

Northeast Asia Policy Under George W. Bush: Doctrine In Search of Policy

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The Bush Doctrine

The Bush Doctrine stipulates that unilateral action, regime change, and preemptive attack now define U.S. foreign policy. In Northeast Asia, however, the doctrine has run up against unpleasant realities that ought to be causing—but so far, do not appear to have caused—its abandonment. Instead, the doctrine's new Realism, embellished with strong ideological predispositions, has made the United States odd man out in Asia. This paper critically examines the Bush administration's policy toward China, the Korean peninsula, and Japan. It concludes that, contrary to the view of some observers,¹ and notwithstanding tactical modifications, the Bush Doctrine remains the essential underpinning of U.S. policy in George W. Bush's second administration.

Northeast Asia's present and future look very different to Chinese, North Korean, Japanese, and U.S. officials. Reconciling those perspectives will have great bearing on prospects for security in the region. But there must also exist the *will* to reconcile them. Domestic political factors come into play here—the roles, for example, of bureaucratic self-interest, party alignments, interpretations of history, and ideological preconceptions. In the Bush administration, these factors have lent themselves to a world view that is unprecedentedly exceptionalist and hegemonic in its approach to national-security affairs. The predominant influence behind this world view is the so-called neoconservatives—people such as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz who held national security posts in the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations. But even so-called Realists around the president, such as Condoleezza Rice, seem to subscribe to the neocons' belief that the “unipolar moment” for the United States has arrived.²

The Bush Doctrine dubs this new Realism a “distinctly American internationalism.” The doctrine asserts that the United States should take advantage of its enormous and unchallengeable power in world affairs to shape the new century.³ The 9/11 attacks have provided the opportunity to do so. No state can effectively challenge the United States militarily; nor is there any other viable political or economic model that can pose an alternative to the American way of life. In sustaining superiority, Bush administration officials have said, the use and threat to use force—preventively if necessary—must have wider application than in the past, whereas diplomacy—*multilateral* diplomacy in particular—must operate on a shorter leash than previously. A sustained military buildup, with new capabilities to match wider missions, is crucial to implementing the new doctrine. The help and advice of allies, friendly countries, and international organizations of all kinds are useful only so long as they serve U.S. purposes; otherwise, they are dispensable. International law and cooperation must serve the larger objective of restoring order in the international system.

If the above summary has merit, its implications for U.S. policy in Northeast Asia are considerable. First, it means that the Pentagon plays a key role in shaping national-security policy. Second, neocon domination of the policy process means that intelligence findings run a considerable risk of being politicized to serve ideological predispositions. Third, the overall thrust of U.S. policy is to seek to impose U.S. will, relying on military preponderance to “send a message” to rival states, with scant appreciation for their security, historical, or other sensitivities. But, as seems to have happened in the second George W. Bush administration, such predilections may be undercut by other developments: the high costs of counterinsurgency in Iraq and the accompanying revelations of illegalities and false pretenses in that war; the resistance to U.S. policy toward North Korea by China and South Korea; the lack of palatable military options for dealing with North Korea; and the huge costs of rebuilding U.S. cities struck by hurricanes.

The United States and China

If we reduce the international politics of Northeast Asia to its essentials, two things stand out: U.S.-China relations are the key to long-term regional stability, and China-Japan rivalry is the most serious threat to regional security. Those two understandings guide the following assessment of the Bush administration’s policies.

Over many decades one thing has become clear about U.S.-China relations: When they are good, issues in dispute, including Taiwan, become easier to handle or can be safely put on the back burner. Today, the tendency in official U.S. circles is to characterize the U.S.-China relationship in positive terms, as the best it has been in a long time. Bush has not taken up the cudgel of the neocons in labeling China a strategic opponent. He relied on State Department diplomacy in the early days of the administration to peacefully resolve the Hainan air collision incident. Apologies were made and the downed airmen and their aircraft were returned. The 9/11 attacks led to a declared partnership on combating terrorism. Bush has also rejected moves toward outright independence by Taiwan’s leadership, and has called for continued dialogue between China and Taiwan. And he has been as strong a proponent as Clinton for doing business with China—though the Unocal case may have shown the Chinese the limits of free-market competition.

But this positive overall assessment seems superficial. Even prominent Chinese analysts who share it are quick to cite numerous troubling aspects of the relationship.⁴ The “partnership” with China in the war on terror is paper-thin; it simply gives each country more room to deal with *its* “terrorists” in its own way, without finger-pointing.⁵ Beyond that, from the Chinese perspective, U.S. policy under Bush is at best inconsistent and at worst provocative. On Taiwan, the latest PRC defense white paper, *China’s National Defense in 2004*, calls the situation there “grim” because of President Chen Shui-bian’s moves toward independence as well as U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which have been limited by Taiwan’s willingness to pay the roughly \$15-billion bill. Even though Bush has opposed Taiwanese independence and stopped short of selling Taiwan some advanced weapons systems, he has consistently upheld a U.S. obligation to defend Taiwan—and has enlisted Japan in that security interest. Japan’s joint announcement with the United States in 2005 of a shared concern about Taiwan’s security (which China

seemingly answered with an anti-secession law aimed at deterring any further Taiwanese moves toward formal independence) was apparently one of the issues that sparked an angry anti-Japanese Internet campaign in China.⁶ Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro have, in the Chinese view, become partners in a new containment strategy that includes research on theater missile defense, loosened restrictions on Japanese deployments and armaments, and encouragement of constitutional revision. Despite U.S. pronouncements about nuclear nonproliferation, it has yet to protest occasional high-level talk in Japan about plutonium and developing nuclear weapons.

