclear-armed China over Taiwan.

tool for weakening centralized communist control in the PRC.

Enabling Taiwan to Defend Itself

Washington also needs to repair its badly flawed policy toward the ROC.⁸⁰ Founded on the island of Taiwan after the communist victory on the mainland in 1949, the ROC long claimed to be the legitimate government of all China. Seven years after Richard Nixon made his historic trip to the PRC in 1972, the United States dropped diplomatic recognition of the ROC and most other nations followed suit. Since then, Taiwan has existed uneasily at the periphery of global politics—an economic powerhouse but a diplomatic midget.

As noted earlier, the ROC's increasing behavior as a sovereign state caused the PRC to rattle its sabers—or, more accurately, test its missiles—in early 1996. Beijing's threats led Washington to implicitly threaten military intervention should hostilities erupt.

Unfortunately, the Clinton policy package increases the threat of war. The United States opposes self-determination by a people who have built a highly successful capitalist and democratic society—as President Clinton made all too clear during his trip to the PRC in the summer of 1998. Moreover, despite its promise to continue selling arms to Taiwan, Washington drags its feet on key weapons systems and thereby risks denying that community the ability to defend itself. Yet U.S. officials continue to indicate that the United States will intervene if war breaks out.⁸¹ That is a dangerous, incoherent policy.⁸²

America does not have sufficient interests at stake to risk war with a nuclear-armed China over Taiwan. However, Washington, after making clear that it believes the status of Taiwan, whether reunified with mainland China or independent, is up to the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, should sell the ROC whatever weapons, such as attack submarines, that Taipei desires to purchase for its own defense.⁸³

Encouraging Strategic Counterweights

Washington should view India, which

possesses the world's second largest population, a sizable military, and an embryonic nuclear arsenal, as an important future counterweight to China.⁸⁴ India, in combination with a tough-minded Taiwan, a somewhat more heavily armed Japan, and a unified Korea with potent military forces, would help establish a new regional balance of power that would allow the United States to further distance itself from incendiary but local disputes.

The alternative—and apparently the preferred course of American policymakers across the political spectrum—is for Washington to discourage China's neighbors from playing serious military roles. Such a strategy creates the specter of a regional power vacuum that only the United States can prevent. That approach obviously increases the influence of American diplomats and might deter conflict—as long as Washington's willingness to intervene is believed. But it also ensures that the United States will be involved in any fight, no matter how marginal to America's interests.⁸⁵

Moreover, turning East Asia into a starkly bipolar arena creates perverse regional incentives. China could turn out to be more aggressive if it faced no regional constraints and didn't believe that America was willing to risk Los Angeles for Taipei, Tokyo, or Seoul. At the same time, the belief that they have U.S. protection may cause China's neighbors to be more obdurate in any dispute. The incongruous result would be an increased chance of conflict.

Avoid Unnecessary Dangers

The United States should avoid dangerous flashpoints where only tangential security interests, if that, are involved. Most of all, Washington should not worry unduly about the sort of quarrels that are inevitable in any region with nations as diverse as those in East Asia. The daisy chain between political repression in Cambodia or civil unrest in Indonesia and widespread war or trade dis-

ruptions is not only long; it is also so complicated that an American military presence would likely be unable to interrupt it. True, DOD does claim that U.S. troops allow Washington “to anticipate problems, manage potential threats and encourage peaceful resolution of disputes.”⁸⁶ But no successful examples come to mind.

America’s economic strength, diplomatic reach, and cultural ubiquity will always make it a potential honest broker. Irrespective of Washington’s views, states such as South Korea and Japan have good reason not to let disputes, such as that over the Tokdu/Takeshima islands, escalate; in fact, reliance on U.S. defense guarantees encourages bilateral irresponsibility, since both nations can score domestic political points with little security risk. Moreover, the current economic difficulties are already dampening arms sales, suggesting that an irresponsible arms race might be difficult for Asian states to mount in response to U.S. disengagement.⁸⁷

Potentially more threatening are such disputes as those over the Paracel and Spratly islands, which conceivably could lead to a military clash. But those simmering feuds illustrate the importance of devolving full responsibility, not just partial burdens, to friendly East Asian states that have far more at stake. At some point the threat to use force, rather than simply maintain a force presence, might allow America to impose a solution to a particular problem. However, that is unlikely to be worth the cost and risk to the United States. Even in the rare instance in which it might be worth it, the critical strike forces would be air and naval, not the ground units presently stationed in Japan and Korea.

