Cultivating Support for Hegemony through Multilateralism: 
The Sino-American-Japanese Relations and Asian Security

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Introduction

How do states make a strategic choice when they face the need for designing regional security arrangements? How do states reach agreement on building and changing regional security institutions? This paper examines an emerging interaction between bilateral and multilateral regional security arrangements for conflict resolution in Asia since the 1990s by emphasizing both dynamics of Asian hegemony management and foreign policy strategies of the United States, China and Japan, which try to cultivate supports among Asian countries for the leadership. This paper demonstrates that hegemony management and national preferences regarding regional security arrangements in Asia have impacted both nascent attempts to institutionalize multilateral security cooperation and the robust bilateral alliances in the region since the 1990s.

After illustrating the two-fold facts that the multilateral institution-building in the Asian regional security is in its nascent stage on the one hand, and the U.S.-led bilateral alliances in Asia are still robust even after the end of the Cold War on the other hand, this paper then examines how and why the U.S.-Japan bilateral alliance has strengthened and accommodated itself with multilateral security arrangements such as the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Regional Forum. This paper focuses on the interaction between the hegemony management and foreign policy strategies of China, Japan and the United States in order to examine this puzzle. I will compare the three countries’ preferences in Asian regional security arrangements wherein bilateralism and multilateralism interact. Then I will demonstrate how the idea that bilateralism is not replaced by but supplemented with multilateralism has diffused among the three countries. I will examine how this idea has obtained the feasibility and legitimacy as a foreign policy strategy among policy-makers in China, Japan and the United States by emphasizing the impact of the hegemony management upon the foreign policy interactions. Finally, I will argue that the diffusion of the idea through the interaction of national preferences in the process of hegemony management has impacted the establishment of regional security arrangements in Asia.
Asian Security in the Post-Cold War Era

While there is a wide range of different theoretical perspectives with regard to analyzing international security, Asian strategic relations are usually discussed by employing two dominant paradigms in the study of international relations: realism and neoliberal institutionalism. Realism holds that states will either bandwagon with or balance against dominant powers so that international politics will always include a significant military component as states warily regard one another.¹ For example, Aaron Friedberg demonstrates a pessimistic view of the future of regional stability in Asia and argues that none of the conditions which promote peace and stability in Western Europe and North America are found in the Asian context, whereas many of the factors which promote conflict and instability are present in abundance.² A number of events might appear to support this pessimistic view of realism: the 1993-94 crisis over the North Korean nuclear weapons program; the 1995-96 Sino-American confrontation over the Taiwan Straits; the social and economic downturn in the Asian financial crisis in 1997; and tensions over the North Korean missile program and the launching of the North Korean Taepodong missile over Japan.

In contrast to realism, neoliberal institutionalism provides a more optimistic view of international relations, arguing that states can avoid the security dilemma through transparency and cooperation which are promoted by international institutions.³ Liberals argue that regional security suspicions which realists propose can be managed through multilateral-based arrangements and confidence-building measures (CBMs), which achieve transparency in military information.⁴ Liberals claim that information about states’ military capabilities contributes to regional stability and promotes compatible military doctrines. For example, China issued the first white paper on its defense policy in 1995. The publication of China: Arms Control and Disarmament,

followed by *The White Paper on National Defense* which were released by the Information Office of the People’s Republic of China State Council in 1998, 2000 and 2002, was one of the remarkable achievements by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which pushed member governments to publish at least one annual defense white paper to reveal their military information, such as defense expenditures, military force levels, and acquisitions.\(^5\)

In addition to the two dominant paradigms in the study of international relations, constructivist approaches have emerged as the third major theoretical group.\(^6\) Constructivism holds a view that human behavior, including state actions, is fundamentally shaped by a socially shared understanding of the world.\(^7\) Constructivist scholars argue that individual actors’ identity can determine the nature of regional security. Identity is a set of “relatively stable, role-specific understanding and expectations about self.”\(^8\) An individual’s identity and understanding of the world emerges out of communicative and social processes: namely, socialization, debate and sometimes coercion.\(^9\) Thomas Berger argues that the chief source of stability/instability in the Asian region today lies in the peculiar construction of national identity and interests on the part of the chief actors in the region. According to Berger, the intentions and perceptions of actors in Asia which might trigger a crisis are fourfold: the drive for national unity by the highly unstable regime in North Korea; the clash between increasingly divergent constructions of national identity in Taiwan and in Mainland China; the deeply rooted anti-militarism of contemporary Japan; and latent popular isolationism in the United States.\(^10\)