Nor is that all, from Beijing's perspective. The Bush administration's stubborn resistance to genuine negotiations with North Korea (at least until mid-2005) has been criticized a number of times by PRC officials (see below). Criticism of China's abuse of human rights and U.S. insistence on its "need" to democratize remains a prickly issue. Pentagon analyses of China's military modernization, as well as comments by senior U.S. officials such as Rumsfeld and Rice,⁷ have contributed to the "China threat" school of thought.⁸ Frequent comments in the U.S. press and Congress that characterize China's rise as threatening, militarily and economically, and calls by neoconservatives for even closer U.S.-Japan strategic alignment to deflect "China's great power ambitions,"⁹ all get China's attention. U.S. bases in Central Asia,¹⁰ U.S. efforts to re-start a military relationship with India, U.S. pressure on the EU to delay lifting its arms embargo with China, and China's unwillingness to make a major currency revaluation to reduce its huge trade surplus with the United States add to the list of issues that are undermining the relationship.

Thus, even though Chinese analyses of relations with the United States also point to areas of common interest—keeping Japanese nationalism under wraps, investment in China, U.S. technology transfers, environmental protection, and non-traditional threats such as drug trafficking and terrorism—that ground is steadily eroding under the Bush Doctrine. High-level U.S. assurances that it wants China to be a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system indicate a desire for a cooperative relationship, but in language that suggests it is China that needs to play by the rules.¹¹

From Beijing's viewpoint, dealing with the United States may be summarized this way: In sharp contrast with the Maoist past, we in China have subscribed to global (capitalist) economic rules, signed on to numerous international arms-control arrangements, made numerous overtures to Taiwan's political leaders and opposition parties, and played the good citizen in relation with East Asian neighbors. Yet the United States, as the sole superpower, always demands more, for example on "delivering" North Korea, and continues to interfere on the Taiwan issue. Moreover, powerful forces in the United States now express the kind of alarm about China's "peaceful rise" that it did about China's support of communist insurgencies. One would think that it is China rather than the United States that has the world's largest military budget by far, the most powerful weapons, a huge inventory of nuclear weapons, and far-flung military bases and access points. Is the United States really interested in accommodation and peaceful competition, or is it interested in containing China? A well-known Singapore analyst has recently been moved to conclude that "the United States is doing more to destabilize China than any other power."¹²

The actual relationship with China is increasingly competitive, and is so regarded by a growing group of Chinese America-watchers. To them, and to the PRC military, the

Bush policy amounts to containment of China by a hegemonic America that continues to regard China as a junior partner on international issues.¹³ China is not about to confront the United States directly, however. Instead, China is taking advantage of U.S. preoccupation with the Middle East, specifically the military and diplomatic costs of that preoccupation, and its hard-line North Korea policy, to build, mend, and strengthen fences with China's neighbors, particularly with a view to promoting China's rapid economic development. Toward the same end, China is also engaged in a worldwide search for energy and mineral resources that sometimes (as with Canada and Venezuela) takes it to the U.S. doorstep. PRC leaders apparently are seeking to demonstrate that China is a good Asian and global citizen, a non-threatening rising power, and a reliable partner in multilateral as well as bilateral undertakings. China may be taking the place of Japan as the "lead goose" in East Asia's next stage of development. The contrast with the Bush Doctrine's emphasis on unilateral action and preventive war, and its growing security partnership with Japan, is left for other governments to draw.

U.S.-China differences bode ill not just for the reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula and a resolution of the North Korean nuclear situation. The potential for moving beyond the Six Party Talks (6PT) to creation of a multilateral security mechanism for Northeast Asia cannot be fulfilled without China-U.S. cooperation. Clearly, the United States and China share some interests with respect to Korea's security: no testing, production, or stationing of nuclear weapons, no chaos, no refugee crisis, and perhaps no immediate Korean unification. But they also have vastly different views on the legitimacy of the North Korean system and on North Korea's right to have a nuclear-energy program. Some Chinese analysts believe North Korea also has a right to have nuclear weapons,¹⁴ though they and PRC leaders continue to question U.S. intelligence on the North's nuclear-weapon status. Beijing has consistently urged direct U.S.-DPRK dialogue apart from the 6PT to resolve the nuclear standoff; calling DPRK leaders nasty names, and seeking sanctions against it, they say, are no substitutes for diplomacy.¹⁵ Chinese observers suspect that the real objective of U.S. policy is regime change in North Korea—a suspicion shared by some South Korean and U.S. analysts as well, and supported by press reports of U.S. attack plans¹⁶—and therefore contend that the key to resolving the nuclear crisis is trust building between Washington and Pyongyang.¹⁷

Japan

The fundamental problem in the Sino-Japanese relationship, and one that necessarily poses challenges for U.S. policy, may be that whereas China's rise has thrust nationalism to the fore in Beijing's policy making, Japan's quest for normalcy has resurrected the question how nationalism can be expressed. Chinese nationalism today means a new assertiveness, born of pride of economic achievement, that inevitably finds expression in territorial issues (starting with Taiwan unification), international status (a place at the table on all major global issues, and recognition as a regional leader), and heightened sensitivity to slights (thus, rejection of "bullying" by the United States). Those elements of nationalism are likely to clash with Japanese nationalism, which goes beyond displays of national pride—flying the flag and signing the national anthem—to avoiding excessive apologizing for the past, seeking constitutional revision, standing up

for territorial interests, and undertaking collective-security obligations. Thus, whereas Japanese nationalism calls for a permanent UN Security Council seat and therefore revision of article 9 of the constitution, Chinese nationalism calls for denying Japan that seat and insisting that Japan dissociate itself from its militarist past.

