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**WHY UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES ARE NEEDED
IN NORTHEAST ASIA**

by

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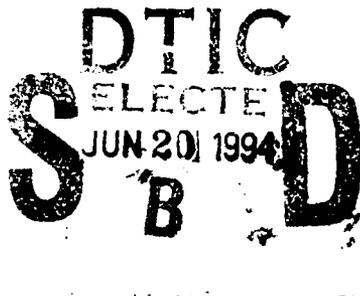
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Study Project

Why United States Armed Forces Are Needed in
Northeast Asia

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This paper attempts to provide reasons for maintaining U.S. forces in Northeast Asia. It describes the current situation in Northeast Asia with the nuclear proliferation issue with North Korea, the ideological differences with China, and the economic problems with Japan. It seeks to define the United States' national interests in the area to include (1) favorable world order, promotion of values, and economic well-being. The paper then argues that the real reason U.S. forces are needed in the region is to provide stability in order to ensure access to important markets for U.S. businesses. With Asia being the number one market for the U.S., it behooves us to examine our commitment to the region in terms of "return on investment." It then provides some solutions in dealing with the countries in the region to further U.S. interests and to provide the basis for future development.

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide reasons for maintaining U.S. forces in Northeast Asia. It describes the current situation in Northeast Asia with the nuclear proliferation issue with North Korea, the ideological differences with China, and the economic problems with Japan. It seeks to define the United States' national interests in the area to include (1) favorable world order, promotion of values, and economic well-being. The paper then argues that the real reason U.S. forces are needed in the region is to provide stability in order to ensure access to important markets for U.S. businesses. With Asia being the number one market for the U.S., it behooves us to examine our commitment to the region in terms of *return on investment*. It then provides some solutions in dealing with the countries in the region to further U.S. interests and to provide the basis for future development.

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Why United States Armed Forces Are Needed In Northeast Asia

War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.
Carl Von Clausewitz, On War

Economics is the continuation of war by other means.
Daniel Bell

Introduction

We won the Cold War. For the past 45 years the United States has been engaged in an undeclared war pitting the ideologies of democracy and communism in a battle for survival. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the major struggle is over. The last remnants of this war, however, are still being waged in Northeast Asia. The continued hostilities with North Korea are a constant reminder that the war is not quite over. In addition, the clash of ideological mores with China continues to be a cloud on the foreign policy horizon.

The United States must take a long term view of its future interests in Northeast Asia. The importance of the region to the United States cannot be overstated. The current administration continues to stress the importance of the link between Asia and the United States.

Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific

Affairs, in April, 1993, in a statement before Congress clearly delineated the views of the United States:

Today, no region in the world is more important for the United States than Asia and the Pacific. Tomorrow, in the 21st Century, no region will be as important. In that vast area, most of the world's people live. Many of the richest cultures flourish. The most dynamic economies beckon. The major powers intersect.

America has fought three wars in Asia during the last half-century. We have abiding security interests there. Forty percent of our trade is with the region, its share swelling more rapidly than that of any other and half again as large as with Western Europe. More and more eager, talented Asian immigrants enrich America's cultural and economic mosaic. Our nation's population and production shift steadily toward our Pacific coast. In sum, the firmest guarantees of America's staying power in Asia -- more credible than rhetoric from the rostrum or writs on paper -- are our overriding national interests.¹

The national interests that are evident in the area are: favorable world order, promotion of values, and economic well-being.² I will attempt to explore each of these in outlining the United States interests in the region.

National Interests

Favorable World Order

The continued threat by North Korea to reunify the Korean peninsula by any means, the instability and possible collapse of North Korea itself, and the development and export of military weapons are major threats to the world order that the United States desires as an end state.

North Korea is one of the last bastions of totalitarian communism. The current (and only, since 1948) North Korean president, Kim Il Sung, has stated that he plans to reunify the Korean peninsula prior to his death. He

is currently 82 years of age. Time is running out for him. North Korea's traditional trading partners, the Soviet Union and China, have withdrawn their previous support. As a result, North Korea is being forced into becoming self sufficient.