\(^5\) We however have to note that some specialists on military affairs cast doubt on the accuracy and sufficiency of information which the Chinese government has released in *the White Paper on National Defense*. See, Jusuf Wanandi, "ASEAN's China Strategy: Towards Deeper Engagement," *Survival* 38:3 (Autumn 1996), 124. As he also notes, however, the Chinese *White Paper* is probably no worse than defense white papers produced in Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia.


\(^10\) Ibid., 420.
When we turn our eyes from theoretical standpoints to substantial situations, the early 1990s witnessed an increasing attention to Asian security. The protracted conflicts in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits are two major factors which have affected the fragile stability of the region. As we will see below, researchers and practitioners have thoroughly examined the methods of conflict resolution in the post-Cold War Asia where the Cold War security structure has still remained.

The 1990s witnessed the idea of multilateralism emerging in the field of international security. In Europe, for example, one could argue that multi-layered international institutions such as the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have played an important role in improving regional stability in Europe.\textsuperscript{11} International institutions based on the idea of multilateralism\textsuperscript{12} have become an intellectual fashion for the new world order since the end of the Cold War. This paper borrows John Gerard Ruggie’s definition of multilateralism, which refers to the situation in which state behavior in a group of more than three states is characterized by the following three inter-related elements: (1) the indivisibility of welfare, (2) the non-discriminatory or equal application of some general principles, and (3) diffuse reciprocity.\textsuperscript{13}

Asia’s regional security architecture has evolved to enhance security dialogues among Asian nations since 1991 when Japanese foreign minister Taro Nakayama began promoting the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, whose members created the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994.\textsuperscript{14} As in Europe, in the post-Cold War era, there have been

\textsuperscript{13} John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” in Ruggie, \textit{Multilateralism Matters}, 3-48. Ruggie makes a clear difference between nominal and qualitative multilateralism. The former is based on a definition by Robert Keohane, which points to “the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states.” The latter is an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of “generalized” principles of conduct. Chinese interpretation of multilateralism is similar to nominal multilateralism. See, Jianwei Wang, “Managing Conflict: Chinese Perspectives on Multilateral Diplomacy and Collective Security,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang eds., \textit{In the Eyes of the Dragon: China Views the World} (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 96.
disputes on the feasibility of multilateral arrangements for conflict resolution in Asia, such as the confidence-building measures (CBMs) attempted by ARF.\textsuperscript{15}

Concomitantly America’s bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia have survived in the Asia-Pacific despite the demise of the Soviet threat after the end of the Cold War. Created over a half century ago, the United State’s network of Pacific alliances, which are commonly referred to as the ‘San Francisco system’ in memory of the 1951 Japanese peace treaty, remains an integral part of Washington’s international security posture.\textsuperscript{16} Particularly, the bilateral security alliance between Japan and the United States has been newly redefined and strengthened in 1996. The April 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Declaration and the September 1997 Defense Guidelines were designed to inject new meaning and credibility to the alliance in a changed security environment. Practitioners of the alliance management made four claims: (1) the alliance was updated; (2) Japan’s defense perimeter was enlarged; (3) the alliance is more reciprocal and balanced; and (4) mutual trust was enhanced.\textsuperscript{17}

As protracted conflicts in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits threaten regional prosperity and stability, new regional security arrangements, including both bilateral and multilateral ones, have become an important policy concern in order to respond to the post-Cold War security situation in Asia. This policy concern reflects the puzzle regarding how two different security arrangements can coexist: bilateral alliances with the United States on the one hand, and newly established multilateral institutions by Asian countries on the other hand.