Of course, this clash of nationalisms is taking place even while China has become Japan's principal trade partner and chief place for relocating important Japanese industries. But summit-level diplomacy between the two countries has been absent for many years, and even Koizumi's very direct apology, made on the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II and with China and Korea clearly in mind,¹⁸ is unlikely to be sufficient to change negative perceptions of Japan in those two countries. The apology notwithstanding Koizumi's China policy mimics Bush's: strategic containment, economic enmeshment.

How is the Bush administration responding to China-Japan rivalry? Surely it is the most important development, from the standpoint of regional security, now taking place in East Asia, for what it amounts to is a Chinese objective to keep Japan contained as against a Japanese objective to keep China's rise contained. The Bush administration has made crystal clear that, rhetoric about friendship with China notwithstanding, the security alliance with Japan outweighs China's importance. Chinese analysts of course find this development deeply disturbing.¹⁹ Japan is the number-one supporter in Asia of the Bush Doctrine. Under Koizumi, it seems to be using that support as cover, moreover, for expanding the boundaries of Japanese security concerns, and in ways that seriously intensify China-Japan friction. As between devoting resources to moderating this growing rift between China and Japan and taking sides in it, the Bush administration seems to have (with awareness or not) chosen the latter course. In the evolving U.S.-Japan-China triangle, the bent of U.S. policy evidently is to promote Koizumi's version of "normal nation" at the cost of antagonizing China. Perhaps the administration believes that Beijing has no alternative but to accept a reemerging Japan given China's perceived dependence on U.S. and Japanese trade and investment. Or perhaps Bush is relying on voices within the PRC leadership that thus far have cautioned, much as Deng Xiaoping did, against confronting the United States during the period of economic restructuring. Whatever the reason, Bush's choice to lean toward Japan—a choice long favored by the neocons—risks antagonizing China in ways that spell trouble for the United States and Japan.

The North Korea Dilemma

North Korea seeks security assurances from the United States and long-term aid from both it and Japan—in short, acceptance of its legitimacy and normalization of relations. These objectives are hardly different from those that shaped North Korean policy during the 1993-1994 nuclear crisis. Constantly pushing the envelope with sudden diplomatic moves and threatening gestures, such as the February 10, 2005 announcement that it indeed possesses nuclear weapons and is withdrawing from the Six-Party Talks (6PT), seems to be Pyongyang's way of drawing attention to its demands. But the Bush administration rejects the idea of making another package deal with Pyongyang, arguing that formal security assurances and any other "rewards" to North Korea depend on its abandonment of its nuclear program. Prior to the fourth round of the 6PT, the

administration's most serious proposal to North Korea on denuclearization, submitted on June 24, 2004 in Beijing, required that Pyongyang pledge to "dismantle all of its nuclear programs," after which the United States would provide "provisional" security assurances and "study" North Korea's energy requirements. Non-reciprocal proposals of that kind virtually assure rejection.²⁰

According to one Korea expert who is now part of the administration, "hawk engagement" best characterizes the Bush strategy. This approach is "based on the idea that engagement [as practiced by Clinton and the South Korean leaders] lays the groundwork for punitive action."²¹ As Bush made clear at the outset of his administration, when Kim Dae Jung visited Washington, the North Koreans are untrustworthy, creating another package deal with them is fruitless, and continuing to pursue an engagement strategy makes no sense. Thus, although the administration advertises "hawk engagement" as a multilateral approach to dealing with North Korea, in fact it is unilateralist in design and intent: It seeks to line up China and South Korea, as well as Russia and Japan, behind a confrontational policy that US officials have broadly publicized *and might already have been pursued were it not for the quagmire in Iraq²² and the lack of acceptable military options in North Korea.*²³

Another major constraint is China's and South Korea's opposition to unilateral action. A recent example came in May 2005, soon after U.S. intelligence reports circulated that North Korea might be preparing an underground nuclear test. Pyongyang raised the ante yet again by announcing that it had indeed removed 8,000 spent fuel rods from its Yongbyon reactor. But the Bush administration's warnings to North Korea and proposals for sanctions failed to jar either the Chinese or the South Koreans from their position that only direct talks between Pyongyang and Washington would improve the situation. The PRC government was particularly emphatic in putting the onus on Washington, not only for refusing to talk one-on-one with North Korea but also for continuing its name-calling ("tyrant," said Bush; "an outpost of tyranny," said Rice) of Kim Jong Il. (The South Korean government echoed that criticism.) A top Chinese foreign ministry official took the unusual step of telling journalists that sanctions are not a workable or acceptable step, and that China would not support using food or oil deliveries to North Korea as a weapon against it. In fact, the official declared there was "no solid evidence" of a forthcoming North Korean nuclear test. And indeed, there wasn't.²⁴