Unfortunately, they do not have the means to be self sufficient. Food production is well below normal levels. People do not have enough to eat. It is reported that the North Korean armed forces are on half rations and suffering from malnutrition.³ Industrial capability is hampered because of a lack of raw materials. Oil must be imported and paid for in hard currency. Both China and Russia are now demanding hard currency in exchange for any goods provided. The old method of barter has been discarded by both trading partners. North Korea's ability to earn hard currency is very limited.

The only export that is of sufficient worth to earn hard currency is military weaponry. North Korea has provided weapons to third world countries. Some of the latest shipments include SCUD-C missiles. The SCUD-D with a range of 1000 kilometers will also find many buyers once it goes into production. There are also unconfirmed reports that North Korea is developing a SCUD-E with a range of 1,500 km to 2,000 km.⁴

The possession of the SCUD-D puts the Japanese capital of Tokyo within range of North Korean missiles. The possible development of nuclear capability is causing Japan to scramble for ways to counter that threat. The

development of a theater missile defense is only a beginning. If the North Korean nuclear threat cannot be stopped, Japan may elect to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrence leading to nuclear proliferation.

If the two Koreas can finally resolve the distrust and enmity that have existed for the last 43 years and reunite, there will be an immediate and uncomfortable military imbalance in the region. While the absorption of the North by the South is possible, the resulting nation would have severe economic problems. It would, however, have a combined armed forces of some 1.8 million well-equipped personnel making it one of the largest and most lethal in the world. That military might would definitely raise the concern of Japan, Russia, China, and the rest of the world.

The ongoing political game between North Korea and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has the entire world watching and holding its breath. The IAEA, with the backing of many Western nations, is pressuring the North to allow inspections of their nuclear facilities. The North is rejecting those demands and threatening war if any sanctions are brought to bear. The ramifications of North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons work against regional stability and toward greater proliferation. The United States is deeply involved in the effort to solve the North Korean nuclear crises. It has a stake in the outcome in more ways than one.

Of course, the spread of nuclear weapons is destabilizing on its own. The United States has, however, held up the reduction of some 7,000

combat forces in South Korea under the East Asia Security Initiative as a result of the nuclear debate with the North. This reduction is in addition to about 6,000 troops previously withdrawn from South Korea. Other U.S. reductions have meant that about 29,000 personnel have been extracted from Asia. Most of these were as a result of closing bases in the Philippines. This reduction of both bases and personnel has lessened the impact the U.S. can have on policy in the area.

Other events bear watching in the region. China is in the midst of a dramatic military modernization and is seeking to assert its self-proclaimed historical right to dominance in the region. New purchases of modern arms from Russia and plans for the purchase of military equipment that can be utilized for power projection have caused concern in many Asian capitals as well as among United States policy makers.

China has announced reductions in its armed forces. These reductions are centered on the border forces in the north facing Russia. However, despite her protests that she is "...fully preoccupied with its domestic problems," and "...has only limited capacity for external involvements,"⁵ China has embarked on a systematic modernization of her armed forces. With increased economic might, military spending has increased each year since 1990. The modernization is not threatening in and of itself since China's military equipment is woefully out of date. The threat to regional security manifests itself in the type of equipment being

purchased and in the reorganization of the forces to utilize the new equipment.

China's modernization efforts have focused on the air and naval forces with an aim of developing combined arms rapid deployment forces capable of threatening the nations of Northeast and Southeast Asia.⁶ This power-projection capability is being enhanced primarily with the purchase of Russian-made equipment.

Air forces are being updated with sophisticated Sukhoi Su-27 fighters. In 1993, China took delivery of 26 Su-27's. Negotiations are almost complete on an additional 26. These 52 fighters represent a potent tactical force with a primary mission of air cover and air superiority for naval forces operating in the South China Sea and other areas.⁷ To extend their range, these fighters are equipped with refueling capabilities. This will fit in well with the purchase of aerial tankers currently underway. In addition, China is conferring with Russia on a technology interchange that would allow the Chinese to build aircraft based on the MiG-29 fighter and MiG-31 high-altitude interceptor. Plans are to build from 50 to 150 aircraft annually.⁸

The naval buildup is also continuing. The centerpiece of the fleet would have been a Russian aircraft carrier currently being built in the Ukrainian Black Sea. However, China has decided not to purchase the carrier. The cost of purchasing, outfitting and operating the ship would have been too great a drain on national resources. It is important to note

that China's *intentions* did not change. They would very much like to have the power projection capability of the carrier -- it is just unaffordable under present economic conditions.

