

## CHAPTER 6

*The Super-Power Respondent:  
The United States*

American policy planners view the contemporary 'international system' as transitional and amorphous. States are perceived as acting in their own interests ('realist' actors) but as constrained both by multinational institutions and the forces of globalisation (trends consistent with the 'liberal' worldview). Lacking widespread consensus on political values and truly robust collective security mechanisms, however, Asia-Pacific states are regarded by Washington as forming a 'classical' multipolar system, potentially susceptible to geopolitical competition and serious regional conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The risk of widespread regional competition exists notwithstanding that the world's remaining superpower currently enjoys an unrivalled power base in the region. It continues to exploit the Asia-Pacific's growing levels of wealth through its control of global trading and investment practices. It maintains technological supremacy in a world where both Asian allies and Asian adversaries covet American software, telecommunications and artificial intelligence for both commercial and military use. Yet such influence is bought at a very low strategic cost: approximately 100 000 US military personnel are deployed in the region and usually subsidised substantially by host countries.

Even so, Washington is clearly shifting its strategic orientation from its traditional 'Eurocentric' focus to one increasingly directed towards the Asia-Pacific. Greater US commitments to offshore deployments in the arc spanning the Persian Gulf to Northeast Asia are now the rule rather than the exception.<sup>2</sup> China increasingly looks likely to fill what analysts label America's 'enemy deprivation syndrome': the need to have an enemy around which a more cohesive (and realist) foreign policy can be shaped. As George W. Bush assumed the presidency in January 2001, concerns throughout the region intensified over the new Administra-

tion's willingness to differentiate between policy pragmatism that incorporates both realist and liberal elements and the outdated politics of the Cold War. To understand the relative prospects of future US policy in the region, that country's recent strategic thinking and behaviour in an Asia-Pacific context needs to be assessed.

The strategic thinking of the United States, an 'eastern rim' Asia-Pacific security actor, has reflected that of a revolutionary state – isolated from global power centres by two vast bodies of water and caught between countervailing instincts of idealism and pragmatism: developing commercial links in both Europe and Asia while avoiding entangling alliances or involvement in foreign wars (the pragmatic dimension), exporting the democratic values of the American body politic to other societies as a means of conflict avoidance (the idealistic component). Over time, American national security thinking has conformed to what Michael Howard has termed the 'social dimension' of Clausewitzian strategy – a trinity of political objectives (realist), operational instruments (pragmatist) and the 'popular passions [or] social forces' which the American people going to war express (idealist).<sup>3</sup> It cannot be said, however, that American grand strategy has moved smoothly along a 'Clausewitzian continuum', especially since the end of the Cold War. No great geopolitical threat or hostile ideology has yet emerged to succeed Soviet power, focusing and mobilising America's public opinion and its formidable national resource base around a central strategic design commensurate to the containment strategy that US policy planners embraced during most of the postwar era.<sup>4</sup>

Americans have never been comfortable pursuing power as an end unto itself. When Ronald Reagan justified larger US military budgets during his presidency, he appealed to what he instinctively knew to be his electorate's apprehension about the intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state. He did this by labelling the USSR an 'evil empire'. The 'Reagan Doctrine' expanded the President's highly idealistic foreign policy beyond the Soviet confrontation to justify the promotion of 'American-style' democracy and human rights in the world's developing regions.<sup>5</sup> Most notably, it embodied a historical tendency of American policy makers to reject expressing policy as a bare manifestation of the national interest. As John Mearsheimer has cogently observed, realists fight wars and accrue power without making value judgements about their adversaries, whereas Americans like to think they enter conflicts to defend 'lofty moral goals' and to defeat 'bad states'.<sup>6</sup>

With the Soviet Union's demise, Washington's adoption of an 'enlargement' strategy to advance the forces of democracy was very much in character with this historical propensity to embrace and project an idealistic foreign policy.<sup>7</sup> Realist critics accused the Clinton Administration

of merely emulating President Reagan's enthusiasm for intervening in limited third world conflicts, even if its motives for doing so were different. Whether to advance an ideological agenda (Reagan's motivation) or to engage in 'international social work' (Clinton's agenda), the realist critique was the same: US foreign policy had lost sight of core national interests in favour of embarking upon moral crusades which have little relevance to the survival and influence of the United States. As Condoleezza Rice, the key national security adviser to incoming President George W. Bush argued during the 2000 presidential campaign, US foreign policy 'must proceed from the firm ground of national interest, not from the interests of an illusionary international community'.<sup>8</sup>

Liberals retorted that narrow, interest-oriented realist postulates could not by themselves possibly inspire the American people to sustain security commitments abroad in an increasingly complex global environment where threats had become more diffuse. They further argued that ideals could be pursued by Washington's policy makers in a systematic fashion without indulging in the messianism which realists feared would cause the United States to lose its way in a self-interested world.<sup>9</sup>

In the Asia-Pacific, American idealism translated itself into an increasing interest in institution-building and regional diplomacy as the means to achieve both a stable regional security order and sustainable economic growth. Yet the Clinton Administration was indecisive and ambiguous in pursuing institutionalism as its preferred approach to Asia-Pacific security. It instead 'equivocated between recommending that US bilateral alliances be strengthened "as the heart" of US strategy for the region, and tacitly acknowledging the need for the United States to develop "layers of multilateral ties" in Asia that would not erode the credibility of the existing US alliance system'.<sup>10</sup>