East Asia is an interesting case for examining region security that contains both bilateral alliances whose origins can be traced back to the beginning of the Cold War and nascent multilateral security frameworks which have emerged in the 1990s. Both


opponents and proponents concerning the significant role multilateral security institutions can play in Asia argue that multilateral security frameworks do not necessarily replace bilateral alliances. Rather, researchers and practitioners seem to reach a loose consensus that multilateral security institutions supplement the bilateral alliances. They point out that regional security arrangements in Asia exist somewhere between “a balance of power and a community-based order” and that political practices in Asian security are shaped by “a strong tradition of bilateralism and only very recently by an incipient multilateralism.”

However, little effort has been made to examine how states reconcile the tensions in security politics generated by the contending approaches of bilateral alliances and multilateral security frameworks in Asia. The remainder of this paper examines why these regional security arrangements in Asia are the complementarity between the robust bilateral alliance and the nascent multilateral security arrangement by focusing on the national preferences of the United States, China and Japan, and the mutual influences of their national preferences by adopting the viewpoint of hegemony management.

Hegemony Management

The United States has dominated the terrain as an only superpower that posses predominant material capabilities, both militarily and economically, since the end of the Cold War while the decline of the preponderance of the United States was being argued during the 1980s. Susan Strange denies the argument of the U.S. decline by pointing out that structural power, which is defined as “power to shape and determine the structure of the global economy,” contributes to U.S. control over structures of the world political

Joseph Nye also emphasizes the role of soft co-opted power in shaping what others want due to “the attractiveness of one’s culture and ideology or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes actors fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic.” Thus, hegemony is defined not only by the distribution of material capabilities (i.e., military strength and economic prosperity) which allows a predominant state to change what others do through coercive command behaviour. But it is also defined by “soft” ideational and institutional power which derives form intangible power resources such as culture, values, ideology and institutions. Hegemony is complete when a dominant state provides major institutions, forms of organizations, and key values and ideas of a particular political, social, and economic structure. Hegemony thus describes in three functions: 1) a particular distribution of power, benefits and cost; 2) normative judgments and justification about past, current, or potential states of affairs; and (3) embedment of particular institutionalized strategies and behaviours for distributional and justification goals among the less powerful parties. Through functioning the three elements above, hegemony achieves a wide measure of consent among states and is able to provide sufficient benefits to the associated and subordinate elements in order to maintain their acquiescence.

Davis Bobrow argues that hegemony management is a competing situation among parties with regard to who enhances, maintains, modifies and challenges the three functions of hegemony. The major parties play roles as a current hegemon, a follower, and a challenger. They compete over providing other parties with persuasive ideas and interpretations of regional arrangements which maintain or modifies distributions, normative justification, and institutionalized strategies. Thus, hegemony management is a process to rectify the current hegemony dominance by questioning, re-examining and re-constructing the current order of hegemony who not only requires a large extent of

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22 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Bound to Lead (Basic Books, 1990), 267ff.
23 Nye, Bound to Lead, 32
26 Ibid., 173.
consent among less powerful states but also provides some extent of satisfaction for them to keep its supremacy.

For example, creating or reshaping regional security arrangements is a reflection of hegemony management. After the end of the Cold War, major powers in East Asia, i.e., the United States, Japan and China have competed over an idea of regional security arrangements. As we have already observed, multilateralism in regional security has emerged in the early 1990s as an alternative idea that re-examines effectiveness, legitimacy, and expectation of the U.S.-led bilateral alliances. Thus, seeking for multilateralism is disputable and regarded as a challenge to American hegemony, particularly in Washington in the early 1990s. Competing over ideas and interpretations of regional security arrangement that includes the combination between bilateralism and multilateralism has been seen as the product of hegemony management. Hence, the process of idea diffusion regarding state preferences to bilateralism and multilateralism plays a significant role in hegemony management in Asia.