"The fundamental difference between Clinton's near-success in resolving the issues and Bush's stalemate," one scholar has recently written, "lies not in Bush's unwillingness to talk or in his proposal to expand the agenda for talks but in his refusal to end the enmity between the two nations."²⁵ North Korean spokesmen have suggested many times that the DPRK would be willing to make major concessions, including "giving up" nuclear weapons, if the United States agrees to respect its sovereignty and provides other incentives.²⁶ Kim Jong Il reportedly told a high-level South Korean delegation in mid-2005 that in return for US security assurances and "respect," North Korea would return to the 6PT, give up its nuclear weapons, rejoin the NPT, and reopen the country to nuclear inspectors.²⁷ Within a month Pyongyang announced its return to the talks, its official news agency stating that "The US side clarified its official stand to recognize the DPRK as a sovereign state, not to invade it, and hold bilateral talks within the framework of the six-party talks."²⁸ These concessions, for which the Bush

administration deserves credit, indeed brought the DPRK back to the table and led to a number of direct talks with U.S. officials. The Statement of Principles that all the parties agreed to on September 13, 2005 contains important points about verifiable North Korean denuclearization, Pyongyang's return to the NPT and the 1992 joint denuclearization declaration with South Korea, U.S. recognition of the DPRK's sovereignty and a mutual desire to normalize relations, and the DPRK's need of energy assistance.²⁹ But implementation of these and other principles are very much a matter of sequencing, details, and U.S. politics, not to mention mutual trust, starting with the matter of North Korea's insistence on having a civilian nuclear-energy program.³⁰

The South Korean government is convinced that sustained official and nongovernmental contact with North Korea, and economic incentives, will pave the way for a nuclear agreement with the North. When the fourth session of the 6PT began in July, the Seoul government sweetened the pot with a promise to ship energy to North Korea. Agreement was also reached on South Korean mining operations in the DPRK in exchange for food and raw materials for North Korean factories.³¹ Hyundai's industrial development at Kaesong continues to expand, its thirteen factories (soon to be seventeen) employing about 4,000 North Korean workers. In fact, around 17 percent of South-North Korea trade, which is rapidly increasing, was accounted for by Hyundai's Kaesong operations in the first half of 2005.³²

It seems eminently sensible to support initiatives such as these, whether or not the latest round of the 6PT results in substantive undertakings. The initiatives are occurring at the same time that farmers markets are expanding in the North, consumerism is growing, foreign investment opportunities are slowly emerging, and reliable monitoring of food distribution by aid organizations such as the World Food Program is again possible. According to people who have lived and worked in the DPRK, North Korea is actually in a critical time of transition in which major economic changes are underway but the leadership "is still obstructing deeper change," fearful of "reforming the institutions needed to manage and sustain a market."³³ If North Korea is actually prepared to give up its nuclear-weapon program(s), the United States and the rest of the international community, including financial agencies and NGOs, ought to be ready to step in with training and needs assessments, because the opportunities are at hand. The use of force or threat, which could have the most disastrous consequences for all Koreans, does not seem warranted under any conceivable circumstances.

The Looming Tensions with South Korea

Of immediate concern is the deterioration of U.S. relations with South Korea, which has occurred in large part because of Bush's North Korea policies. Ever since Kim Dae Jung's visit to Washington in 2001, when President Bush made clear his distaste for both the Sunshine policy and Kim Jong Il, the United States and the ROK have been far apart on how to deal with the DPRK. A unilateralist American policy simply has little toleration for a policy of strategic engagement such as Kim had inaugurated. Even though the South Korean government has deployed troops to Iraq, despite public disapproval, and despite U.S. plans for reducing its military presence in South Korea, President Roh Moo Hyun has distanced his country from the United States.³⁴ He has announced a policy of "cooperative and independent national defense" and more recently talked of

South Korea serving as a “balancer” in Northeast Asia.³⁵ Anti-Americanism is on the rise in South Korea, especially among young people, and clearly one reason is that, not for the first time, the United States is regarded as the main obstacle to Korean reconciliation.³⁶

Observers close to the Roh administration have clarified that his objective is not to weaken the alliance with the United States—South Korea has become the number-one customer in East Asia for U.S. arms³⁷—but to implement a more South Korea-centered foreign policy. Rather than continue to be squeezed between China and Japan, the ROK can serve as a “bridge” between the two. South Korea is depicted as being uniquely situated to promote peaceful international relationships in Northeast Asia and “to create a new order based on regional cooperation and integration through open-minded diplomacy.” But the United States will undermine prospects for a new order if it “launches a policy of containment based on a belief that China poses a threat, or seeks to push through regime change in North Korea, while encouraging Japan to emerge as a military power . . .”³⁸ Thus, in Roh’s conceptualization of regional cooperation, greater policy-making independence is designed to avoid alignment with the United States in containing China or North Korea, on one hand, and develop a stronger East Asian identity (including broader ties with ASEAN) on the other.³⁹

In keeping with this new thinking in Seoul—which, it should be noted, has been hammered by conservative politicians and the press for its supposed naivete and anti-alliance implications—South Korea has moved increasingly close to China. Within South Korean government circles as well as the public at large, the conviction is growing that China and not the United States should be the focus of South Korean diplomacy.⁴⁰ While that view is unlikely to become policy anytime soon, the economics of the ROK-PRC relationship must accord good relations with China high priority in South Korea. As is well known, China is now South Korea’s leading export market (and a major source of trade surplus) and principal FDI recipient. China has also surpassed the United States as a place for Koreans to visit and study. And Roh has vowed to step up military exchanges with China.