The United States adopted an engagement strategy to realise Clinton's vision of a 'Pacific Community'.<sup>11</sup> This posture clearly embraced the liberal approach to regional security. As defined by the President's national security strategy report released in early 1996, engagement was designed to prevent major threats to regional stability and to build stronger partnerships with Asia-Pacific states. It was further defined as the selective application of 'preventive diplomacy' – a combination of military power and non-military initiatives to ease regional tensions and avoid conflict. Economic assistance, support for democracy, a low-key but still credible US military presence, interaction between US and foreign militaries and involvement in multilateral dialogues and negotiations were all important ingredients of the engagement posture. If applied correctly, the report argued, engagement should work to further American security interests while promoting democracy and prosperity in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Engagement, however, failed to reconcile US goals and interests in the Asia-Pacific with the means to achieve them. While the region is clearly a vital component of US global strategy, the Clinton Administration failed to structure and convey a clear explanation of why this is the case and how American global and regional interests might be reconciled in the region.<sup>13</sup> This chapter argues that US interests would be better served if key aspects of both the realist and liberal outlooks were effectively integrated thus reflecting a key component of the 'convergent security' strategy that is the subject of this book. Specifically, the success of US strategy in Asia will be determined by how well key American strategic policy interests are justified and pursued on the basis of values that the American people can support. It is a truly daunting task to identify and establish rationales and strategies which generate widespread support among the American populace for helping Asian liberals to build a twenty-first century equivalent of the postwar European integration movement in their own region. To do so will require a concerted effort aimed at overcoming Americans' historical preference for isolationist policies. Yet Washington has little choice other than to meet this challenge by incorporating a judicious mix of realist and liberal strategies or face the prospect of confronting formidable threats and even fighting future wars in Asia.

This chapter will initially evaluate key US interests as they apply to the Asia-Pacific region. It will then discuss the George Bush Snr (1989–93) and Clinton Administrations' (1993–2001) approaches to pursuing these policy objectives and the difficulties that they faced in trying to achieve them. A third section will evaluate prospects for the United States to shape a more viable strategic policy agenda for Asia-Pacific. In particular, it will address those aspects of realism and liberalism that could be adopted by US policy planners to implement such a policy agenda and to enhance overall regional stability.

### US Policy Interests in the Asia-Pacific

American grand strategy has had an Asia-Pacific component for at least a century. The annexation of the Philippines by the United States and its intensified penetration of Asian trading lanes during the 1890s was a logical extension of its westward continental expansion and a visible manifestation of American determination to create a sphere of influence in the Asia-Pacific region. It also marked the beginning of a lengthy period of strategic competition with Japan. This reached a climax with Japan's total defeat in the Pacific War of 1941–45. Following that conflict, the United States sought to impose its version of an international order throughout

Eurasia through both power balancing and the creation of international organisations. This system was designed primarily to restrain the Soviet Union, although it was later brought to bear against the PRC.

James Kurth has recently argued that the United States' major geopolitical challenge in Asia during the Cold War was learning how to co-exist with a powerful and unified China – a China opposed to US interests and values, but which did not threaten Asia-Pacific sea lanes and American regional markets as overtly as did wartime Japan. China neutralised US grand strategy by declining to posit an explicit strategic challenge to the United States, except in extraordinary circumstances. The Chinese response to the US deployment of troops in North Korea during 1950 and American attempts to undermine the survival of North Vietnam in the early 1960s need to be seen in this light. They were *responses* to incursions by US military forces into areas that China saw as vital strategic buffer zones rather than manifestations of an expansionist Chinese agenda. Accordingly, little real policy consensus was generated within the American electorate about the nature of the 'China threat'.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, many Americans found it problematic that the United States was seeking to contain Asian political movements (even those of a Marxist nature) that were based on ideals of national self-determination and anti-colonialism when those very themes and values were so much a part of their own political heritage.

George Kennan's 'Long Telegram' (later appearing in the widely respected journal *Foreign Affairs*) spelled out the geopolitical premises which justified Washington's adoption of a global containment posture.<sup>15</sup> No equivalent treatise was offered, however, to explain in concise and convincing terms why the United States needed to sustain and protect an Asia-Pacific regional sphere of influence and how the United States needed to relate to other indigenous and external powers in the region to achieve this objective. Successive American postwar administrations lurched from crisis to crisis in Asia, only responding to what they perceived as incessant communist expansionism (what came to be known as the 'domino theory') with deployments of massive land and offshore forces to intervene against or to deter the threat.<sup>16</sup> When events forced policy adjustments to be made from the 1970s onward, the 'Nixon' (1969–73), 'Pacific' (1975), and 'Weinberger' (1983) doctrines all assumed America's strategic role in Asia to be self-evident. They therefore focused exclusively on the problem of how a more qualified level of strategic commitments would not compromise the role of the United States, even though that role was poorly defined.

The end of the Cold War has intensified concerns among US policy makers and independent analysts as to just what American interests in the Asia-Pacific justify a continuation of their strategic commitment to

the region. A general consensus has developed among US policy planners on this point and several key interests that need to be protected have been identified. This is in stark contrast to the confusion and dissent that underscored US policy formulation during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. The key US interest is to prevent major Asia-Pacific wars from erupting as these could lead to strikes against US territory or forces. Corollaries of this interest are the need to avert limited Asia-Pacific conflicts that could escalate into large-scale regional wars and to prevent the proliferation of WMD in the hands of those who would contemplate such an option. A second critical American interest is to prevent China, or a Chinese-led coalition of hostile powers, achieving regional hegemony at the United States' expense. China cannot and should not be contested in developing a regional sphere of influence. But Washington cannot allow Beijing *carte blanche* to subjugate the region. Nor is it in the interest of the United States for counter-coalitions to emerge that would oppose the Chinese and possibly lead to a major regional confrontation. A third US interest is to facilitate Asia-Pacific regional prosperity by encouraging open markets and free trade. A fourth, less strategic and more controversial, political interest is to project successfully democratic values into the region.<sup>17</sup>