Other naval purchases include Russian Kilo-Class conventional submarines. The Kilos would be used to provide protection to surface vessels operating at increasingly longer distances from China. The Kilo has a range of about 6,000 miles and can remain at sea for 45 days. Other naval vessels being built include amphibious ships that can transport rapid deployment forces to conflicts within China's sphere of influence. These vessels are in addition to some 51 amphibious ships currently in the inventory. There is also a modern class of missile-equipped destroyers and frigates being constructed that will allow China to patrol far from its coastal waters. Other enhancements to a blue-water capability involve retrofitting vessels with propulsion and weapons systems purchased from industrial democracies.⁹

The ground forces have not been forgotten. Although total numbers are going down, the units are being restructured to provide better capability. The goal is to provide forces trained and equipped for rapid-reaction combined arms and joint operations. A brigade-size amphibious force has been deployed on the island of Hainan in the South China Sea.¹⁰ This force would be expected to take part in any action aimed toward the Spratly Island area.

The joint force that China is putting together is a potent one. The ability of the Chinese armed forces to project its force rapidly is being watched closely by its neighbors. As the Asian economy booms, more and more resources are being spent on defense. An arms race is developing in the region with implications far beyond the South China Sea where there have been skirmishes over the resource-rich Spratley Islands. China's continued armament and their moves toward assuming a regional role as an offset to Japan will bear watching.

Su Huimin of China's Institute for International Strategic Studies argues that "anyone without prejudice can see that China does not constitute a threat. On the contrary, China is a force for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region."¹¹ This may be true; however, the "peace and stability" appear to be on China's terms without regard for its neighbors concerns.

While, Russia has reduced troops and destroyed many of its missiles in the Far East, she has also been modernizing the remaining forces. Hongchan Chun, in his dissertation entitled, "The Security Situation in Northeast Asia Under Transition," outlined the detail of the Soviet draw down:

A series of unilateral arms reduction announcements under Gorbachev affected military posture in this region as well as under the European region. The 1987 INF Treaty on intermediate-range missiles, which removed about 430 theater nuclear missiles deployed in Soviet Asian regions could reach China, Japan, and South Korea, was the initial Soviet initiative toward military detente in Northeast Asia. Afterwards, the Soviet Union announced its plan to reduce its

Far Eastern armed forces by 120,000 by January 1, 1991, including deactivation of 12 divisions and 11 air squadrons and the elimination of nine major surface warships and seven submarines.¹²

Much of the most modern equipment that was reduced east of the Urals was moved to the Far East. As Russia down sizes her forces, she prudently retires the older, less effective equipment. In the Far East this has had the effect of increased capability in spite of an overall reduction in troop levels.¹³ The reduction in missiles in the area has also lessened tension in the region. However, what remains is a potent capability that bears watching closely.

Although Japan's methods have been more economic than military in the past, Asia's economic giant is now looking at its military as a synchronous part of its comprehensive security policy. The recent decision to allow Japanese Self-Defense Forces to accompany U.N. peacekeeping operations is a major departure for the nation whose constitution forswears war.

Japan is also looking at upgrading her military. Negotiations are ongoing with the United States to jointly develop an antimissile system. This is mainly in reaction to the North Korea missile threat and is a departure from Japan's total reliance on the U.S. for this assistance.¹⁴

The main thrusts of Japan's buildup are in the naval and air forces. The navy is being outfitted to provide protection for shipping lanes and commerce within a 1,000 nautical mile range of Japan. This is a

continuation of a policy that has changed from a basic coastal defense system and could, however, lead to conflicts with China and other nations within this zone. The Japanese Defense Agency is considering the purchase of about 500 new aircraft over the next 5 years. The purchase would be a combination of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), fighters, transports, and helicopters. These aircraft would have extended ranges to assist in the protection of the 1,000 nautical mile zone. However, the current economic downturn could slow the procurement or even derail it completely.

The impending withdrawal of Great Britain from Hong Kong and the future of that enclave is also of major concern to the world as a whole. Although the military reach of the British Empire has fallen the syndrome of "just being there" provides stability.

