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WHEN KOREA REUNIFIES... WILL ASIANS SAY HELLO OR GOODBYE TO G.I. JOE?

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores the impact of Korean reunification on the security environment in Northeast Asia and the implications of Korean reunification on U.S. forward presence in the region. Special attention is given to assessing the perspectives of the major Asian nations of the PRC, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regarding U.S. military forward basing in the sub-region following Korea reunification. This project reviews relations between the major powers in Northeast Asia, including the economic, political, cultural and historical, and security dimensions.

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WHEN KOREA REUNIFIES...WILL ASIANS SAY HELLO OR GOODBYE TO G.I. JOE?

Buried below last year's initial euphoria and the subsequent anxiety surrounding North Korean Chairman Kim Il-Sung's astonishing opening-up to the world lies an incredible amount of thought and work for the U.S. government. The hypothesized peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula is no longer considered a "what if" exercise and the potential for its occurrence in the foreseeable future has become a reality. From a U.S. perspective, imbedded in the thought and work of planning for this event is the question of what changes would a Korean reunification, assuming South Korean government control, have on the U.S. security strategy within the Asian region. As William T. Pendley so aptly stated in a 1995 *Joint Forces Quarterly* article:

> The passing of North Korea is simply a minor transition in the long history of East Asia. More important will be the strategic changes resulting from a unified Korea, and they must be the focus of U.S. policy.[1]

An incredible number of variables should be analyzed, debated, considered, and used in decisions in order to set the stage to implement an appropriate U.S. strategy for Asia. One of these variables is the question of U.S. forward presence in the region. A corollary to this question is what is the attitude of the major East Asian nations regarding U.S. forward presence and what makes these nations respond this way.

Current U.S. National Security Strategy and its ensuing National Military Strategy and Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region are under review following the transition from President Clinton's administration to President Bush. Despite this review it is reasonable to expect the existing core objectives of the U.S. National Security Strategy to remain essentially intact because of their primary connection to basic U.S. national identity. These core objectives are to enhance America's security, to bolster America's economic prosperity, and to promote democracy and human rights abroad.[2] The current National Security Strategy recognizes that maintaining U.S. overseas presence promotes regional stability, gives substance to our security commitments, and contributes to deterrence by demonstrating our determination to defend U.S., allied, and friendly interests in critical regions such as Asia. Forward presence also better positions the United States to respond rapidly to crises.[3] Whether this positive perspective towards forward presence is retained within a Bush National Security Strategy is yet to be seen, but there have been no overt statements to the contrary during or following the presidential election to indicate a major shift in policy regarding U.S. forward presence in East Asia.

Pending any official change to U.S. strategy, it is reasonable to assume that the United States will continue to recognize the benefits of U.S. forward presence in East Asia.

U.S. forward presence in the Asia-Pacific theater is the centerpiece of the current Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region.[4] Are the existing U.S. forces forward deployed to the region, presumably there to assist the Republic of Korea in the defense of the Korean peninsula from an attack by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, required in the Asia-Pacific theater when that attack is no longer likely to occur? Assuming that President Bush retains forward presence as a key component of the U.S.-Asian security strategy, an important aspect of this question is the disposition of the major nations in the region towards U.S. forward presence.

Asian governments wholeheartedly endorse the continued, continuous, and unambiguous presence of U.S. forces in the region.[5] There are a myriad of intertwined economic, political, cultural/historical, and security reasons that each nation in the region will use to justify its position. The following review of these major nations' motives within the context of each of these elements of national power will justify the stance these East Asian nations have taken towards U.S. presence following Korean reunification. Understanding the motives behind these nations support or non-support may enhance determination of the final U.S. decision regarding forward presence and the continued deployment of U.S. military forces in East Asia following Korean reunification.

ECONOMICS

Economically, Asia is the world's powerhouse. The region's share of world economic output in 1998 was an impressive 26 percent when measured using an exchange-rate basis, and an incredible 34 percent when using purchasing power parity.[6] This is nearly double the region's 1973 output.[7] The United States conducts over $500 billion a year in trans-Pacific trade,[8] which equates to nearly 7 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.[9] Each nation in the region takes great national pride in the dynamic economic progress that the region and its respective population have enjoyed for the past thirty years.[10] Much of this growth is due to the enormous untapped markets within the region. With 58 percent of the world's population, the economic growth of the last 30 years has only scratched the surface of the economic potential in the region.[11] Futures forecasts, such as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Global Trends 2015 predict that "emerging Asia" (China and India) will be the fastest growing region in the world.[12] Growth in "emerging Asia" will translate into economic prosperity for the entire region.