Other US interests certainly exist, such as accessing and, where necessary, controlling critical sea lanes of communication in the region; stemming nuclear proliferation and regional arms races; and protecting human rights and cultivating regional confidence-building. These, however, are less central to the United States' physical survival or its ability to preclude a hostile hegemon from dominating the region.<sup>18</sup>

The nature and ramifications of the core American interests are inter-related in increasingly complex ways. War avoidance in the Asia-Pacific – and, more directly, the introduction of US military forces in what contingencies may erupt – will become more difficult as strategic threats will apply to longer distances, involve more advanced and lethal stand-off weapons technologies and introduce elements of strategic coercion into the region that previously could be dominated by American offshore military power operating in forward deployed positions. Certainly, greater free trade throughout Asia could reinforce the United States' legitimacy as a key politico-economic actor in the region. Yet it could also heighten the risk that a more 'globalised' marketplace, shaped by American technology and exports, will precipitate the spread of advanced strategic capabilities to potential US adversaries in the region. Intensified long-range strategic threats originating from more diversified locales than the traditional Northeast Asian area of Cold War focus could even draw the US into conflicts where vital interests might not be at stake. While the adoption of democratic values and institutions by Asian states could

reduce this prospect, it is improbable that many Asian cultures will adopt or develop distinctly American or 'Western' forms of governance or civil society over the short-term. If not carefully managed, economic integration and information transparency could thus generate asymmetric regional threats and tensions and magnify previously local conflicts just as easily as fostering a more benign 'Pacific Community'.<sup>19</sup>

*The Asia-Pacific and War Avoidance*

US global power has been largely predicated on its ability to influence from great distances the ways other states relate to each other – what Kurth has characterised as being an 'order-giver'.<sup>20</sup> Its status as a large and powerful geopolitical entity separated by two oceans has made the United States relatively invulnerable to a land invasion but its concentration of military and industrial power on its east and west coasts makes it a target for potentially devastating missile strikes.<sup>21</sup> As a maritime power, its ability to deploy forces rapidly and with great concentration of firepower to distant points is perhaps its most distinctive strategic asset. In the postwar Asia-Pacific, it has applied this capability to orchestrate an effective balance of power as a war avoidance strategy. It has usually been successful in preventing great-power confrontation and it has been highly successful in deterring nuclear conflicts.

It has been much less adept in avoiding the outbreak of limited conflicts. These have, at times, impeded regional economic development and have involved US forces in disputes not directly related to American national security interests. The United States has also tended to assume too many strategic commitments relative to the actual resource levels it deploys.<sup>22</sup> The 'two-and-a-half war' doctrine adopted by the Kennedy Administration was designed to allow the United States to fight and win a European, an Asian and a smaller war all at the same time. It was undermined by the Vietnam conflict which greatly strained American financial and military resources. The subsequent 'one-and-a-half war' posture adopted by the Nixon Administration was made possible by *detente* with China. It was undermined, however, by the Carter Administration's nearly disastrous miscalculation in contemplating a withdrawal of all US land forces from South Korea and by Washington's subsequent acknowledgment that an 'arc of crisis' had emerged with the 'loss' of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A fundamental lesson of geopolitics was rediscovered in the 1970s: the strategic wellbeing of the United States is directly inter-related to its defence of Eurasia's rimlands and littorals. All else can fail, but if hostile powers launch successful air and sea offensives against US forces deployed in Western Europe or Northeast Asia, the

American homeland would become vulnerable to blockades, interdiction campaigns or offshore tactical missile strikes with WMD.<sup>23</sup>

The stakes for the United States in Asia-Pacific conflict prevention are high. The technological prowess of several Asia-Pacific states is sufficiently advanced for them to develop and deploy over the next decade or two nuclear, chemical or biological warheads and delivery systems which could be targeted against either the United States proper or its forward deployed forces.<sup>24</sup> This latent threat means that Washington must seek long-term alternatives to its traditional postwar deterrence strategy. These would be aimed at ensuring that negotiation will prevail over confrontation if local tensions escalate into conflicts with the potential to threaten the North American continent. Global arms control and disarmament initiatives offer substantial promise of achieving this over the long term; TMD and other defensive technologies consistent with the terms of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty provide one (but not necessarily the best) short to mid-term option for reducing vulnerability to nuclear intimidation by potential Asia-Pacific adversaries.

US deterrence and war-fighting capabilities are complicated by an increasing difficulty to distinguish between tactical and strategic weapons systems. The current US nuclear posture, for example, has reduced the American tactical nuclear force to Air Force dual-capable aircraft and Navy Tomahawk missiles (the Bush Administration removed tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea and other sites during 1991–92). Yet, by themselves these systems could still render immense damage to an adversary's ability to deliver nuclear bombs against US or allied targets. Such systems would be considered 'tactical' in the strategic calculations of states such as Russia and China which deploy extensive and diversified nuclear capabilities, but could be 'strategic' with respect to North Korea or Pakistan which have more limited nuclear weapons inventories and delivery systems. Recent breakthroughs in missile defence technology, however, may well blur the past distinctions between strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. For example, the US deployment of either an effective national missile defence system on the American homeland or of theatre missile defences in Japan or Taiwan would be viewed by China as a major compromise of its own strategic capabilities. China's official no-first-use commitment, extended after its first nuclear test in 1964, could then become tenuous.<sup>25</sup>