Promotion Of Values

The Cold War was fought over values believed to be universally good. The tenet that democracies trade with and don't fight each other was the main reason to try to undermine the spread of communism in the world. The last two remaining major communist nations are China and North Korea. The democratization of Russia has sounded a death knell for the ideology of these two holdouts.

China is gradually changing. However, the crackdown typified by Tianenmen Square shows that there is still a long way to go to achieve any

resemblance of Western style democracy in China. Economic powers and the power of the purse are strong lures and are causing the Chinese to be dragged into democracy slowly but surely. The constant use of "carrots and sticks" by the United States to gain an advantage seems to be falling on deaf ears in China. The annual battle over the awarding to China of Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status is now over. China was awarded MFN status in spite of the protests of many who want China to improve their human rights record. The economic draw of China's markets, however, is making it harder and harder to wield power to force them to improve their human rights. The current administration appears to have succeeded in separating the two. The battle between the two countries is far from over. China knows how to play the game. Her latest ploy to "appease" U.S. trade negotiators by executing copyright violators flies in the face of U.S. human rights advocates. The economic power will eventually force China to come to grips with the new world order. The granting of MFN status to China is a small step along the way to open intercourse. The United States, however, must be patient and take a long term view of the desired objectives.

If the global community can convince North Korea to join the new world order, the threat of communism will be greatly diminished. North Korea continues to follow Kim Il Sung's policy of national self-reliance called juche. The juche philosophy is Kim's interpretation of communism that dictates an independent, self-reliant, political, economic, social, and military state. This

military mind-set, with a large standing armed force (estimated to be the world's fifth-largest conventional army),¹⁵ is a major destabilizing factor in the region.

Economic Well-Being

With the demise of the Soviet Union and confrontation between the two superpowers, the major threat to the United States' well being is perceived as the Japanese economic might. The Japanese Rising Sun is replacing the Soviet Bear as the symbol of America's enemy. Superior economic performance generates greater economic power: increased control over capital facilities, markets and technology.¹⁶ The competition for these markets is considered a "zero-sum game." The United States must compete or lose. The survival of the nation is at stake.

Besides Japan, other Northeast Asian countries are growing at varying rates. While the recent global recession has slowed growth somewhat, South Korea and China's economies are expanding at admirable rates well ahead of that of the United States and, even Japan. As an example, China's economy is expected to grow at annual rate of 4.8% for the next 25 years eventually becoming one of the world's largest economic powers.¹⁷

It has been postulated that if the U.S. - Japan trade dispute continues, the current friction "could escalate into serious economic retaliation, a trade war, a financial war, and on the very distant horizon, even some sort of twenty-first century military clash."¹⁸

This threat is not to be taken lightly. Steve Chan, in his book East Asian Dynamism: Growth, Order, and Security in the Pacific Region states:

It would also be quite misleading to suggest that Japan is a powerless giant, an economic behemoth without any military capabilities. This suggestion evidently suits Tokyo's publicists, who want to foster a pacific image of their country abroad, an image that could help to deflect foreign adversaries from focusing on Japan as a potential military target and to defuse concerns on the part of Japan's neighbors that somehow it could repeat its military aggression of World War II. However, in reality, Japan is far from being militarily impotent. It has the world's third largest defense budget (behind only the United States and the former USSR). Furthermore, given Japan's large industrial base and sophisticated technological establishment, it could launch a massive and effective military armament program on short notice.¹⁹

Japan tends to play this military trump card with some regularity. By so doing and by having the world react in fear, they receive a free ride for world security and prosperity from the United States. As the people of the United States search for their share of the so-called "peace dividend" as a result of winning the Cold War, they will be less willing to pay for Japan's free ride. The United States tends to focus on the bilateral relationship between itself and Japan. In reality, the obvious friction between the two countries tends to outweigh the importance of the area as a whole.