The constructivist approach to the study of international relations provides us with the insight that national preferences are constituted in the face of experience, communication, and changing ideas about how the social world operates. Ideas are defined as “beliefs about cause-effect relationship which derive authority from the shared consensus of recognized elites.”27 Ideas determine both preferences and the appropriate strategies for achieving these preferences.28 An idea diffuses among related countries because the national preferences of each country converge through a process of interstate communication and learning from shared experiences. For example, through interstate communication with regard to the regional security arrangements in Asia after the end of the Cold War, the idea that multilateral security institutions do not replace bilateral alliances and that the former supplements the latter started to diffuse among decision-makers in the United States, Japan and China. Decision-makers of each country then shared the idea of multilateralism not replacing but supplementing bilateralism and re-defined their original preferences in regard to the relationship between bilateralism and

multilateralism. As a result, the prevailing security order in Asia is a production of the interaction between bilateral alliances and multilateral security dialogues.

**State Preference: Bilateralism, Multilateralism, and the Concepts of Security**

This section compares the three countries’ preferences concerning regional security by focusing on the relationship between the bilateralism of the U.S.-Japan alliance and the multilateralism of security dialogues, which Canada, for example, actively supports.29 This paper assumes that national preferences in bilateral alliances and multilateral security dialogues relate to different concepts of security. Bilateral alliances effect general deterrence, being based on the logic of a classical balance of power. Bilateral alliances focus on the ability of states to defend against threat and the use and control of military force of states against states, which is a traditional concern for the study of international security.30 In contrast, multilateral security arrangements rely on broader concepts of security which include common security, cooperative security, and comprehensive security.31 This is because a broad membership in multilateral institutions provokes a wider range of interests in security issues including non-traditional security. The scope of these non-traditional concepts of security includes non-military threats, ranging from transnational crimes and human right abuses to environmental issues and poverty. Thus, disputes regarding the security arrangement based on bilateralism and multilateralism is deeply embedded in different concepts of security.

*The United States*

The United States was involved in geopolitics in Asia throughout the Cold War era. The bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia were the keystones of the United States’ strategies in Asia during the Cold War.32 The United States’ military presence during the Asian Cold War was believed to contribute to

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the regional stability and prosperity. The rapid economic growth of Japan, being followed by South Korea and Taiwan, was achieved under the security umbrella of the United States.³³

After the end of the Cold War, in the early 1990s, there were disputes within the United States concerning the justification of maintaining the United States’ military presence in Asia. The Department of Defense under the (senior) Bush Administration issued *East Asian Strategy Reports* in 1990 and 1992 and planned the gradual retreat of the United States’ military presence from Asia. The abolition of the Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines in 1992 was regarded as a symbol of the declining role of the United States’ military presence in Asia. However, in *the East Asia Strategy Report* which was released in February 1995, the Pentagon under the Clinton Administration clearly documented that the United States needed to sustain a forward military presence in Asia by emphasizing the need of 100,000 troops, of whom 36,000 were to be stationed in South Korea, while 47,000 were present in Japan to demonstrate the United States’ commitment to regional security and the defense of Japan.³⁴

The first term of the Clinton Administration granted foreign policy priority to narrowly-defined national economic interests in the Asian region.³⁵ But by 1996, the administration reversed its course and placed greater weight on traditional security concerns. In Asia, the Clinton-Hashimoto summit meeting of April 1996 was the clear signal of the reversal of foreign policy priority. In the summit meeting, the strengthening and expansion of the U.S.-Japan bilateral security arrangements were superior to the economic demands of the United States for Japanese market access by U.S. firms.³⁶

Reinforcing the existing bilateral alliances in the region is the best strategy for the United States to adopt in response to the Asian security circumstances in the post-Cold War era. There are several reasons why the United States puts greater weight on