The demise of the Soviet Union left American strategic planners without an immediately obvious rationale for sustaining high levels of force projection capabilities in the Asia-Pacific theatre of operations. The loss of US bases in the Philippines and the subsequent emphasis on the ability of the US Pacific Fleet to retain access to 'places, not bases' initially

appeared to vindicate those in the United States who were arguing for a reduced American military presence in the region.<sup>26</sup> They posited that the one distinct threat to the physical security of the United States (Soviet naval power) had been removed and that the US navy was simply a service in search of a new Pacific mission. A self-declared 'minimalist' faction of the realist camp (yet one most likely to be labelled 'neo-isolationist' by most realists) disdained the need for the United States to maintain extended deterrence commitments against imaginary regional hegemony or on behalf of allied interests for which the United States should not risk war. It argued instead that the United States should adhere to an 'offshore balancing' strategy, taking advantage of its insularity and allowing Asian rivalries to counter-balance each other. It also insisted that Asian economic growth – most graphically represented by Japan's economic wealth – was not a strategic advantage for the United States but a direct attack on American prosperity and survival, employing the weapons of trade rather than those of war.<sup>27</sup>

The majority of realists, however, joined the liberal camp in rejecting these arguments. So too did those invested in formulating US strategic policy. Perhaps the most authoritative rebuttal was an article appearing in *Foreign Affairs*, written by US Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye. Long known as a scion of the liberal cause, Nye embraced an expedient combination of realist and liberal postulates to counter the minimalists' arguments. He observed that few people take the minimalist or neo-isolationist strategy seriously because: (1) history, geography, demographics, and economics unavoidably make the United States a Pacific power; (2) the Asia-Pacific region is not capable of orchestrating a 'normal' or stable balance of power without full American participation, and would move toward arms racing and the creation of regional security dilemmas if the United States detached itself from Asian security politics; and (3) Japan's defence burden-sharing role allows the United States to more readily project global power. Nye concluded that US security interests were met more effectively by continuing to pursue a strategy of regional engagement from a position of leadership and strength while simultaneously seeking greater economic and politico-strategic interdependence with other Asia-Pacific states. This entails developing and sustaining a policy consensus in the United States on Asia-Pacific security policy, maintaining and strengthening existing bilateral security alliances in the region and cultivating multilateral security dialogues as an active participant in regional security politics.<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, US vital interests are served best by incorporating selected aspects of both arguments. The strength of the minimalist argument is its encouragement of policy discrimination between 'vital' and 'less vital' interests. Nye is correct in arguing that geography is a critical part

of the Asia-Pacific policy calculus for any US administration. Yet America's great distance from Eurasian shores could conceivably eliminate or minimise the otherwise high cost of maintaining forward deployed US forces in the Asia-Pacific if no immediate threat exists in Europe or Asia which can directly threaten the United States. Moreover, strategic officials in the United States and in allied countries have tended to place too broad an interpretation on defence guarantees in the bilateral security agreements between the United States and its various Asia-Pacific friends and allies. These alliances, as they currently operate, are predominantly realist policy instruments with provisions for consultation but not necessarily automatic strategic commitment under all circumstances. They require constant re-evaluation 'in terms of the most probable threats to regional stability'.<sup>29</sup>

#### *China as a Hostile Hegemon?*

Since becoming a Pacific power in the mid-nineteenth century, the United States has sought to prevent a hostile power or hostile group of powers from achieving regional dominance. By doing so it seeks, as a global maritime power, to maintain its access to the Asia-Pacific to safeguard its trans-Pacific trading lanes and the oil routes from the Persian Gulf to its key industrial allies in the region, Japan and South Korea, and to secure the western flanks of the Western Hemisphere. While this book's concluding chapter will evaluate strategic primacy or hegemony as a general problem for Asia-Pacific regional security, this subsection will address the more specific issue of how the United States has perceived and responded to a stronger and wealthier China – the most likely contender for supplanting or neutralising US power and influence in the Asia-Pacific.

Hardline realists assert that US strategic power must balance growing Chinese tendencies to be more assertive on irredentist issues (Taiwan and the South China Sea) and to acquire more sophisticated military capabilities. They conclude that if the United States accepts this challenge, a relatively stable bipolar regional power balance will emerge which is preferable to either a hegemonic or anarchical Asia-Pacific security environment.<sup>30</sup> Liberals counter that this reasoning reflects an unfortunate tendency by both the Americans and the Chinese to translate 'worst case planning' into strategic policy. They further assert that American policy makers would better serve their nation's interests by relating to their Chinese counterparts more positively and by affording the Chinese leadership the opportunity to win domestic support by interacting positively with the United States. This would be preferable to promoting an endless series of confrontations over weapons proliferation, human rights, trade and irredentism.<sup>31</sup> They believe Chinese interests are best served by

engagement with the United States and by pursuing national security and economic interests in multilateral settings, preferably via international organisations or possibly by adopting concert politics – informal agreements among Chinese, American, Japanese and Russian leaders to meet regularly to coordinate their interests and policies on regional security issues. Moving towards agreements with rival claimants on the Spratly Islands dispute through institutional venues, such as ASEAN, is illustrative of the former approach; working with the United States and constantly consulting with Japan and Russia regarding a permanent peace settlement for the Korean Peninsula exemplifies a concert approach.