Since the early 1970's, the model for the growth in this region has been an export-oriented model. In this economic model components are produced by Japan, distributed to "sub-contractor" nations such as Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore, where the components are assembled for sale in Western Europe or North America.[13] Japan is the economic engine for the other vigorous economies of the region as the principle supplier of capital investment and economic aid to Asian nations.[14] The consumer oriented West is the customer in this model. This model is very dependent upon the international transportation system and the security of that system. The major nations in the region are interrelated economically to such a degree that security enhanced stability is crucial to the livelihoods of each of the nations.[15] For example, the nations within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) want the U.S. to provide security reassurance through forward presence that enforces the operational ground rules of the liberal trading order.[16] ASEAN nations recognize the collateral benefits to international trade and to their individual economies that they receive from U.S. forward presence in East Asia. As demonstrated throughout the Cold War, forward-deployed U.S. military forces permit the United States to act in a regional leadership role to secure the emergence and formation of a liberal economic order in East Asia.[17] The economic growth potential of large Asian populations that become primary consumers of Asian products is extraordinary. The nations of East Asia recognize the value that stability has on their economies and their populations, and all of them recognize the role that U.S. forward presence has on regional stability and its continued economic viability.

POLITICS

Politically, the argument for U.S. forward presence is not as clear. National politics, both international and domestic, requires more of a national perspective and less of a regional perspective. The following review of potential political issues in a reunified Korea, and current issues in Japan, the PRC, Taiwan, and ASEAN nations will provide a reference perspective of the questions that may influence these nations attitudes regarding U.S. forward presence. ASEAN (as an inclusive alignment of nations that includes the Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs) and other smaller Asian nations) is included to present the viewpoint of the subordinate nations within the region.

A reunified Korean peninsula under South Korean government control would have a number of international and domestic political issues confronting its support of U.S. forward deployed forces. The peninsula's location in Northeast Asia and the Korean status as a small power surrounded by larger ones will always make it geostrategically critical to the major powers.

Proof of this importance is obvious when reminded that the United States, Japan, PRC, and Russia all fought at least one major war over control of the peninsula during the past century.[18] A reunified Korea would have three key political concerns: the expense of reunification; the "North's" disorientation as a result of reunification; and a reunified Korea's recognition of both new and reemerging external threat's to its security.

The primary political concern within a reunified Korea that is under control of the "South" would be the cost of reunification, which objective independent studies put as high as $1 trillion, far exceeding even the German example.[19] The "South's" economy would be strained to such an extent that the "Southern" population would see a significant reduction in their purchasing power and their personal lifestyle. In addition, the government would not be able to afford the military that is currently in service, and considerable cuts in military spending could be required. U.S. forward presence during this period could be crucial to the defense and security of this fragile nation.

Following more than a half-century of North Korean "Kimilsungism" (a cult of personality for the Leader),[20] "Northern" Koreans would be extremely disoriented during their integration with the "South." Coming after years of famine and deprivation rendered by the northern regime and it's self-indulgence, "Northern" Koreans who had been raised to revere their leaders could be distrustful of any government and any attempts to integrate them into a "Southern" Korean society. U.S. forward presence, in a Korea where the "South's" military has been severely reduced for economic reasons, could be negatively construed by "Northern" Koreans as the tool of reunification.

Finally, a reunified Korea might perceive both its historical enemies, the PRC and Japan, as potential security threats.[21] As previously noted, the Korean peninsula's location is precipitously located amongst major world powers. In his book *Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia*, Kent Calder foresees a future world as having seven powers in Asia (the United States, Russia, China, Japan, India, a unified Korea, and Vietnam).[22] With the exception of Vietnam, these powers all meet at the Korean peninsula. Forward presence by U.S. forces could be a deterring and stabilizing force in the region as critical to the stability of the future as it has been since the 1953 armistice of the Korean War.