The cry by the United States Congress for increased burdensharing on the part of our allies is directly tied to the United States' economic problems. Failure to reduce the budget deficit by attacking the main problem -- entitlements -- has forced Congress to turn to the defense budget as a source of funds for reductions. One way to maintain the forces needed for the defense of the United States and its interests, while reducing costs, is to levy a share of the costs on those nations that are deemed to benefit the most from the presence of U.S. forces. James Steinberg and Charles Cooper writing for the RAND Corporation state:

Other aspects of economic friction, such as disputes over trade barriers and macroeconomic policy, are only indirectly related to the security relationship, although acrimony engendered in the economic domain tends to spill over into the security relationship. All too often, Americans who view the U.S. commitment to Europe as a favor to Europeans are tempted to retaliate in the security domain for felt insults in the transatlantic economic relationship.²⁰

While this statement is directly about the European theater, the same relationships and problems exist in Asia. To some extent the problems are exacerbated because of the tremendous chronic trade deficit with Japan. Trade with Korea is about balanced; however, the perception is that Korea and the other so called "Little Dragons" (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore) are all running huge trade surplus with the U.S.

The argument that our allies should bear some of the expense runs thin when our own foreign policy is at odds. After World War II, Japan was forced to forswear war. Its constitution prohibits the existence of a Japanese armed forces other than for self-defense. The United States foreign policy has been and continues to be that we will provide for the defense of Japan. Our nuclear and conventional umbrella extends to cover Japan and most of its critical trade routes. Japan has prospered because it has not had to spend a large amount on defense. It has perennially spent about 1% of GDP on defense. Although this may sound insignificant when expressed in percentage terms, one percent of over three trillion dollars is a large number.

In spite of this we continue to attack Japan as not spending enough

for the common defense. During the Gulf War, Japan was a major contributor to the effort. Although perceived as a reluctant participant, Japan had tremendous hurdles to overcome with its domestic policy and the constitutional prohibition on war. Japan became one of the major contributors of money and materiel to the war effort and ended up paying approximately 20% of the bill -- much more than the United States was forced to spend. Japan has also begin to participate in United Nations peace keeping operations. They have also surpassed the United States to become the largest contributor of foreign aid in the world. We need to take a holistic view of countries' contributions, and of Japan's in particular, to society as a whole. Measuring defense in terms of military spending is sometimes a bit simplistic. The United States must come to grips with how it plans to deal with Japan. Does the world want a rearmed, powerful military Japan, or is it content to provide the military force needed for their defense. If we insist on them paying an ever-increasing share of the world's defense, we must be willing to have the specter of a powerful competitor for world supremacy.

One way of looking at the expenditure of funds for forward presence is as a return on investment. For the relatively small amount we spend on stationing U.S. forces in Northeast Asia, we get a tremendous return. Our presence ensures the stability of the region.

Japan and Korea have for years depended on the United States'

nuclear umbrella to provide protection from the Soviet and Chinese nuclear threats. That promise today helps promote non-proliferation in the area, but places the United States in the role of protector. How much is this worth to the United States? As shown by the following table, trade with the countries of Northeast Asia is tremendous. The \$274.6 billion dollars is more than our trade with Western Europe.

The following table displays pertinent data about the countries of Northeast Asia:

Country/Area	Gross Domestic Product ²¹	Total Trade with United States ²²	Total Defense Spending	Total U.S. Stationing Costs	Total Contribution
United States	5,950.7	-NA-	299.0	-NA-	-NA-
Japan	3,480.3	147.3	34.3	7.7	3.6
Korea	324.9	32.0	12.4	4.0	1.8
China	405.2	34.9	23.1 ^a	-NA-	-NA-
Taiwan	196.8	41.0	9.7	-NA-	-NA-
Hong Kong	93.5	19.4	unknown	-NA-	-NA-
Total NE Asia	4,500.7	274.6	79.5	-NA-	-NA-

NOTES: Dollars are in billions. All data is as of 1992. Total Trade is the sum of imports and exports between the United States and the country indicated. ^aThis is 1991 spending. The official budget for 1992 was \$6.8 billion.

As can be seen from the table above, the GDP of the area is almost 75 percent of the U.S. output. The defense expenditures are, however, only about 26 percent of the U.S. expenditure. Obviously these countries benefit from our defense umbrella. While Japan and Korea make a small contribution because of U.S. forces based on their soil, the others make no such contribution to the overall welfare that they enjoy.