Once more, both the realist and liberal arguments have strengths that are applied most effectively by US policy makers in an integrated fashion. A necessary precondition for any approach to be successful, however, is that there be effective communication between China and the United States. These two countries must be able to enunciate their interests and intentions directly to each other without distortion. Neither the deterrence/containment approach supported by most realists nor the engagement postures backed by the liberal camp will work if this basic framework is lacking. Such a framework was mostly absent in Sino-American ties between the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident and the last year of President Clinton's first term of office (1996).<sup>32</sup> More recently, both sides have reconstituted channels of diplomatic, economic and even military dialogue. The summits between President Clinton and Chinese leader Jiang Zemin, during 1997 and 1998, are indicative of progress. However, with the notable exception of preventing conflict escalation on the Korean Peninsula, these consultations have often appeared to be short on efforts to identify and act on mutual *interests* and long on discussions over mutual *grievances*. This creates an atmosphere which makes it difficult for Chinese officials to break the cycle of politely disagreeing with their American counterparts on the international stage before turning to attack American policies on the domestic stage in order to engender nationalist sentiment at home.<sup>33</sup> The challenge Washington faces is to break this pattern of incessantly competitive or 'zero-sum' interaction with the PRC. In a wide-ranging interview on the incoming George W. Bush Administration reported in early January 2001, China's top foreign policy official, Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichan, demonstrated sensitivity toward this problem. Calling on the new American President not to view 'China as a strategic competitor', Qian argued that China and the United States 'have no need to begin a war against each other' over Taiwan and insisted that 'anything could be discussed'.<sup>34</sup>

By their very nature, multilateral institutions may offer a basis for Beijing and Washington to identify more positive bilateral agendas. Neither China nor the United States will allow third parties to dictate their own

policy agendas, but a broader forum presents opportunities for more diverse and more frequent lines of communication to be developed. Both China and the United States have recently demonstrated a greater level of interest in pursuing their relations with Asia-Pacific states within the ASEAN, ARF and APEC frameworks. China is also exploring the policy benefits of collaborating with Asian states in more exclusive regional bodies (see chapter 2). Both Washington and Beijing are determined to avoid being isolated by the rise of 'middle-power diplomacy' in the region. The major alternative to regional power management – concert diplomacy – appears less viable, as China has intensely criticised what it views as an American acquiescence to a greater and more independent Japanese security role in the region while the United States is watching with concern the evolution of Russian–Chinese strategic ties.<sup>35</sup> Some liberals would take comfort in the evolution of such 'concerted bilateralism' or regular summit diplomacy between major powers. Unless carefully managed and constrained, however, these bilateral relationships could precipitate security dilemmas where none previously existed.

Realist concerns about regional power vacuums thus cannot be discounted in the absence of a Sino-American reconciliation. Moreover, despite Qian's entreaty cited above, there is evidence that the Chinese are not willing to comply with such regional and international security norms as negotiating territorial disputes (regarding the Spratly Islands), honouring other polities' processes of political self-determination (in Taiwan and Burma) and complying with restraints on the transfer of materials applicable to nuclear weapons production (Pakistan). Nor have the Chinese exhibited a genuine readiness to enter into the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) with the United States, Russia and other declared nuclear powers. This posture has serious long-term implications for US nuclear deterrence strategy. If China's nuclear arsenal and commensurate delivery systems (which are increasing and diversifying) are not addressed effectively, the United States will have little choice but to continue its extended deterrence strategy in the Asia-Pacific on behalf of its regional allies. Otherwise, if the United States were to disengage, China's nuclear force could become the catalyst for a highly destabilising nuclear arms race, involving possibly Japan, one or both Koreas, Taiwan, India, Pakistan and other regional actors.

#### *Economics and Security*

Economic relations are viewed by US policy planners as a crucial aspect of national security policy.<sup>36</sup> They are particularly relevant in the Asia-Pacific region that generates approximately one-quarter of the world's gross national product (GNP), a substantial part of which can be applied

to military-related spending. However, American analysts are often less concerned than are their Asian and Australian counterparts about exploring precisely how the economics-security inter-relationship works in the context of reinforcing or undermining Asia-Pacific regional stability.<sup>37</sup> With few exceptions their attention has been directed towards specific microanalytical problems relating to trade flows. They have been particularly obsessed with the need to minimise or remove structural impediments to US exports to the region.<sup>38</sup>

A minority of American policy analysts, particularly those of the isolationist or 'minimalist' faction mentioned previously, have argued that trade relations cannot be separated from security considerations. They have damaged the credibility of their position by tending to accuse Japan (most frequently) or other Asian states (increasingly) of consciously conspiring to seek relative gains and long-term dominance over the United States by waging economic warfare. Such arguments only serve to precipitate a siege mentality among Japanese and Asian policy makers, serve forces in Asia which favour greater protectionism against US products and greater resistance to 'Western' democratic values, and abet the interests of Chinese strategists who favour undermining the US-Japan security alliance. Linkages between the economic and security ties binding the United States are always present. They are best approached in terms of how they can positively reinforce each other (absolute gains) rather than how one sector can be applied to extract leverage in the other (relative gains).<sup>39</sup>

There is little evidence that American policy planners view China's spectacular economic growth or the continued prosperity of other Asia-Pacific states, assuming they fully recover from the Asian financial crisis over the next few years, as a prelude to heightened tensions in the region. Instead, as noted previously, American policy tends to 'compartmentalise' security and economic issues in the Asia-Pacific. US security interests are pursued mostly through its bilateral alliance network while the American economic agenda is approached through APEC and the WTO.<sup>40</sup> US security alliances are decidedly realist in their orientation, based on strategies of deterrence and, more recently, power balancing. The United States' economic strategy is clearly advertised as liberal but it is perceived by many Asian observers as obsessed with extracting leverage and cultivating relative gains. American rhetoric calling for the transformation of intra-regional trading competition into a process of 'open regionalism' through tariff reductions and by encouraging greater high technology and information flows is viewed with scepticism. They have obvious difficulty in reconciling open regionalism with the comparative advantage dimensions of American trading strategies and behaviour.