Without question, a reunified Korea will initially have significant political challenges. The cost of reunification will be staggering in both dollars and people. Integrating the twenty million displaced and disoriented "Northern" Koreans will be a monumental effort for the "South." While popular opposition to U.S. military presence in the "South" has been vocal, strident, and sometimes violent in recent years, the sacrifices of reunification may temper this public

opposition.[23] President Kim Dae-Jung's affirmation of the value of the U.S.-Korean bilateral alliance and his support for continued post-reunification forward presence by U.S. forces may be designed to ensure stability and continued viability of the political structure during this calamitous period. President Kim states that U.S. forward presence will contribute to residual defense needs and will assist in the integration of the two Korea's as required.[24] The "South" Korean government supports continued U.S. forward presence following reunification. Surprisingly, during the 2000 Korean summit, North Korean Leader Kim Jung-Il responded to comments by President Kim Dae Jung that U.S. forces remaining on the peninsula may be beneficial to protect Koreans from surrounding hegemons by stating, "Yes, we are surrounded by big powers-Russia, China and Japan-and so therefore it is desirable that the American troops continue to stay."[25] The political leadership of both nations favors continued U.S. forward presence on the Korean peninsula following reunification.

Despite nearly a decade of "China-centric" focus under the Clinton administration,[26] current U.S.-PRC relations are strained. A cursory glance would suggest that these tensions are the consequence of major events such as the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, the Kosovo intervention, new U.S.-Japanese military guidelines, human rights violations, World Trade Organization membership, and a potential U.S. deployed Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system.[27] In reality, the tension in the U.S.-PRC relationship is the result of three interrelated circumstances in the PRC: a recent modification to PRC leaderships goals; a significant change in the state's ideology to achieve these goals; and a leadership perception that PRC and U.S. objectives conflict with each other.

The PRC leadership recently identified preservation of the state-party system, recognition as a *world* power, and reunification of a Greater China (to include mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao) the key tenets of PRC policy.[28] To better achieve these new aspirations they have replaced communism with nationalism as a new state ideology.[29] By solidifying the national identity and promoting acceptance of the regime's policies, PRC leadership ensures the goal of preserving the state-party system.[30] Failure to attain world power status or to complete the reunification of Chinese territories could undermine these efforts. The U.S. with its forward presence in the region is considered by PRC leadership to be the major obstacle to achieving these goals. The United States seeks regional stability and a peaceful determination of both the Korean and Taiwan issues. U.S. support of Taiwan and a forward deployed U.S. military presence that deters or prevents PRC aggression towards Taiwan are perceived as direct acts to block PRC reunification efforts and also devalue the status of the PRC in the world and in the region.[31] As long as the U.S. maintains both a forward

presence and an overriding ability to economically and diplomatically influence nations in the region the PRC leadership feels that it will be unsuccessful in achieving its stated objectives of preserving the state-party system, *world* power recognition, and territorial reunification of a Greater China. U.S. forward presence affects PRC attainment of its key objectives and is not viewed favorably.

The U.S.-Japanese alliance is the linchpin of U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific region.[32] Despite the unique and trusted relationship this alliance enjoys, Japanese actions are obviously taken with Japan's interest primarily in mind. Japan desires to be a political world power to match its economic world power status.[33] This has been a long-term objective whose roots can be traced to two events in the early 1970's. First, the surprise 1972 U.S.-Chinese summit meeting in Beijing where Chairman Mao Zedong and President Richard Nixon met and during which the United States established initial formal contact with the PRC.[34] This event, conducted without any warning or prior notification between Tokyo and Washington, resulted in Japanese suspicions regarding U.S. sincerity, honesty, and transparency in the relationship.[35] The second event was the 1973 Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) price manipulation of oil, which severely affected the Japanese economy and consequently produced a Japanese drive for economic security.[36] The result of these events, which occurred without any recourse by the Japanese government to influence them, inspired a Japanese adoption of *jishu gaiko*, or autonomous diplomacy, designed to develop a diplomatic independence commensurate with their economic independence.[37]

There are three primary political issues confronting the Japanese nation that may affect Japan's position regarding U.S. forward presence. First, is an uncertainty whether Japan will carry out the structural reforms needed to resume economic growth and slow its economic decline. Second, involves a question whether Japan will alter its security policy to permit a stronger military and a more reciprocal relationship with the U.S.[38] Third, is local opposition to U.S. military presence. Japanese economic reform is indirectly related to the question of U.S. forward presence while security reform and localized domestic opposition are directly related to the question.