Why are we willing to pay their share? In 1990, Paul Wolfowitz, then Undersecretary of Defense had the following statement about our role in Northeast Asia:

We do not bear this role and retain these forward forces only because we are concerned over the vacuum which would be created if we were no longer there, although that is a source of concern. Nor are we merely motivated by altruism. Simply, we must play this role because our military presence set the stage for our economic development in this region. With a total two-way transPacific trade exceeding 300 billion dollars annually, 50% more than our transAtlantic trade, it is in our own best interest to help preserve peace and stability.²³

Mr. Wolfowitz has the key to the answer. We have decided (although probably not consciously) as a nation that is in our best interests to maintain the stability of this and other regions of the world in order to ensure that we have free and open trade with those areas that we consider our friends. The \$274 billion in trade means jobs for the United States. Although no direct comparisons can be drawn, a recent article by Hobart Rowen in the Washington Post estimated that \$120 billion in exports to Asia in 1992 equated to about 2.3 million American jobs.²⁴ This is evidence of the tremendous impact this area has on our daily lives.

Japan is trying somewhat to fill the gap left by the partial pullout of the United States in the region. However, Japan is currently having internal problems that have diverted its attention. The first economic crisis since World War II is absorbing the politicians and people's time and attention. Until Japan's economy is back on an even keel, the view of that country will be toward the inside rather than the outside.

The Far East has recently replaced Europe as our largest trading area. With China's population fast approaching 1.5 billion people, and with a rising standard of living, this area is touted as the market of the future. The ability of the United States to compete in that market is paramount to our economic well-being and to our existence.

A Solution

The United States must develop a comprehensive national strategy involving all three forces that may be brought to bear on global problems: political, economic, and military.

Political

The lack of multi-lateralism in the area is a major destabilizing factor.²⁵ Trying to promote a regional agreement among the parties has met with some resistance. Years of enmity, distrust, and European and American domination, however, have undermined the ability of these nations to reach any type of mutual security pact. Economic talks (such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Council) are being held with an eye toward countering the proposed European Common Market and North American Free Trade area.

Japan and Korea have for years depended on the United States' nuclear umbrella to provide protection from the Soviet and Chinese nuclear threats. That promise today helps promote non-proliferation in the area, but places the United States in the role of protector. Because of the above, *the current arrangement of bi-lateral security agreements, with the United States as the common factor, must continue. The long-term goal of the United States must be to develop a multi-lateral security arrangement in the region.*

The United States must *continue to support the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and other organizations that support nuclear non-proliferation.* In order to decrease the North Korean nuclear threat we must *continue bi-lateral and multi-lateral talks with the North Koreans.* This will have a several impact: (1) decrease the nuclear threat by ensuring that all nations are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and follow its tenets: (2) lower tensions on the Korean Peninsula by continuing the dialogue between the North and South with the United States as an interested and

participating partner: and (3) hasten the reunification of the Korean peninsula by keeping the players at the bargaining table and ensuring the peaceful settlement of any disputes. China's continued insistence on the conduct of nuclear testing is also detrimental to the overall goal of non-proliferation.

Economic

As the largest future market of goods and services, China must be a major target for United States economic growth. While preserving our markets in Japan and Korea, we must make every effort to expand trade with China. In order to do this we need to clear the political obstacles to open trading. *The United States must de-link human rights issues with the Most Favored Nation trading status. The United States should make every effort to utilize its economic power to nudge China toward compliance with global standards of human rights. We must not, however, allow our idealism to deter American business from this valuable market. A balanced approach that provides "carrots and sticks" in the forms of positive rather than negative trade concessions, encouragement for American business to expand into China as aggressively as possible, and the assistance to China to develop its natural resources of people, minerals, and land will allow us to make inroads in this critical area.*

With respect to Japan, the United States must continue to resolve items of mutual interest. Having Japan as a friend and ally is much-preferred to having this economic giant as an enemy. Economics must be viewed as an extension of war. The same planning that goes into defense analysis should be used to devise a national economic strategy to counter the threat. Just as the Soviet Union as an enemy dominated the military thinking of Cold

War, Japan must come to the fore in the analysis of economic threats. America must learn from them. Japan has a well-rounded, comprehensive national strategy that includes the values that are espoused here. Their success is worth emulating. It is not too late to learn.