bilateralism than multilateralism. Firstly, the United States has the advantage of
distinguished military power which outclasses other countries in Asia. The existing
bilateral alliances enable the United States to pursue its national interests through its
military strength. In this sense, the United States relies heavily on the traditional concept
of security. Secondly, the United States is afraid that multilateral framework will weaken
its supreme position in Asian security because multilateral approaches to regional
security, in which all nations in the region must be treated as equals, give opportunities
for smaller powers to enhance their position and for greater powers to face constraints on
their behavior. Thirdly, policy makers in the United States are concerned about the rising
intentions of closed regionalism under the name of multilateralism in Asia which
excludes the United States from the region. In 1990, the Malaysian Prime Minister,
Mahathir, advocated the creation of the East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG) or
Caucus (EAEC) whose membership would be limited to Asian countries and exclude not
only Australia and New Zealand but also the United States and Canada.\(^\text{37}\) The United
States condemned this idea for its closed regionalism. Finally, the United States is
concerned that its hegemony in Asia is contested by potential challengers such as Japan
and China through the establishment of a new regional institution. It is fresh in our
memory that Tokyo’s initiative, in the face of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, to create
an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) as a supplement to the IMF was severely condemned by
the American officials who argued that the AMF risked creating a regional ‘moral
hazard’ problem and that it was a cynical effort to protect the interests of Japanese banks.
Washington believed that Japan was doing too much.\(^\text{38}\)

Japan

Japan is an ambiguous case. Japan, as a trading state\(^\text{39}\) as well as a beneficiary of the
U.S. dominance of international political economy after the Second World War,
introduced the so-called ‘Yoshida Doctrine’ in the immediate postwar period and has

\(^{37}\) David P. Rapkin, “Leadership and Cooperative Institutions in the Asia-Pacific,” Andrew Mack and John
Ravenhill (eds.), *Pacific Cooperation: Building Economic and Security Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region*

\(^{38}\) Christopher B. Johnstone, “Strained Alliance: US-Japan Diplomacy in the Asian Financial Crisis,”
*Survival* 41:2 (Summer 1999), 126.

promoted the idea of “comprehensive security” since 1970s. Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira advocated a “comprehensive approach to national security” in the context of the bilateral security relationship between Japan and the United States. His idea was that a vibrant industrial base, robust economy, beneficial export relationships, and an active foreign assistance program contributed to a state’s security. While the concept of comprehensive security has provoked policy concerns, Japan also has heavily relied on the traditional concept of security under the “nuclear umbrella” of the United States in order to respond to realpolitik in Asia over the Cold War period.

Moreover, Japanese national identity is adrift after the end of the Cold War. The lukewarm reaction from the world to the nonmilitary and largely financial nature of Tokyo’s contribution to the U.S. allies during and after the Gulf War in 1991 provoked an intensive, national debate concerning the way to contribute to international security: should Japan pursue the position in the world as a “Global Civilian Power” or as an “Ordinary Country” which strengthens its military capabilities? This drifting identity as well as the change of security circumstances in Asia after the end of the Cold War has influenced the national preferences of Japan concerning the relationship between bilateralism and multilateralism in Asian security.

Searching for foreign strategies that respond to the changing security circumstances in Asia, Japanese practitioners and researchers pay keen attention to the newly establishing multilateral institutions in Asia. The so-called Nakayama proposal, expressed during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1991, clearly demonstrated a manifestation that the Japanese government took an initiative in promoting multilateralism in Asian security in the post-Cold War ear. The Nakayama proposal, named for then Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama, advocated the creation of a multilateral security dialogue within the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) and the creation of a supporting Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). The ASEAN countries regarded this Japanese initiative as the redefinition of the Fukuda Doctrine, which declared that Japan would never again become a military power and would steadfastly abandon any military cooperation with

other East Asian states.\textsuperscript{43} Tokyo has redefined the Fukuda Doctrine’s pledge to allow it to openly discuss regional security with its neighbors, bilaterally as well as multilaterally, and consider limited forms of security cooperation beyond dialogue through regional multilateral structure, with the intention to use regional security multilateralism as a tool for being a cautious leader in Asia rather than a reactive state.\textsuperscript{44}