Japanese economic recovery and reform is a troublesome proposition without the security that the U.S. forward deployed forces provide. As previously described, the constancy that U.S. forces ensure has a stabilizing effect on the monetary and economic viability of the region. Japan's economic significance to the region is critical. To make major economic and monetary reforms at the same time that regional security and stability are in question may be beyond Tokyo's political capacity.

Despite Tokyo's annual payments of nearly $5 billion towards the expense[39] of maintaining military facilities for 46,000 U.S. forward deployed forces in Japan,[40] it has been a long-term policy effort by the U.S. to encourage Japan to increase the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) share of Japan's defense. The cultural and security implications, for other Asian nations, of this U.S. drive to increase Japan's defensive capability will follow, but the political implications for Japan are significant. Since its WW II defeat, Japan has constitutionally restricted its military to minimal self-defense needs and rejected constitutional changes for the role of the armed forces. As war memories have faded, the debate has grown between those who favor a more active stance and those who recall the hardships brought by the war.[41] This potentially decisive issue may polarize the Japanese electorate like no other issue.

The majority of Japanese civilians support an active U.S. military forward presence in Japan, in principle. As long as this forward presence is located elsewhere (or "not in my backyard"), the typical Japanese citizen is very supportive of U.S. forward presence.[42] This is not the case in Okinawa where the majority of U.S. forces in Japan are stationed. Extreme anti-militarism is rare in Japan, but it can be found in Okinawa, where the slogan *Beigun Kichi no nai Heiwa na Okinawa* ("A Peaceful Okinawa Without US Military Bases") has strong support.[43] A number of high profile incidents on Okinawa ranging from a case involving three U.S. sailors under investigation for molesting teenage girls; to an alleged e-mail by III Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF) commanding general that Okinawan prefecture leaders were wimps; to the noise, overcrowding, and pollution that U.S. forces produce on the cramped island, strains the US-Japanese security alliance.[44]

An increasing Japanese military responsibility may arouse the independent and nationalistic enthusiasm that Japanese governments have encouraged in the 1990's.[45] Economic and constitutional reform, and local Okinawan non-acceptance of U.S. military presence will affect Japan's official position regarding U.S. forward presence. The April 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security which proceeded the September 1997 release of a revised Defense Guidelines influences Japan's peace and security[46] and envisions a continued U.S. forward presence in Japan to secure peace with troops that continue to be supported by the Japanese central government.[47] With the exception of the citizens of Okinawa, these agreements highlight an increasingly nationalistic Japanese nation and government that currently prefer a U.S. forward presence, albeit a lower profile presence.

Support of U.S. forward presence by the Republic of China (Taiwan) is indisputable and directly related to the Taiwanese governments principal concern – survival. Mainland China's insistence on both reunification and the "one-China" concept as a basis for reunification

negotiations[48] conflicts with the stance of a growing number of Taiwanese people that feel the goal of reunification should be replaced with a goal of independence.[49] Taiwan's official policy has shifted from a Nationalist controlled "one-China" policy during the period 1949-1979, to a strategy of "practical diplomacy" and dual recognition of the PRC and Taiwan from 1979-1993, to the current target of "pragmatic diplomacy" and dual statehood since 1993.[50] The journey down this course culminated in 2000, when Taiwan managed the unprecedented transition of power from the long-ruling Kuomintang to the fourteen-year old Democratic Progressive Party.[51] As previously stated, a primary objective of the PRC is the reunification of Greater China and PRC leaders remain hostile to independence for Taiwan.[52] The U.S. objective that Taiwan and the PRC resolve the issue through non-military means is enforced by U.S. forward presence.[53] The Taiwanese population will increasingly consider an independent Taiwan as the only recourse to potential PRC subjugation. Pending resolution of this issue, Taiwan's government supports U.S. forward presence in the region.