The Asian financial crisis has likewise sobered ASEAN policy planners to the realities of economic growth and to the limitations of regional interdependence as a catalyst for international prestige. Their lingering doubts about US strategic involvement in Southeast Asia have nevertheless 'spilled over' to shape their security perceptions: increasingly, China, Japan, and their relationship with each other are viewed as the keys to future regional economic stability, with the United States needed only to counter-balance Beijing's and Tokyo's prospective ambitions and strategic rivalry.<sup>41</sup>

Such pessimism has been challenged by those liberals who argue that the United States retains sufficient regional influence to bargain effectively within APEC and the WTO for the adoption of rules and norms that facilitate its own interests while simultaneously promoting greater regional cooperation on both economic and security matters. But for US bargaining to be effective it will need firstly to be based on a more sensitive understanding of the needs of other regional states. In particular it will need to accommodate the conceptual inter-relationship between economic and non-economic interests so widely supported within the region.<sup>42</sup> Congressional pressure on future administrations to project hard-line trading postures against Japan and South Korea will have to be balanced against the prospect of those states adopting more nationalistic postures. Acceptance of this essential balancing principle, even if of limited dimension, was in evidence when the Clinton Administration modified its human rights stance against China – a China, it should be noted, that was prepared to confront Washington and risk losing its Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status in order to preserve what it saw as its sovereign prerogatives.

#### *Reconciling 'American' and 'Asian' Values*

Recent efforts by various Asian elites to define and project a distinctly regional identity have illuminated a fundamental tension in US postwar foreign policy. Liberal American political ideology draws sharp normative lines between what is 'good' and 'bad' and what is 'democratic' and 'authoritarian'. By contrast, 'interest-driven' American geopolitics tends to subordinate concerns about the types of governments Washington is dealing with where such states are positioned strategically.<sup>43</sup> The former approach often is labelled 'neo-Wilsonianism', after the American President Woodrow Wilson whose normative vision of democratic ideals justified the United States entering World War I 'to end all wars'. It is predicated on the assumption that modern democracies are peaceful trading states that do not fight wars against each other. If this premise is valid, US foreign policy should work towards encouraging other states to

strengthen their democratic practices and institutions. Multilateralism and liberalism are supported by this policy approach because the UN and other international organisations encourage negotiation, bargaining and other non-authoritarian forms of political participation and decision making.

The Clinton Administration wrestled with merging neo-Wilsonianism with its international free trade objectives by promoting the concept of 'good governance', that is the efficient management of free market reform evolving simultaneously with 'the creation of transparent mechanisms for the accountability of the state and its officials and a political system able to guarantee individual rights and freedoms'.<sup>44</sup> In November 1996 President Clinton argued in an address to Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok that the citizens of Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines have recently demonstrated that 'accountability and rule of law can thrive in an Asian climate'.<sup>45</sup> However, in the Asia-Pacific, as in other 'non-Western' regions, the United States has continued to advance the pre-eminence of the individual over collective society – the 'enlargement' theory – and has stressed that no conflict exists between individual liberty and advancing economic prosperity.<sup>46</sup>

In an Asia-Pacific context, the application of this agenda has been impeded by the 'Asian Values' movement. The extent to which this movement is driven by either some Asian leaders actually believing their values are superior to Western principles or by their resentment to having external values imposed upon them is a question which may never be resolved. At least two specific aspects of the 'Asian Values' posture, however, have undermined efforts by Washington and other Western governments to combine idealism with policy pragmatism in fashioning their policies towards the Asia-Pacific region. These factors will be surveyed briefly here in the context of American policy.

First, Malaysian, Singaporean, Chinese and other regional elites have strongly resisted what they view as an American effort to undermine their own policies for economic competitiveness. These policies allegedly embody values of: (1) family loyalty and thrift; (2) the primacy of community interests over those of the individual; (3) the need to act through carefully derived consensus among legitimate state authorities rather than through flawed compromises emanating from confrontations among unwieldy representative political bodies; and (4) the imperative for strong governments acting to safeguard economic growth and social cohesion on behalf of its citizens.<sup>47</sup> Taken together, it is argued by the proponents of 'Asian Values' that these characteristics, which comprise a distinctively 'East Asian' economic culture, are superior to those ideals or values which prevail in Western societies and cultures.

As Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir has argued, 'enlargement' is an American campaign which threatens Asian core values because it fails to take into account that 'too much freedom is dangerous'.<sup>48</sup> In other words, if allowed to penetrate Asian societies unchecked, American-style democracy could threaten the social cohesion and international competitiveness of an 'Asian' bloc united in its determination not to be culturally swayed or politically dominated by the United States.

Such rhetoric is often targeted as much towards a domestic audience as it is toward the US government. As two Western analysts have correctly noted in their recent assessment of the US-ASEAN discourse on human rights, 'increasingly sharp rebuttals to Western criticism ... suggest that the calculation seems to be that the minimal economic costs of standing up to the West, and especially to the United States, on human rights issues are more than offset by domestic political benefits'.<sup>49</sup>

Second, by connecting human rights to economic and strategic issues, the Clinton Administration complicated US relations with Asian governments by linking compliance with American values to American national interests.<sup>50</sup> This is particularly true with respect to Washington's posture toward China. However, it also extends to American resistance to Burma's participation in ASEAN and, intermittently, to US sanctions on various arms deals with Indonesia over the latter's administration of East Timor and behaviour leading to that province's independence referendum.<sup>51</sup> However, this linkage is not consistent since America has a tendency to express concern about human rights practices in various ASEAN settings while still conducting 'business as usual' in strategic relations. For example, Singapore has assumed the largely self-appointed role of being a major Southeast Asian critic of the human rights rhetoric emanating from Washington. Yet American investment levels in Singapore remain largely unaffected while the US navy and air force continue to deploy and train with their Singaporean counterparts on a rotating basis.<sup>52</sup>

Washington's strategic policy makers are concerned that the human rights debate does not spill over to affect American access to Asia-Pacific bases and markets. They worry that influential liberals within future administrations or within Congress will press for the United States to consistently promote human rights as a fundamental component of US foreign policy. Those realists who concede that American ideals cannot be totally absent in such policy nevertheless advocate that human rights should be promoted through quiet diplomacy. In addition, they also conclude that it should be focused more at the universalist level, that is, the UN, so that it does not appear to be directed towards Asia as a specific region.<sup>53</sup> Such an approach, they argue, would send a more positive message of engagement and reconciliation to Asian governments and elites



that are resentful of any current US campaign to impose Western ideals on their own polities.