At the same time, the Japanese practitioners were concerned about the need to redefine the domestic and international legitimacy of the bilateral security alliance with the United States which was created during the Cold War. Their concerns were motivated by the changing security circumstances in Asia after the end of the Cold War, namely, the possible U.S. retreat from Asia, the North Korean brinkmanship in the nuclear development crisis and the tension between the United States and China regarding the Taiwan Straits. Japanese supporters of the U.S.-Japan security treaty and the U.S. military presence in the Asian region through its commitment to the bilateral alliance tried to find an answer to the following question: whether and how Japan’s role and mission under the bilateral security framework should be redefined to reflect the security circumstances of the post-Cold War Asian region. A series of revisions to security policies was their answer. The Japanese government adopted in November 1995 a new National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) and affirmed the centrality of the U.S.-Japan security treaty to the nation’s security policy. Prime Minister Hashimoto met President Clinton in Tokyo in April 1996 and they issued a joint declaration on security, which reaffirmed the essential importance of the U.S.-Japan security treaty, both to the two countries and to the region.\textsuperscript{45} In the following year, Japan also reviewed the Guidelines for the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, which replaced the old Guideline issued in 1978.

The 1990s thus witnessed that Japanese policy concerns regarding Asian security were a function of inter-related issues: the drifting national identity, the changing security circumstances in Asia, the decline of the U.S. hegemony and its retreat from Asia, the

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\textsuperscript{43} Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS-EAS, July 24, 1991, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{45} The original text of “The Japan-US Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21\textsuperscript{st} century” is available at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html
\end{flushright}
scrutiny of the strategic rationale for the bilateral alliance, and the initiative to enhance the Japanese political leadership in Asian security. Therefore, the pendulum of Japanese preferences regarding policy concerns for Asian security has shifted between bilateralism and multilateralism.

**China**

China was a reluctant player in multilateral arrangements in Asian security in the early 1990s even though it has participated in the ARF since its birth in 1994. China’s consciousness about security multilateralism is two-folded: its basic assessment of the security situation in the Asia-Pacific on the one hand, and national separatism and territorial disputes as the security threat to China on the other hand.\(^{46}\) Chinese policy makers assess the low possibility of any major new conflict which does not urge China to establish a multilateral security arrangement in East Asia. At the same time, Beijing wants to maintain the status of separationist movements in Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang as domestic issues. It also tries to handle territorial disputes such as the South China Sea through bilateral settings with related parties because China is afraid that a multilateral approach might contribute to reducing Chinese advantage as a major power. Additionally, China regards multilateral security frameworks in Asia as a tool to assure its neighbors who perceive China as a threat.\(^{47}\) Thus, China has passively participated in multilateral security arrangements in Asia and has not played any significant role to promote it.

However, Chinese attitude towards multilateralism seemed to change around 1996-7.\(^{48}\) Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, at the third ARF meeting in Jakarta in 1996, suggested that ARF start a dialogue on defense conversion and begin discussion on comprehensive security cooperation. At the same meeting, China agreed to co-sponsor with the Philippines the 1997 meeting on confidence-building measures in Beijing. Furthermore, China, at the 15\(^{th}\) Party Congress in 1997, adopted multilateralism as a


\(^{47}\) Jianwei Wang, “Managing Conflict,” 84.

policy and has been generally constructive in its participation in regional security as well as economic meetings.  

In 1997 China agreed for the first time to talk about ASEAN members’ claims in the South China Sea and offered to frame a code of conduct governing ties with ASEAN while Beijing pushed ASEAN to sign a political accord with China to confirm a closer relationship between Beijing and ASEAN, including an affirmation of Beijing’s “one China” policy.  

The Chinese intention to promote multilateral security cooperation in Asia may be motivated by the recent changes in the U.S.-Japan bilateral alliance as well as the regional tensions caused by its military exercise at the Taiwan Straits. The revision of the U.S.-Japan alliance alarmed China of the containment by the United States, the possibility of Japanese aggressive militarization, and the interference to the Taiwan Straits dispute by put Taiwan under the scope of the security pact.  