ASEAN nations support U.S. forward presence. ASEAN, as a group of states with existing and potential disputes, was initially formed as a political body to identify common political interests and to determine conditions under which member-states would provide mutual support to one another.[54] The initiation of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to conduct a multilateral security dialogue and develop bilateral measures is one result of ASEANs political efforts.[55] Renato Cruz De Castro identifies in an *Asian Perspective* article titled "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations as an *Entente Cordiale*" that:

> The ARF has two manifest functions: fostering constructive engagement and preventative diplomacy. It also has a tacit but more significant objective—the preservation of a regional balance of power based on the military and political engagement of the United States. The ASEAN states' major apprehension in the aftermath of the cold war was that the emergence of China and Japan, the regional *status quo* might be threatened by their possible use of force to resolve their disagreements...[56]

There is little doubt that the member governments of ASEAN draw more than a measure of assurance from the continuing commitment of the United States to remain a Pacific power, expressed in forward military presence.[57] The nations of ASEAN support U.S. forward presence.

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL

There are numerous cultural and historical issues that affect Asian nations attitudes concerning U.S. forward presence. Some of the cultural differences between Asian nations are significant. Generally, these differences are not a direct source of friction affecting their

attitudes regarding U.S. forward presence. Rather, some of these differences reflect indirectly on decisions made and actions taken. For example, Japan is a strongly ethnocentric society.[58] This cultural inclination may be a source of many of the Japanese atrocities committed during the colonial period prior to and during World War II. The following regional issues are historically based concerns with cultural undertones: East-Asian territorial disagreements; PRC dominance in the region; and the fear of a resurgent militarism within Japan.

Territorial disputes abound in East Asia. Japan, Taiwan, and the PRC have disputed Diaoyu (Senkaku)[59] and Tok-to (Takeshima) islands[60] of the Ryukyu Islands archipelago. The Chinese first invaded the islands in the 7th century, and in the 14th century China established a dominance that lasted until 1879 when Japan annexed the Ryukyus.[61] The strategic waterways through the South China Sea are witness to competing sovereignty claims where six nations claim all or part of the Spratley and Paracel islands in the sea as well as surrounding territorial waters.[62] The PRC and its territorial ambitions in the South China Sea have caused an increase in tensions within the region.[63] Finally, a reunified Korea could look to the PRC to return territories in northeast China that contain a large minority of ethnic Koreans.[64] There are other territorial disputes in Asia, but these examples highlight the magnitude of the problem as it concerns the major powers of the PRC, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The ARF's main function is to provide a venue in which major powers can dialogue with each other and with smaller countries to build trust and facilitate communication on regional matters.[65] Territorial disagreements are the type of regional matter that the ARF can help to resolve. Nations in East Asia agree that U.S. forward presence in the region reduces tension by deterring an escalation of territorial unease.

China is one of the world's oldest civilizations with a documented history that dates back nearly 3,500 years.[66] While this history is a basis for significant cultural similarities it is also a source of apprehension for many smaller nations that have experienced Chinese dominance in the past.[67] The economic and political manifestations of PRC hegemony have already been described. Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the smaller nations of Asia seek to maintain a U.S. presence to counter The PRC's growing regional influence.[68]

Mistrust of Japan based on its World War II behavior remains an obstacle to many nations relations vis-à-vis Japan.[69] On the Korean peninsula, historically based distrust and enmity of Japan is currently a commonality between the two Koreas.[70] The two foremost powers in the region, the PRC and Japan, have a history characterized by mutual suspicion and distrust.[71] The atrocities committed by Imperial Japan are well documented and a listing of them is not relevant here. But, the memory of these acts is crucial to Japan's Asian neighbors attitude

towards potential Japanese remilitarization. The April 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security preceded the September 1997 release of revised Defense Guidelines in which Japan has assumed a more definitive role in responding defensively to situations in areas surrounding Japan.[72] Japan's Korean and Chinese neighbors are opposed to any enlargement in Japanese defense capabilities or missions.[73] In an essay titled "Japan's Foreign and Security Policies," published in *The Balance of Power in East Asia* edited by Michael Leifer, Brigadier Kenneth Hunt states:

> Certainly, nobody wants to build up the Japanese forces so that they can take over roles from US forces, so enabling [the U.S.] to sail away to the Indian Ocean. Asian neighbors are at one on this: when they sometimes make noises about a possible resurgence of Japanese militarism - of which they have bitter memories - their immediate concern is with a resulting diminution of the US military presence in the Western Pacific.[74]

Positive engagement within the East Asian region with forward deployed U.S. forces will deter any military supported territorial inclinations, reduces the potential for PRC domination in the region, and assuage regional concerns of a resurgent Japanese militarism.