Besides Korean peninsula security, Seoul and Beijing share a number of views on Northeast Asian security matters—enough so that the Hu Jintao-Roh Moo Hyun summit in July 2003 upgraded the PRC-ROK relationship to a “comprehensive cooperative partnership.” Apart from their obvious concern to avoid war and denuclearize the Korean peninsula, both governments believe in the virtues of multilateral engagement with each other (most importantly in ASEAN+3) and with North Korea. Both are concerned that certain U.S. tactics directed at North Korea, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, theater missile defense, and economic sanctions, are needlessly provocative. Both governments believe that North Korea has the right to have a civilian nuclear-power program (South Korea, after all, has twenty nuclear-power plants) so long as it is under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Both governments have been critical of disparaging U.S. remarks directed at the North Korean leadership, and their criticisms probably helped account for Bush’s reference to “Mr. Kim” and Rice’s acceptance of North Korea’s legitimacy. Beijing and Seoul also have advised Washington that a policy of engagement, including direct dialogue with Pyongyang, is the wisest course of action. Their views of Japan also have much in common: concern about rising Japanese nationalism and what continuing aggravation of the North Korea situation might mean for

future Japanese security policy; demands for more apologetic attitudes from top Tokyo officials on past grievances; and opposition to a permanent Japanese seat on the Security Council.

This coincidence of views, combined with South Korea's growing economic dependence on China, has important implications for both China and the United States. First, it strengthens the common cause of China and South Korea in dealing with Japan over issues such as textbook revision, Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, disputed territory, and Taiwan. Second, it edges South Korea toward a foreign policy that would remove U.S. bases and forces from the ROK and, in the event of Korean unification, eliminate Korea as a security danger to China. These possibilities, it should be emphasized, are not necessarily adverse to U.S. security concerns in Northeast Asia. But when interpreted through the lens of the Bush Doctrine, they would have to count as unacceptable and even alarming. In all, such developments lend further weight to the argument here that the character of U.S.-China relations is central to all other relationships in Northeast Asia.

The Issue of Leadership

It is common to hear talk about the indispensability of U.S. leadership in Asia. Without the United States, it is said, Asia is rudderless: it has no other government that can be entrusted to lead, no other country to provide strategic reassurance. Only the United States can be the "hub in the wheel," as former secretary of state James A. Baker III once wrote. But leadership involves other capabilities and qualities, such as creative diplomacy that adapts to changing circumstances, uses careful language, and promotes nonviolent dispute resolution. Increasingly, it also involves *redefining security*. The post-cold war world has changed enormously in Northeast Asia as it has everywhere else, but the United States seems out of step with most of the region's governments when it comes to identifying the urgent issues. For Washington the main challenges are proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and China's strategic ambitions. But for East Asia the challenges are quite different: solving the contradictions between economic growth and widening poverty and social divisions, achieving political stability, finding new energy sources, and competing with Chinese economic power.⁴¹ In contrast with Washington's attempts to enlist partners in a grand struggle against implacable enemies—the "war on terror" and the "axis of evil"—East Asian countries are grappling with governance issues and are busy developing multilateral venues for promoting trade and political dialog. The contrast could not be more striking: the Bush administration falls back on cold-war era bilateral alliances and balance-of-power politics, and is a minor player in regional multilateral activities, while East Asia, with China increasingly the driving force, is intensifying integration via free trade areas such as the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, dialog groups such as ASEAN+3 and (in December 2005) an East Asian Community, and commitment to stronger regionalist initiatives (such as China's signing of the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as well as a Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity.⁴²

Leadership can also mean consistency in principles and policies, such as by displaying generosity of spirit and resources for promoting economic and social justice within and between countries. George Perkovich has recently argued, for example, that

Bush's emphasis on freedom slights its counterpart, justice, and thus weakens the appeal of the United States in the Middle East and elsewhere. Justice—within societies, between states, in the behavior of the United States abroad, and in the global economy—is the real litmus test of U.S. foreign policy.⁴³ The reputation of the United States has been badly tarnished by the war in Iraq, and not just in the Middle East. A war that the UN secretary-general declared illegal, that has witnessed prisoner abuses that violate international as well as domestic U.S. law, and that is tainted by occupation of an oil-rich country surely makes an impression around Asia. Moreover, U.S. stinginess with economic assistance, a refusal to do away with agricultural subsidies that undercut export opportunities for the poorest countries, and a penchant for arming repressive regimes and military establishments (such as in Indonesia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan), all reflect priorities that contradict or undermine professed democratic ideals.

The U.S. approach to China and North Korea could benefit from these different notions of leadership. China requires a U.S. policy based on genuine partnership, and North Korea requires a policy of sustained engagement. Both countries require an emphasis in U.S. diplomacy on trust building to correct antagonistic perceptions. But trust building can only happen when shared interests are the focus of policy making. And there are shared interests. Cooperation with China on military transparency, the legal system, energy, water, and sustainable development could be vital to the country's future economic and even political stability. Signing a peace treaty with North Korea, denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, improving the North's energy and food supplies, and opening the country to greater contact with others are interests that the United States shares with North Korea and China.