Sharing Ideas  

The attempts to build multilateral security arrangements in Asia were brisk in the early 1990s. Canada, for example, took an initiative role in creating the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD, 1990-1993). Japanese foreign minister Taro Nakayama advocated the creation of a multilateral security dialogue within the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) in 1991. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) was established in 1993 for the purpose of facilitating security dialogue among non-governmental research institutions. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held its first meeting in 1994 to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution in the Asia-Pacific region. Japanese support for multilateralism found its way into a policy report on Japan’s post-Cold War security policy submitted to Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in August in 1994. This so-called ‘Higuchi Report’ (Prime

Minister’s Advisory Commission on Defense Issues 1994), if not putting greater importance on developing a multilateral security framework in the Asia-Pacific than on maintaining the U.S.-Japan bilateral alliance, appeared to place equal importance on the former to the latter.\(^{52}\) A certain optimistic viewpoint for the realization of the “concert of Asia”\(^{53}\) had spread in the early 1990s and overestimated the role multilateral dialogues and institutions would play in security matters in Asia.

However, the euphoria at the end of the Cold War did not last long in Asia when it witnessed North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and the Sino-American tension with regard to the Taiwan Straits. The nascent multilateral institutions were put to a test of effectiveness in dealing with the protracted conflicts, which were the legacy of the Cold War structure. It was clear that the newly established, non-governmental ‘track two’ diplomacy like the CSCAP and multilateral security dialogues had done little to respond to the brinkmanship by North Korea and the Sino-American confrontation over the Taiwan Straits. The ARF, in its initial stage of establishing confidence-building measures among member countries, did not sufficiently facilitate the easing of the tensions surrounding the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits.

The revealed limitation of the multilateral security dialogues and institutions in Asia expedited the redefinition of the rationale for the Cold War alliances of the San Francisco system in order to respond to the new security circumstances in the post-Cold War era. The U.S. overreaction to Japanese leanings toward multilateralism in the early 1990s is also notable as a significant reason for the reaffirmation of the bilateral alliances. For responding to and deterring the two protracted conflicts in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits, the U.S.-Japan bilateral alliance was redefined and strengthened in 1996. Interaction among states in regard to Asian security situations in the Post-Cold War era shaped the idea that multilateral security framework should not replace the existing bilateral alliance and that the former supplements the latter through formal and informal security dialogues.

**Concluding Remarks**


This paper has tried to develop a better understanding of cooperation and discord between China, Japan, and the United States regarding the regional security arrangements in Asia in the post-Cold War era. It has assessed the impact of national preferences upon forming Asian regional security arrangements which can be defined as an interaction between bilateral and multilateral security structure. In the early 1990s, the attempts to establish multilateral security arrangements in Asia were enthusiastically welcomed and fuelled by the success of ASEAN and the opportunities for security cooperation presented by the end of the Cold War. Nevertheless, the re-emerging tensions of the protracted conflict in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits revealed the fragile feasibility of the nascent multilateral security arrangements which could not efficiently respond to the traditional military crisis. Subsequent events in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, including the Asian financial crisis and the East Timor crisis, shook and questioned the efficacy and viability of the existing multilateral security arrangements in Asia. A reluctant multilateralist with a strong unilateralist tendency of the great powers like the United States, the (junior) Bush Administration in particular, facilitates the significant role the existing bilateral alliances play in the Asian security.

However, it is notable that, despite its limitations, regional multilateralism has been widened and has contributed to consolidating security dialogues and confidence-building measures in Asia through the inter-governmental ARF and non-governmental CSCAP. Researchers and practitioners have reached a consensus that bilateralism and multilateralism are mutually complementary. But how do the two security arrangements interact? Michael Lankowski argues that “bilateralism can provide solid foundations for multilateralism. Bilateralist structures could benefit greatly from the consolidation of multilateral norms, such as inclusiveness, transparency and reciprocity.”

Further inquiry is needed in order to understand how multilateral structures and bilateral relationships including alliances interact and enhance the regional security in Asia by using substantial case studies. For example, how does Japan determine the compatibility of the alliance with the United States with its search for a new, post-Yoshida Doctrine security identity? How does the United States reconcile the domestic unilateral tendency with the hegemony management in Asia where the American

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presence will remain the keystone in building Asian regional security over the next
decade and beyond? As this paper demonstrates, the national preferences including
domestic interests and issues concerning the relationship between bilateralism and
multilateralism are important to consider when one examines how states make a strategic
choice and reach an agreement on building and changing regional security arrangements.

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