SECURITY

Security is the heart of the issue when Asian nations consider the benefits and disadvantages to U.S. forward presence in the region following Korean reunification. The most disturbing security issue in the region is a potential for the PRC and the U.S. to become active adversaries. A review of the primary concerns affecting the U.S.-PRC relationship may provide insight into neighboring nations intentions with respect to U.S. forward presence.

PRC leaders do not recognize that their political objectives conflict with every other nation in the region. PRC territorial aspirations' regarding Taiwan and the South China Sea are a concern for nations in the region. The sea-lanes in the South China Sea are critical to the economic viability of the nations in the region, through either the transportation of intermediate or finished goods and the transportation of energy sources to fuel these economies. East Asia has such an expanding appetite for energy that nearly 87 percent of the imported oil that arrives from the Middle East flows through these crucial sea lines of communication.[75] Strategically, the PRC and the U.S. represent opposed poles of interest in the region. The retrenchment of Soviet power from China's northern frontiers permitted the PRC's leadership unprecedented strategic latitude in modern times. The departure of Soviet forces from Outer Mongolia also relieved pressure on China's northern frontiers. Vietnam was forced to withdraw from Cambodia and India lost its Soviet protector. Relieved of strategic pressure on its land borders,

the PRC started to engage along its maritime frontiers. They established extensive territorial claims in the East and South China seas in 1992, insisting on its right to use force, including against Japan and the Philippines (two U.S. allies). A passive U.S. response created a more assertive PRC. Seeking to intimidate Taiwan during its first presidential election in 1996, the PRC fired missiles that bracketed Taiwan's ports.[76] The People's Liberation Army retreated from its aggression however, when the U.S. deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups near the Taiwan Strait and the PRC leadership took note of the U.S. response.[77]

The PRC has issued three white papers discussing the reunification of China. All three white papers state "reunification of the country embodies the fundamental interest of the Chinese nation." Significantly, in the second of the three papers, released on 21 February 2000, the PRC asserts for the first time that if Taiwan indefinitely refuses to pursue "peaceful settlement of the cross-strait reunification through negotiations, the Chinese government will be forced to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."[78] The U.S. cannot permit the PRC a free hand in East Asia now, as it could not grant Japan a free hand in the region in the 1930s. A similar collision of interests between Japan and the U.S. led to World War II. The trigger for World War II was an attempt by the U.S. to deter Japan from attacking Southeast Asia without subsequently provoking Japan to make a preemptive strike. Obviously, this policy failed in 1941 and a primary reason for this failure is that the U.S. lacked the balancing forces required for effective deterrence.[79]

Several events have prompted some of the PRC's elite's to question its long-standing security assessments that "peace and development" are the primary international trends, that world war can be avoided, and that the balance of global power is shifting from a bipolar to a multipolar structure. Senior PRC leaders are concerned that the U.S. wants to retain the dominant position in Asia by containing Chinese power. Beijing believes that the U.S. is pursuing a regional "unipolar" balance of power by strengthening the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The new U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines Review measures are suspected to authorize Japanese military action beyond its previous defense posture and will prompt the Japanese to improve their regional force projection capabilities. Beijing also considers U.S. efforts to develop national and theater missile defenses as a means to challenge the PRC's nuclear deterrence credibility and will eventually be extended to protect Taiwan.[80]

The above analysis indicates that an adversarial U.S.-PRC relationship is not conducive to stability in East Asia. If escalation of U.S-PRC distrust continued unabated, other Asian nations would not have the security assets to protect themselves. It is reasonable to deduce that U.S.

forward presence is not desirable by East Asian nations if it precipitates war in Asia by virtue of its presence.

CONCLUSION

Korean reunification is likely to occur during the twenty-first century. Assuming that reunification occurs sooner rather than later, that it occurs under South Korean leadership, and that the United States continues to consider forward deployed forces in Asia as beneficial to U.S. national interests, U.S. policy makers will have to consider whether to continue support of overseas presence and subsequently determine where to station those forces. One aspect of these decisions is the acceptance of Asian nations to U.S. forward presence. This paper reviewed U.S. forward presence within the context of the four elements of national power (economic, political, cultural/historical as informational, and security) of the major Asian nations (PRC, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and ASEAN). These nations favor U.S. engagement over U.S. isolation.