Avoiding the prospect of hostile U.S.-China relations, and within that a hostile China-Japan relationship, is central to international security in Northeast Asia. The post-cold war opportunities for dramatic improvements in the region are being frittered away, mainly by a U.S. administration that has used the 9/11 attacks to seek to establish a new world order based on unquestioned U.S. preeminence. The 6PT are one such opportunity. If the 6PT's principles are translated into practice, the talks can be the lift-off point for broader security arrangements.⁴⁴ China seems willing to support some kind of multilateral security forum that convenes regularly on Northeast Asian security issues, in the manner of the ASEAN Regional Forum.⁴⁵ A forum would provide space for informal as well as formal discussion of a number of issues that are now dealt with haphazardly or not at all, such as security in the Taiwan Strait, territorial disputes, energy cooperation, a nuclear weapon-free zone centered on Korea, conventional arms limitations, and even Korean unification.

There are still other steps the United States could take that would demonstrate leadership in new ways. They are:

- Signing and supporting ratification of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Rome Treaty that established the International Criminal Court, and other international agreements.
- Seeking mutual or sequenced arms reductions with the PRC on the Taiwan issue.

- Promoting North Korean economic development through support of its membership in all Asian regional groups and NGO programs in the DPRK.
- Lowering the rhetoric on the “China threat.”
- Signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.
- Clarifying limited support of Japan’s “normal nation” aspirations.
- Supporting a Northeast Asia energy consortium.

What is the alternative to new patterns of leadership and new approaches to security? Should current trends continue, we might face a whole new order in Northeast Asia in which a quasi-alliance between China and South Korea stands opposed to tighter U.S.-Japan security relations. That circumstance is surely not conducive to a peaceful and stable future. It would amount to a new cold war in which the United States and China are competing for Asian leadership. Such a competition would probably lead to arms racing and to the United States siding with Japan’s right wing in abandoning the restraints of Article 9. Once Japan commits to becoming a major military power, pressure would mount for it to develop nuclear weapons, setting off the very chain reaction of nuclear-weapon acquisitions and modernization that is not in any country’s best interest. Such a dismal future should provide the incentive for vigorous multilateral cooperation in which the United States is a key player.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Gideon Rose, “Get Real,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2005, p. A23.

² This was true for Rice well before the 9/11 attacks. See her “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, No. 1 (January-February, 2000), pp. 45-62.

³ See *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002*, available online at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>. A fuller interpretation is in my *Superpower on Crusade: The Bush Doctrine in US Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 2005). Among the many excellent explications of the Bush Doctrine, see in particular G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, No. 5 (September-October, 2002), pp. 44-60, and David C. Hendrickson, “Toward Universal Empire: The Dangerous Quest for Absolute Security,” *World Policy Journal*, vol. 19, No. 3 (Fall, 2002), pp. 1-10.

⁴ See, for example, Wang Jisi, “China’s Search for Stability with America,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, No. 5 (September-October, 2005), pp. 39-48. Wang writes (p. 46): “The Chinese-U.S. relationship remains beset by more profound differences than any other bilateral relationship between major powers in the world today.”

⁵ A recent demonstration of their divergent views on terrorism came in the aftermath of the abortive revolt in May 2005 against the Karimov government in Uzbekistan. Whereas the U.S. State Department raised questions about the killing of hundreds of protesters by Uzbek security forces, China announced its unequivocal support of the regime for quelling what it termed a terrorist attack against the state.

⁶ Joseph Kahn, “If 22 Million Chinese Prevail at U.N., Japan Won’t,” *New York Times*, April 1, 2005, p. A4.

⁷ Rice, in an interview, opined that China's military "looks outsized for its regional interests" (*New York Times*, April 19, 2005, p. A9), while Rumsfeld, lecturing in China, said "advances in China's strategic strike capability raise questions" about its intentions and lack of transparency. *New York Times*, , November 21, 2005, p. A14.

⁸ For example, the July 2005 official defense department assessment of China for Congress, while by no means alarmist in tone or content, does reflect on the "ambitious" character of China's military modernization. The assessment posits a \$90-billion Chinese military budget (one three times China's official military budget) and concludes: "In the future, as China's military power grows, China's leaders may be tempted to resort to force or coercion more quickly to press diplomatic advantage, advance security interests, or resolve disputes." Yet much of the same report underscores the disadvantages, political and military, that China would have in moving in a more aggressive direction. See Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: The Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2005*, online at

www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2005/d20050719china.pdf. By contrast, a RAND Corporation study prepared for the U.S. Air Force offers a far more nuanced evaluation of the Chinese military and points to domestic budgetary and other constraints (such as tax revenues) on high levels of military spending. That study posits an annual military budget (including all off-budget expenditures) in the range of \$31-38 billion. Keith Crane et al., *Modernizing China's Military: Opportunities and Constraints* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005), pp. 133 and 205 ff.

⁹ Dan Blumenthal, "Getting Closer," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 168, No. 4 (April, 2005), pp. 40-42.