America as Ultimate Balancer

The United States should act as the ultimate balancer in East Asia. Should a potential hegemon arise that cannot be contained

by states friendly to America—today, at least, only China seems a plausible, though not likely, villain—Washington should be prepared to act. But there is no reason to assume that Beijing will be an enemy. China’s future development is highly uncertain, and there is a great difference between an assertive nation, which China has been so far, and an aggressive one.⁸⁸ The PRC is a long way from becoming such a threat in any case. Even today Taiwan’s GDP is about a third that of Beijing’s, South Korea’s economy is almost half as large as that of the PRC, and Japan’s GDP is more than four times as big as that of the PRC.⁸⁹

Moreover, China is far more likely to behave in a restrained fashion if its neighbors possess serious deterrent capabilities. Beijing is likely to treat more seriously well-armed neighbors than U.S. promises, especially if America’s interests seem slight and its will to act uncertain. An assortment of capable East Asian powers would also reduce the likelihood of the United States being ensnared in dangerous crises—especially those that might lead to a confrontation with a nuclear-armed adversary.

The United States should act as the ultimate balancer in East Asia.

Toward a Sensible Security Strategy

The world remains a dangerous place, advocates of a perpetual Pax Americana ritually intone, and so it is. But it is not inherently dangerous to the United States. Nor are the dangers to other nations in East Asia as great as they were during the Cold War era. As DOD acknowledges, relations between Russia and China are much better, greatly reducing the possibility of conflict between those two states; several other sets of bilateral relations (Russia-South Korea, China-Japan, Russia-Japan, ROK-Japan) have also improved.⁹⁰ This doesn’t mean that a major war in East Asia is impossible, but it is much less likely.

Defense Secretary Cohen has argued that “the central lesson of this century” is “that

Notes

when America neglects the problems of the world, the world often brings its problems to America's doorstep."⁹¹ Yet no one seriously argues for isolation, or acting, in Cohen's words, "as if we could zip ourselves into a continental cocoon and watch events unfold on CNN."⁹² The real debate is between those who would be meddlers of first resort and those who would be intervenors of last resort. Most world problems will never end up on America's doorstep unless Washington invites them to. Real leadership entails identifying the rare problems that are likely to affect the United States and then developing the most effective response. With regard to the rest, Washington ought to rely on local leadership to deal with local problems.

Nowhere is that strategy more important and desirable than in East Asia. The United States will be more secure if friendly East Asian powers, instead of relying on America, are able and willing to contain nearby conflicts. Moreover, as economic issues grow in importance, it will become even more essential for Washington to simultaneously reduce the military burden on the American economy and ensure that its trading competitors bear the full cost of their own defense. Otherwise, U.S. firms will be less able to take advantage of expanding regional and global economic opportunities.

Jettisoning antiquated alliances and commitments and reducing a bloated force structure do not mean the United States would cease to be an Asian-Pacific power.⁹³ After bringing its forces home from South Korea and Japan, America should center a reduced defense presence around Wake Island, Guam, and Hawaii. The United States would remain the globe's strongest military power (by far), with the ability to intervene in East Asia if necessary. However, American policy would be dictated by America's interests, rather than those of the populous and prosperous security dependents that Washington has accumulated throughout the region. The Pentagon's next East Asia security strategy report—and, more important, its practical policies—needs to be based on that crucial principle.

**Real leadership
entails identifying
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most effective
response.**

1. U.S. Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, February 1995), p. 6.

2. U.S. Department of Defense, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region: 1998* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, November 1998). Cited hereafter as *Security Strategy 1998*.

3. For example, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has helped fill any potential vacuum that could have resulted from the eclipse of U.S. dominance in Southeast Asia two decades ago, and the Clinton administration extols the "increasingly important role" played by the organization, whose members "have grown more confident and assertive in the years following the end of the Cold War." Nevertheless, explains DOD, the ASEAN states support "a continued U.S. military presence in the region." As a result, America "will remain committed to our friends and partners in Southeast Asia both in good times and in bad." *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 35–36. Of course, it is hard to find any nation that doesn't prefer to have America defend it. States the Pentagon, "Brunei has publicly supported the U.S. role in maintaining Asia-Pacific security, including a continued U.S. military presence in the region." *Ibid.*, p. 37.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

5. William Cohen, "America—Confronting the Issues and Staying the Course," *World Affairs Journal* 12, no. 1 (September 1998): 1.

6. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 1.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

9. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 26.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 34.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

13. Quoted in Mary Jordan, "Albright Assures Japan That Alliance Is Strong," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1998, p. A12.

14. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 19–20.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

16. Quoted in "Anger As Pentagon Chief Kicks Off Visit," *South China Morning Post*, April 8, 1997.
17. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 22-24.
18. Ibid., p. 62. The Korean people, in contrast, seem less enthused. A 1997 poll indicates that 70 percent want all American forces to go home after reunification. "U.S. Troop Presence Depends on Role in Unification: Report," *Korea Times*, January 24, 1999. Even today some groups protest activities of the U.S. military, including its impact on the environment. "Noise at U.S. Bombing Range Disturbs Wildlife," *Korea Times*, September 27, 1998.
19. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 62.
20. Ibid., p. 39.
21. Ibid., p. 35.
22. Ibid., p. 27.
23. Ibid.
24. U.S. Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, p. 6.
25. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 29, 12, 29.
26. Ibid., p. 40.
27. Ibid., p. 34.
28. For a more detailed discussion of the Taiwan issue, see Ted Galen Carpenter, "Let Taiwan Defend Itself," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 313, August 24, 1998.
29. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 28.
30. Ibid., p. 40.
31. Ibid., pp. 37, 39, 38.
32. Ibid., pp. 42, 64, 66, 43.
33. Ibid., pp. 53-58, 63, 57.
34. Ibid., pp. 19, 59, 7.
35. Joseph Nye, "In Defence of the Alliance with the U.S.," *Australian Financial Review*, August 3, 1998, p. 17.
36. "U.S. Military Chief Sees No Big Threat in Asia," Reuters, February 25, 1999.
37. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 10-11.
38. The same phenomenon occurred in Europe, where after the fall of the Berlin Wall officials suggested using NATO to fight the drug war, combat environmental degradation, and promote student exchanges. Doug Bandow and Ted Galen Carpenter, "Preserving an Obsolete NATO," *Cato Policy Report*, September-October 1988, pp. 1, 10-12. Now, of course, instability has become the chief target of the onetime anti-Soviet alliance.
39. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 11.
40. Doug Bandow, *Tripwire: Korea and U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changed World* (Washington: Cato Institute, 1996), p. 40.
41. "South Korea to Pay Less in '99 for Keeping U.S. Troops," Reuters, December 22, 1998. Washington has also cut ROK payments under the Foreign Military Sales program. Barbara Opall-Rome, "DoD Lightens Seoul's FMS Burden," *Defense News*, June 8-14, 1998, p. 4.
42. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 18.
43. Ibid., p. 45. To the contrary, the Indonesian military has generated political instability as well as violated human rights. Ryaas Rasyid, director-general for regional affairs in Indonesia's Home Affairs Ministry, observes, "Suharto sent troops to every region considered to be threatening national unity. It created dissatisfaction everywhere." Quoted in John McBeth and Margot Cohen, "Loosening the Bonds," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 21, 1999, p. 11.
44. Opposition leader Sam Rainsy complains that Western financial aid has hindered reform. He contends that half of the soldiers to be demobilized with Western money are "ghost" soldiers. Michiyo Nakamoto and Ted Bardackee, "Financial Aid to Cambodia 'Hinders Reform,'" *Financial Times*, February 24, 1999, p. 6.
45. Cohen, p. 5.
46. Perhaps the silliest example of this rationale in action was Woodrow Wilson's formal justification for entering World War I—to preserve the right of Americans to travel on armed merchantmen of a belligerent power carrying munitions through a war zone. See, for example, Doug Bandow, *The Politics of Envy: Statism as Theology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 93; Charles Seymour, *American Diplomacy during the World War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942), pp. 26-128; and Edwin Borchard and William Lage, *Neutrality for the United States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 59-235. In fact, a lively controversy has arisen over the charge that Britain left the *Lusitania* without escort in the hope that it would be sunk and would thereby

bring the United States into the war. The leading proponent of that thesis is Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972).

47. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 57, 32–33.

48. The cost is shared by American and foreign citizens. The Pentagon acknowledges “the sacrifices of the citizens who live near training areas or bases, and who sometimes endure noise and other inconveniences.” *Ibid.*, p. 13. But in the case of Okinawa the burdens are both overwhelming and unjustified. Doug Bandow, “Okinawa: Liberating Washington’s East Asian Military Colony,” Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 314, September 1, 1998.

49. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 23, 24.

50. Richard Fisher, Robert O’Quinn, and Daryl Plunk, “Clinton’s Trip to Asia: Time to Show U.S. Leadership,” Heritage Foundation Backgrounder no. 1236, November 13, 1998, p. 9.