#### **The Pursuit of US Interests: The Bush and Clinton Administrations<sup>54</sup>**

The Administration of George Bush, Snr (1989–93) largely disregarded or resisted arguments that the experience of building multilateral security institutions in Europe could be replicated in the Asia-Pacific. The Clinton Administration offered qualified and largely rhetorical support for such Asia-Pacific institutions. The important point is that the United States has been consistent in assigning much greater importance to preserving its regional bilateral security treaties than to building a new multilateral security framework.

##### *The Bush (Snr) Administration (1989–93)*

In late 1991 President Bush's Secretary of State, James A. Baker, identified three 'pillars' for maintaining a stable and prosperous Pacific Community. These were: (1) a free trading system supported by regional economic integration; (2) greater regional democratisation; and (3) a revised defence structure designed to mitigate or minimise regional conflict. The United States would maintain a forward military presence in the region 'to provide geopolitical balance, to be an honest broker, to reassure against uncertainty' while cultivating intensified and liberalised trade relations with Asian states and encouraging political pluralism throughout the region.<sup>55</sup> Whatever defence network was to be pursued, however, would still be within the framework of America's postwar bilateral alliances. The Bush Administration regarded this as constituting 'a balancing wheel of an informal, yet highly effective, security structure' with the United States as the 'hub', the US–Japan alliance as 'the key connection' and US bilateral security ties with South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia as other important 'spokes' in the network.<sup>56</sup> This doctrinal approach, with its emphasis on an America-centric bilateral alliance system, confirmed that realism still prevailed in Washington's strategic thinking.

This perspective was immediately challenged in US domestic political circles by increasing calls to cut defence spending in response to the relative decline in Soviet power. Effectively, the US Congress and the American electorate were looking for a 'peace dividend' in the form of lower defence spending. It became clear that if the interests cited by Baker and other US officials were to be supported, something more in the way of justification was required than a mere reaffirmation of the existing, sta-

tus quo-oriented policies. The response came in April 1990 when the US Defense Department released a report which, along with an update released in July 1992, became known as the East Asia Strategy Initiative (EASI).<sup>57</sup> 'EASI I' and 'EASI II' offered rationales for US forces to remain deployed in the Asia-Pacific (although at reduced strength) and advanced a number of arguments as to why increased allied defence burden-sharing would need to accompany the modest US force reductions which were planned over a ten-year, three-phase period.<sup>58</sup>

EASI was designed to complement the Bush Administration's 'Base Force' strategy for downsizing and reconfiguring the global US military presence. The downsizing part of the strategy was to be achieved by reducing total personnel strength from 3.2 to 2.6 million. The reconfiguration revolved around a shift from the emphasis on the forward deployment of forces in distant theatres of potential combat to a focus on maintaining forces that were both more mobile and flexible. It was anticipated that these forces would increasingly be deployed directly from the United States to points of conflict. If fully implemented, the Base Force concept would have reduced US defence spending by 25 per cent in real terms before the end of the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> The US Defense Department endeavoured to reassure America's allies and domestic realists that forward deployed forces would be maintained to 'strengthen alliances [and] show [US] resolve'. However, the Bush Administration's so-called 'Regional Defense Strategy' appeared to reflect the strategic probability that the Persian Gulf War would be the last major American overseas operation of the post-World War II era.<sup>60</sup> The costs of that conflict alone, largely defrayed by allied financial contributions, reinforced the arguments of those who were asking when the long-promised peace dividend would emerge.<sup>61</sup> By the end of the Bush Administration's term of office (January 1993), US annual defence outlays had declined in real terms by over 15 per cent (\$60 billion) and troop levels permanently stationed overseas had been reduced by over 225 000 personnel (44 per cent).<sup>62</sup>

Neither EASI I nor EASI II provided uniquely different rationales from those in effect during the Cold War as to why the United States should project military power into the Asia-Pacific. The US force presence was characterised as an instrument of power balancing to prevent regional hegemonism and as insurance for American economic involvement in the region. By 1990 US trade to the region exceeded \$300 billion annually, 50 per cent more than the volume of US–European trade.<sup>63</sup> Even at reduced levels, American air and naval assets were expected to facilitate US control over regional sea lanes of communication and strategic choke-points in order to guarantee continued American access to regional markets. Base Force/EASI projections called for US force levels in the

Asia-Pacific to decline from 135 000 in 1990 to approximately 100 000 personnel by 1995. This assumed that the region's security environment would continue to reflect continued progress and improvement.<sup>64</sup>

These force reductions were largely achieved. A notable exception was in South Korea where a proposed withdrawal of 6000 troops was frozen in November 1991 in response to growing tensions on the Peninsula. At this point, North Korean efforts to develop nuclear weapons led Washington to conclude that the United States would have to re-invest in ground forces if it wanted to seriously deter Pyongyang.<sup>65</sup>