¹⁰ In the view of Chinese strategic analysts, Central Asia "has long been regarded by the United States as the pivot in realizing its global strategy," and the establishment of bases there is an "historic breakthrough" for U.S. policy makers. See Xie Wenqing, "Post-'9.11' Asia-Pacific Security Situation," *International Strategic Studies*, No. 4 (2002), pp. 41-47. The six-party Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to which China belongs, issued a statement in July 2005 that called upon the United States to withdraw from bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Subsequently, U.S. relations with the Uzbekistan government soured over that government's repression of demonstrations, and notice was served on Washington to leave its air base there in six months.

¹¹ See the speeches by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing on August 2, 2005 (at www.state.gov/s/d/rem/50498.htm) and to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations in New York City, September 21, 2005 (at www.state.gov/s/d/rem/53682.htm).

¹² Kishore Mahbubani, "Understanding China," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, No. 5 (September-October, 2005), p. 49.

¹³ See, for instance, the latest PRC defense white paper, *China's National Defense in 2004*. The English translation is at http://english.chinamil.com.cn/special/cnd2004/contents_02.htm. See also the Chinese comments in the report of the Fifth U.S.-China Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation, "Practical Steps for Improving U.S.-China Cooperation on Arms Control and Nonproliferation," ed. by Lora Saalman and Jing-dong

Yuan (Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2004), pp. 9-13.

¹⁴ See for example Dingli Shen, "Accepting a Nuclear North Korea," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 168, No. 3 (March, 2005), pp. 51-54.

¹⁵ A PRC foreign ministry spokesman rejected sanctions in May, saying that "The normal trade flow [between China and the DPRK] should not be linked up with the nuclear issue. We oppose trying to address the [nuclear] problem through strong-arm tactics." Joseph Kahn and David E. Sanger, "China Rules Out Using Sanctions on North Korea," *New York Times*, May 11, 2005, p. 1.

¹⁶ For example, the Korean press reported on the existence of a contingency plan in the event of political instability in North Korea, code-named "5029-05," that was being formulated by the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command. The National Security Council of the ROK is said to have told the CFC in January 2005 not to make the plan operational for fear of undermining its own policy toward the North. *Korea Times* (Seoul), May 2, 2005, online ed.

¹⁷ Recent evidence of China's rejection of the Bush approach to North Korea came in mid-May, following U.S. intelligence reports of a possible DPRK underground nuclear test and the DPRK's announcement that it had begun reprocessing spent fuel from its 8,000 rods at the Yongbyon nuclear facility. A senior PRC foreign ministry official took the unusual step of telling reporters that "a basic reason for the unsuccessful [diplomatic] effort lies in the lack of cooperation from the U.S. side." He urged the Bush administration to put aside its derisive name-calling of Kim Jong Il, rejected U.S. suggestions of economic sanctions against North Korea, and said there was "no solid evidence" of a forthcoming North Korean test explosion. Joseph Kahn, "China Says U.S. Impeded North Korea Talks," *NYT*, May 13, 2005, p. A6.

¹⁸ Koizumi's statement acknowledged the "tremendous damage and pain" caused by Japan's imperialism, and said: "Humbly acknowledging such facts of history, I once again reflect most deeply and offer apologies from my heart." (*New York Times*, August 16, 2005, p. A9.) But his repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and the portrayal of Japan in school textbooks have yet to be resolved. See "Koizumi's Statement on the Sixtieth Anniversary: Improving or Inflaming Relations with China and South Korea," *Yomiuri Shimbun* commentary, August 17, 2005, online at www.japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=369.

¹⁹ See Wang, "China's Search for Stability with America," pp. 44-45.

²⁰ See Selig S. Harrison, chair, *Ending the North Korean Nuclear Crisis: A Proposal by the Task Force on US Korea Policy*, p. 9.

²¹ Victor D. Cha, "Korea's Place in the Axis," pp. 79-92. Cha is now in charge of Asian affairs in Bush's National Security Council.

²² For example, a "senior [US] administration official" was quoted in 2002 as saying that "one rogue-state crisis at a time" was Bush's preferred approach, suggesting that North Korea might be next on his hit list after Iraq was subdued. (*NYT*, December 13, 2002, online ed.) That also seems to have been the view of administration hard-liners in the afterglow of seeming victory in Iraq; see David E. Sanger, "Administration Divided Over North Korea," *NYT*, April 21, 2003, p. A15.

²³ A war simulation conducted in 2005 by *The Atlantic* magazine with several former U.S. foreign-policy officials of various political stripes essentially supported the conclusion here that there is no acceptable military solution to the “North Korean problem,” unless one regards a minimum of 100,000 dead in Seoul as acceptable. Diplomacy remains the far more preferable (and urgently needed) option. See Scott Stossel, “North Korea: The War Game,” *The Atlantic*, vol. 296, No. 1 (July-August, 2005), pp. 97-108.

²⁴ Joseph Kahn, “China Says U.S. Impeded North Korea Talks,” *NYT*, May 13, 2005, p. A6. A North Korean nuclear test is unlikely in any case, given the consequences, which include providing a pretext for U.S. attack and an argument for South Korea, Japan, and even Taiwan to go nuclear.

²⁵ Jae-Jung Suh, “Assessing the Military Balance in Korea,” *Asian Perspective*, vol. 28, No. 4 (2004), p. 77.