51. For instance, Moscow is replacing its 1961 treaty with North Korea with a new accord that lacks security guarantees. “Russia Ready to Sign Treaty with N. Korea,” Reuters, February 22, 1999.

52. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 25.

53. See, for example, Jennifer Veale, “Is This Recovery for Real?” *Business Week*, January 25, 1999, pp. 54–55; and Michael Schuman, “South Korean Economy May Have Bottomed Out, But Many Factors Still Present Risks to Investors,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 29, 1999, pp. A12, A13.

54. For a fuller treatment of this issue, see Bandow, *Tripwire*; and Doug Bandow, “America’s Obsolete Korean Commitment,” *Orbis* 42, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 605–17. The Bank of Korea estimates that the North’s economy has been shrinking since 1995.

55. The latest estimate for 1997 are a GDP of \$442.5 billion for the ROK and \$17.7 billion for North Korea. In the same year the South spent \$15.5 billion on its defense. John Dori and Richard Fisher, eds., *U.S. and Asia Statistical Handbook 1998–1999* (Washington: Heritage Foundation, 1998), pp. 58–61.

56. Bandow, *Tripwire*, pp. 71–73.

57. Voice of America, “Korea/Defense,” September 28, 1998.

58. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 22–23.

59. Thomas Lippman, “N. Korea-U.S. Nuclear Pact Threatened,” *Washington Post*, July 6, 1998, pp. A1, A13; and Philip Shenon, “North Korean

Nuclear Arms Pact Reported Near Breakdown,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1998, p. 16. Selig Harrison of the Century Fund argues that America’s promise to lift sanctions was more important than its pledge to provide fuel oil. Selig Harrison, “How to Deal with North Korea,” Remarks during Council on Foreign Relations debate, Washington, February 9, 1999, p. 1.

60. Glenn Baek, “Dangerous Endgame in North Korea,” *Washington Times*, February 26, 1999, p. D19; and George Gedda, “Albright Calls North Korea a Threat,” Associated Press, February 25, 1999.

61. Among the admittedly more unusual evidence of change was the recently revealed beer and pizza parties hosted by the U.N. Command at the truce village of Panmunjom and attended by North Korean and U.S. soldiers. Don Kirk, “GIs and North Koreans Said to Mingle in DMZ,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 12, 1998.

62. Some analysts fear that soon there will be another crisis that veers toward war, as did that of 1994. See, for example, James Kitfield, “The Next Korean Conflict,” *National Journal*, December 5, 1998, pp. 2876–78. Critics of the Framework Agreement blithely ignore the threat of triggering hostilities and offer no practical alternative policy. Yet simply cancelling the accord risks creating a frightening spiral beginning with a restart of the DPRK nuclear program and continuing with U.N. sanctions, allied military strikes, and war.

63. See, for example, Selig Harrison, “The Korean Showdown That Shouldn’t Happen,” *Washington Post*, November 22, 1998, p. C2; Joseph Cirincione and Matthew Rice, “Korean Nuke Pact Works,” *Defense News*, November 2–11, 1998, p. 13; and Donald Gregg and James Laney, “Don’t Dismantle the Nuclear Framework on Korea,” *Washington Post*, September 21, 1998, p. A21.

64. See, for example, “U.S., Japan Agree to Study Missile Defense,” *Washington Times*, September 21, 1998, pp. A1, A20; and Bill Gertz, “Cohen Says N. Korean Missile Is Big Threat,” *Washington Times*, July 10, 1998, pp. A1, A20. Naturally, the administration would prefer to intensify the dependence of U.S. allies by running such a system, but our allies’ defense should be their responsibility. The North Korean missile threat also creates an incentive for the United States to develop a domestic anti-missile system. James Anderson, “The Senate’s Opportunity to Get Serious about Missile Defense,” Heritage Foundation Executive Memorandum no. 551, September 8, 1998.

65. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Doug Bandow, “Nuclear Issues between the United States

and North Korea," in *North Korea after Kim Il Sung*, ed. Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Reiner, 1998), pp. 123-45.

66. Bandow, *Tripwire*, pp. 162-63. A new report from the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, the South Korean Foreign Ministry's think tank, advocates that Washington permanently station 5,000 soldiers on the peninsula in order to, according to the *Korea Times*, "guarantee its automatic involvement in a regional conflict." "U.S. Troop Presence Depends on Role in Unification: Report."

67. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 62.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

69. Ted Galen Carpenter, "Washington's Smothering Strategy: American Interests in East Asia," *World Policy Journal* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1997-98): 22.

70. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 21. Fear of North Korea has grown since the North's recent missile launch, causing a new debate over Japan's defense policy. "The Call to Arms," *The Economist*, February 27-March 5, 1999, pp. 23-25; and Michiyo Nakamoto, "LDP Debates Military Strikes Strategy," *Financial Times*, February 26, 1999, p. 4.

71. Bandow, "Okinawa."

72. Quoted in Kenneth Pyle, "The Japanese Question," in *Japan and the World: Considerations for U.S. Policymakers* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian and Soviet Research, 1990), p. 7.

73. See, for example, Ted Galen Carpenter, "Paternalism and Dependence: The U.S.-Japanese Security Relationship," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 244, November 1, 1995, pp. 20-23; and Frank Ching, "A Partnership under Strain," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 17, 1994, p. 33. The media in both nations play a role. Stanley Budner and Ellis Krauss, "Newspaper Coverage of U.S.-Japan Frictions," *Asian Survey* 35, no. 4 (April 1995): 336-56.

74. See, for example, Doug Bandow, "ANZUS: A Case of Strategy Obsolescence," in *Collective Security or Strategic Independence? Alternative Strategies for the Future*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 121-32; and Ted Galen Carpenter, "Pursuing a Strategic Divorce: The U.S. and the ANZUS Alliance," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 67, February 27, 1986.

75. The latter are claimed in whole or in part by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Chinese construction on the appro-

priately named Mischief Reef has generated sharp criticism from the Philippines, whose exclusive economic zone contains the islands. Manila has so far unsuccessfully called upon ASEAN and the United Nations to intervene in the dispute. Philippine defense secretary Orlando Mercado has also pointed to his nation's mutual defense treaty with the United States and argued that it is in the interest of America and allied states "that this particular area be kept free as a sea-lane from the dominant control of one power." Quoted in Michael Richardson, "Philippines Is Stymied in Dispute with China," *International Herald Tribune*, January 21, 1999, p. 4. Washington has so far, appropriately, remained aloof.

76. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 36.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

79. For a general view, see Ted Galen Carpenter, "Managing a Great Power Relationship: The United States, China and East Asian Security," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12, no. 1 (March 1998): 1-20.

80. See generally Carpenter, "Let Taiwan Defend Itself."

81. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

82. In fact, the administration's policy of "strategic ambiguity" is extraordinarily irresponsible. Washington seems to be saying that the United States might be willing to go war to protect Taiwan, but who knows? The administration obviously hopes it can deter China on the cheap, without having to actually threaten to use force. However, this course risks a repeat of Sir Edward Grey's disastrous diplomacy on the eve of World War I. Britain's foreign secretary secretly committed his nation to assist France without warning Germany of London's position, thereby making both continental powers more willing to risk war.

83. Today a Chinese invasion would be an extraordinarily risky affair. U.S. Department of Defense, "The Security Situation in the Taiwan Strait," Report to Congress pursuant to FY99 appropriations bill, 1999.

84. See, for example, Martin Sieff, "Passage to India," *National Review*, June 22, 1998.

85. The Philippines undertook a serious military modernization program only after the United States departed, when it became impossible for Manila to continue relying on Washington for its defense. Tony Tassell, "Spratly Nerves Force Manila

Rethink," *Financial Times*, January 26, 1999, p. 6.

86. *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 10.

87. Gwen Robinson, "Defense Spending Cuts Threaten Asian Stability," *Financial Times*, February 24, 1999, p. 6; and Tim Smart, "Cutbacks in Asia Take Toll on U.S. Arms Industry," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1998, pp. B1, B24.

88. Under Secretary of Defense, "China in the Near Term," August 1-10, 1994 (photocopy).

89. Dori and Fisher, pp. 43, 45, 53.

90. *Security Strategy 1998*, pp. 42, 44. One reason for some of the improvements may be America's perceived tilt toward China, which has worried Japan, in particular. Ted Galen Carpenter, "Roiling Asia: U.S. Coziness with China Upsets the Neighbors," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 6 (November–December 1998): 1–6.

91. Quoted in *Security Strategy 1998*, p. 4.

92. Cohen, p. 5.

93. Nor is it a radical notion. See, for example, Carpenter, "Washington's Smothering Strategy"; Edward Olsen, "A Northeast Asian Peace Dividend," *Strategic Review* (Summer 1998); and Chalmers Johnson and E. B. Keehn, "The Pentagon's Ossified Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July–August 1995).

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