Economically, the region is dependent upon U.S. forward presence. The stability that the United States provides to the economic trading balance is well recognized and appreciated by nations throughout the region. Continued stability is crucial to the nations within the region and their ability to successfully conduct trade. Successful trade is crucial to these nations internal economies, the well being of their societies and populations, and in some cases the existence of the national leadership. Likewise, the United States is increasingly dependent upon an economically viable Pacific Rim to ensure U.S. economic security. U.S. forward presence is desired by every major Asian nation to support economic stability.

Politically, these nations have unique domestic and international issues affecting attitudes toward U.S. forward presence. A reunified Korea would have to consider the expense of reunification, the effect of reunification on "North" Koreans, and the emergence of the PRC, Japan, and Russia as external threats. U.S. forward presence would relieve the Korean government from maintaining a large military and assist with the expense of reunification and the defense against external threats. The drawback to post-Korean reunification U.S. forward presence is "Northern" Korean distrust of U.S. intentions. A reunified Korea favors U.S. forward presence. The PRC's objectives to preserve the state-party system, attain world power status, and reunify Greater China are thwarted by U.S. presence. As long as the United States is a primary influence on regional issues, PRC status is correspondingly diminished. While U.S. forces in theater are available to support a defense of Taiwan and indirectly prevent reunification, PRC territorial aspirations are not met. Failure by the existing leadership of the

PRC to achieve the last two objectives may make preservation of the state-party system difficult. This would imply that in principle, the PRC is opposed to U.S. forward presence. Japanese political concerns regarding U.S. forward presence are internal. Economic reform, constitutional restrictions to the role of the military, and Okinawan opposition to U.S. forces confront Japanese leadership. Economic reform is crucial to economic recovery. U.S. forward presence relieves Japanese security responsibilities, reduces Japanese security expenses, which should support the capability to conduct economic reform. Constitutional restrictions to the use of military force by the JSDF favors U.S. forward presence. A reduction in U.S. forces may require Japanese review of these constitutional restrictions to support a military capable of preempting attack rather than merely defending against attack. While vocal, Okinawan opposition may be the least critical component of Japanese domestic concern. Japan favors U.S. forward presence. Taiwan favors U.S. forward presence in the region as a buffer to PRC aggression. ASEAN nations favor U.S. forward presence because of the stability they bring to the region. This stability and leveling of regional powers gives the smaller nations of ASEAN increased influence. These issues are varied, but the results are nearly universal. Except for the PRC, U.S. forward presence benefits the nations of East Asia.

Asian nations cultural and historical concern as an informational element of national power support U.S. forward presence in Asia. U.S. forces are viewed positively in deterring aggression by nations with territorial aspirations, equalizing PRC dominance in the region, and suppressing Japanese militarism. U.S. forces help to deter aggression by all nations in the region, which permits dialogue as the basis of resolution for territorial disagreements. They are also viewed as an equalizing influence to PRC dominance and Japanese militarism by most nations in the region. U.S. forward presence has a stabilizing effect within the region and is viewed favorably by all major Asian nations.

Asian nations attitude towards forward U.S. presence is mixed when the dominant security question of the region, a potential U.S.-Chinese confrontation, is considered. While the likelihood of U.S.-PRC relations sinking to such a belligerant level is unlikely, the effect on Asia would be disastrous. It is not in East Asian nations interest to support U.S. forward deployed forces if those units are used in a conflict with the PRC.

U.S. forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region following Korean reunification is an issue that must be considered now rather than later. Waiting until the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) disappears in the same vein that the "wall" between East and West Germany crumbled, will negatively affect U.S. action. An educated discourse now will prevent a "knee-jerk" crisis reaction response in the future. Assuming U.S. strategy continues to support U.S. forward

presence in the region, a component of U.S. consideration should be the perspective of the major Asian nations regarding U.S. forward presence. Asian nations will embrace G.I. Joe after Korean reunification, as long as the PRC and the United States maintain a viable dialogue.

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