²⁶ See, for example, the statement of Li Gun, Deputy Director General of the DPRK Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 16, 2003, in NAPSNet Special Report, February 6, 2004, online from DPRKbriefingbook@nautilus.org. Li Gun’s main message was: “If the US fundamentally changes its hostile policy toward North Korea we could also give up our nuclear deterrent.” The specific steps he said the United States must take were a non-aggression guarantee, diplomatic relations, and noninterference with North Korea’s economic relations with other countries. See also Philip P. Pan, “N. Korea Says It Can ‘Show Flexibility,’” *Washington Post*, June 26, 2004.

²⁷ See *Korea Times* (Seoul), June 17, 2005, online ed. and Norimitsu Onishi, “North Korea’s Leader Says He’s Ready to Resume Talks to End Nuclear Standoff,” *NYT*, June 18, 2005, p. A5. The official North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* stated in a commentary: “If the U.S. nuclear threat to [North Korea] is removed and its hostile policy to ‘bring down the system’ of the latter is withdrawn, not a single nuclear weapon will be needed.” Reported by the Associated Press, July 12, 2005.

²⁸ Reuters (Beijing), in *NYT*, July 9, 2005, online ed.

²⁹ Text in NAPSNet Special Report, September 20, 2005, at www.nautilus.org.

³⁰ On the issue of trust, see the PBS, *Online NewsHour* interview of Christopher Hill, the lead U.S. negotiator at the 6PT, August 9, 2005 (transcript). Almost immediately after the Statement of Principles appeared, Secretary Rice made clear that North Korea would have to dismantle its nuclear-weapons program first before there could be any discussion of nuclear-energy assistance. See David E. Sanger, “Yes, Parallel Tracks to North, But Parallel Tracks Don’t Meet,” *New York Times*, September 20, 2005, p. A6.

³¹ Both the electricity offer (about 2 million kilowatts a year), which would replace the 1994 deal to provide North Korea with two light-water reactors, and the mining agreement were reported in the *Korea Times*, July 12, 2005, online ed. The September 2005 Statement of Principles reiterates South Korea’s offer of electricity.

³² Associated Press report, in NAPSNet, July 28, 2005. According to company publications, Hyundai currently has thirteen factories in the Kaesong complex, and plans on building at least four more.

³³ Peter M. Beck and Nicholas Reader, “Facilitating Reform in North Korea: The Role of Regional Actors and NGOs,” *Asian Perspective*, vol. 29, No. 3 (2005), forthcoming.

³⁴ During 2004, the Pentagon decided to redeploy about 4,000 troops from South Korea to Iraq. Roh, who had been criticized by many supporters for agreeing to send a similar number of South Korean troops there, kept his promise. He ordered around 3,000 soldiers to Iraq in mid-2004, adding to roughly 400 already there. In return, or so it seems, an agreement was reached to redeploy U.S. forces based at Yongsan in central Seoul, an extremely valuable piece of real estate, to less visible bases to the south, and to keep the number of U.S. forces at the existing level.

³⁵ NAPSNet Daily Reports of March 30 and April 4, 2005.

³⁶ Gi-Wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang, "The Politics of Nationalism in U.S.-Korean Relations," *Asian Perspective*, vol. 28, No. 4 (2004), pp. 119-45.

³⁷ Congressional Research Service, *U.S. Arms Sales: Agreements with and Deliveries to Major Clients, 1996-2003* (Washington, D.C.: CRS, December 8, 2004), online at www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32689.pdf.

³⁸ Moon Chung-in, "An Unavoidable Choice," *Chosun Ilbo*, April 12, 2005, reprinted in *Korea Focus*, vol. 13, No. 3 (May-June, 2005), pp. 25-28.

³⁹ Bae Geung Chang, "Moving Forward with Korea's 'Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative,'" Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, *Quarterly Policy Brief* (November, 2004), in *Korea Focus*, vol. 13, No. 3 (May-June, 2005), pp. 85-103.

⁴⁰ These views correlate with age: Younger people tend to be more critical of the U.S. and accepting of China, as befits the "20-30" generation that is usually considered the backbone of Roh and his Uri Party. See Chung Jae Ho, "The 'Rise' of China and Its Impact on South Korea's Strategic Soul-Searching," *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies*, vol. 15 (2005), pp. 6-7.

⁴¹ A recent statement of this perspective is by the deputy foreign minister of Thailand, Surakiart Sathirathai, "Managing the Rise of Asia," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 168, No. 7 (July-August, 2005), pp. 14-19.

⁴² Alice D. Ba, "China-ASEAN Relations: Political Significance of an Asean Free Trade Area," in T. J. Cheng et al., eds., *China Under the Fourth Generation Leadership: Opportunities, Dangers, and Dilemmas* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2005).

⁴³ George Perkovich, "Giving Justice Its Due," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, No. 4 (July-August, 2005), pp. 79-93.

⁴⁴ The 2005 Statement of Principles states: "The six parties agreed to explore ways and means for promoting security cooperation in northeast Asia." For an extended discussion of a regional security mechanism, see Peter Van Ness, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four-plus-two—an Idea Whose Time Has Come," in Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness, eds., *Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views from the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 242-59.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Wang Jisi's positive comments in "China's Search for Stability with America," p. 45.