Military

The United States armed forces stationed in Northeast Asia have a positive, stabilizing influence on the entire Far East and should remain in place. These forces are the United States' guarantee of its commitment to provide the nuclear umbrella that protects the region. It is an offset to the rise of Chinese military might and to the possibilities of Japanese military resurgence.

America's security role in the region has been described as that of "balancing wheel," "intercessor," and "security guarantor." From the point of view of most regional states, the United States fulfills its most valuable security function just by being there.²⁶ "Just being there" may not be enough. The absence of multilateral security agreements causes diplomacy to be a little complicated. The common denominator amongst the nations of the region is the U.S. In order to perform its perceived roles America must stay fully engaged in the region.

In looking toward the future, *America must examine its role with a reunified Korea.* South Korean leaders have projected that a United States presence will still be needed even after reunification. One of the strongest proponents for this will be Japan as they seek a dampening factor on the creation and control of this sudden super power.

The bi-lateral security arrangements with nations in the area provide for a common defense that benefits all. These must be continued in light of the

inability or reluctance of the area countries to agree upon a regional plan of cooperation and security. Japan and South Korea both contribute to this area defense in terms of funds and land to support the United States armed forces stationed in their respective countries. *The United States must work to strengthen these security agreements and must strive to bring China into the fold with a separate agreement that will have long-term impact on the region.*

Changes in the missions of the United States forces stationed in South Korea must be examined. If the threat from North Korea continues to decline as predicted, the forces in South Korea could provide a regional role rather than being locked on the target of the North Koreans. This regional force would provide the ability to ensure access to economic trading zones. It would discourage expansionary views of China and Japan and give the United States a forward deployed force that could be used for force projection on a rapid basis.

Conclusion

Northeast Asia is one of the most important areas for the United States. Our ability to maintain a presence in this area, with South Korea ideally located, is of major importance to our future and vital to our national interests. Our future economic well-being is dependent upon our access to markets in the Far East. Access to markets is guaranteed by ensuring a stable political, economic and military situation. The armed forces in South Korea provide just such force. Without that presence the ancient ethnic grudges that are so much a part of history could erupt into armed conflict as they have in other parts of the world.

The relatively small cost of the military in the area is greatly offset by the

increased economic trade afforded because of the increased stability of the region. America must bring itself to view the world with a mid- to long-term outlook. Short-sighted policies will only further the decline in prestige and power that has occurred over the past several years. In order to provide global leadership, the United States must develop a comprehensive national strategy with a long-term view of the world that focuses on the economic well-being of the United States and the entire world.

Mr. Paul Wolfowitz, then Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee stated our continuing policy ever so eloquently:

Our regional interests in Asia will remain similar to those we have pursued in the past: protecting the United States from attack; supporting our global deterrence policy; preserving our political and economic relations; maintaining the balance of power to prevent the development of regional hegemony; strengthening the Western orientation of the Asian nations; fostering the growth of democracy and human rights; deterring nuclear proliferation; and ensuring freedom of navigation. Our policies -- political, economic, and security -- must be designed to prevent a vacuum from occurring, and to support our unique and central stabilizing role.²⁷

To do less than this would be to shirk our responsibility to ourselves, the Asia-Pacific region we call our backyard, and to the world.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁴ "Joint Chiefs of Staff Report on North Korea: 'No Knowledge' on New Missile," (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS-EAS-93-178, 16 September 1993), 16.
- ⁵ A. James Gregor, "The Spratlys and the Security Environment in the South China Sea," The New Pacific Security Environment: Challenges and Opportunities, Edited by Ralph A. Cossa. Washington: National Defense University Press, 1993, 224.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.
- ⁷ Tai Ming Chueng, "Sukhois, Sams, Subs," Far Eastern Economic Review 156, no. 14 (8 April 1993), 23.
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- ⁹ Gregor, "Security Environment in the South China Sea," 223.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.
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- ¹⁹ Steve Chan, East Asian Dynamism: Growth, Order, and Security in the Pacific Region. (Boulder, Westview Press, Inc., 1993), 77.
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²⁶ Andrew Mack, "Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Problems and Prospects," Journal of Northeast Asia Studies 11, no. 2 (Summer 1993), 30.

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