The Bush Administration's doctrinal espousal of an 'honest broker' or regional power-balancing strategy failed to establish a universally accepted *raison d'être* for preserving US security commitments and defence resources in the Asia-Pacific. At that time it was unclear precisely which power, apart from North Korea, needed to be balanced in the region in an immediate post-Cold War era of American strategic primacy. Moreover, the American Congress and electorate were sceptical about increasingly wealthy Asia-Pacific friends and allies not being able to defend themselves. US policy critics argued that grand strategy and strategic doctrine had not taken into account the growing inter-relationship of military strategy and international political economics and that no specific US national security interest had been defined.<sup>66</sup>

The Bush team was further criticised for continuing to identify Japan as both a state that needed to be protected from itself (arguing that US security guarantees were required to prevent its remilitarisation) and one that posed an economic threat.<sup>67</sup> China was implicitly viewed by most in Washington as a potential threat to the American version of a new world order. The Bush Administration also advanced the dubious proposition that it could continue to exercise a strategic preponderance in the Asia-Pacific and prevent the emergence of power vacuums despite planned force reductions, particularly in Korea. US basing closures in the Philippines elicited questions about the United States' future role as an engaged power balancer in Southeast Asia. Vietnam's diplomatic and economic overtures to ASEAN called into question what an offshore US force presence would do in Southeast Asia apart from generating contracts for naval replenishment and re-supply.<sup>68</sup> Those arguing for wholesale US strategic disengagement from Asia were at least advocating a doctrinal approach that was clearly understood even if it lacked widespread policy support.

#### *The Clinton Administration*

President Clinton entered office determined to formulate a clear and comprehensive doctrinal approach to Asia-Pacific security. Several key

policy statements attempted to set the context. The most important of these included testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March 1993 by Winston Lord (the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs) and speeches by President Clinton to Waseda University in Japan and to the South Korean National Assembly in July of the same year.<sup>69</sup> A focus on trade, security and human rights comprised the nucleus of the new administration's approach to the region. These policy sectors, administration officials argued, were closely inter-related and needed to be addressed jointly as part of a comprehensive policy approach. Manifestations of this new approach quickly became apparent. By mid-1995, for example, US trade tensions with Japan were being tacitly linked to America's propensity to sustain its security commitments under the US-Japan MST.

The Clinton Administration believed that Japan and other Asian states would need to improve on their previously poor record with respect to supporting the principles of free trade if the American public was going to continue to support US strategic involvement in the region. If they did not, the United States reserved the right to impose 'managed trade' initiatives, pressing Asian states to import selected American products or face retaliatory sanctions.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime, US human rights policy was embodied in a policy of democratic 'enlargement', wherein the promotion of human rights and political liberalisation throughout the Asia-Pacific was linked to continued US access to and influence within the region.

Most significantly, the idea of multilateral security dialogues was endorsed. This contrasted sharply with the Bush Administration's reluctance to involve the United States in such proceedings. Clinton believed that the United States shared common security interests with enough Asian states to merit Washington's visible, if qualified, participation in such processes. These shared interests included curbing regional arms races and nuclear proliferation, seeking conflict prevention, and strengthening regional peacekeeping.<sup>71</sup> The term 'engagement' was used to identify this common approach to regional security. It entailed preventing regional threats from overwhelming regional stability and working under US leadership toward regional peace and stability. US friends and allies, however, were expected to assume greater responsibility in achieving that common objective.<sup>72</sup> US security officials also employed the term 'cooperative engagement' to describe the application of US military power for reinforcing regional alliances and ensuring effective crisis response.<sup>73</sup> The Clinton Administration was less concerned about how multilateralism might erode US regional influence by undercutting its ability to deal with key allies in a bilateral context, and about regional power balancing, than was its predecessor. But it differed from the understanding many Asia-Pacific states had about the term

'engagement'. To the ASEAN states, in particular, cooperative engagement implied ensuring that parties deemed potentially destabilising to regional security, especially China, were included in any dialogue or consultative process for resolving regional differences and disputes.<sup>74</sup>

Initially, the Clinton Administration's policies reflected a highly liberal, values-oriented outlook towards international security. However, this approach was soon tested and found wanting by several developments in US-Asia-Pacific relations. Instead of relenting to American trade pressure and seeking greater interdependence with the United States, the Japanese Government hardened its resistance by petitioning the WTO for the lifting of US retaliatory sanctions on the import of Japanese luxury cars. In doing so, Japan signalled its insistence that trade issues were to be kept separate from US-Japan defence relations.<sup>75</sup> US policy credibility was actually enhanced by the Clinton Administration's decision not to link China's human rights behaviour to a continuation of that country's MFN trading status.<sup>76</sup> ASEAN states were critical of American efforts to attach human rights standards to their management of domestic labour problems and political dissent. Australia condemned the United States for undercutting traditional Australian agricultural markets with subsidies for American farming exports. Some Australian officials began to question if strategic affiliation with Australia's traditional 'great and powerful friend' was still relevant in a world where Canberra and Washington had increasingly become economic competitors.<sup>77</sup> Even the initial American success in negotiating an Agreed Framework with North Korea in 1994 to stop that country from developing an indigenous nuclear weapons production capability was subsequently questioned; bilateral US-North Korean relations intensified during 1998-99 with the North Koreans agreeing to constrain their ballistic missile production and exports in return for the US lifting many of its former trade sanctions against the North.

These developments generated increasing doubts about the viability of American support for multilateralism. How can American participation in a multilateral security dialogue be successful if Washington's relations are complicated by a policy agenda viewed sceptically by both its old allies and its potential adversaries? More fundamentally, what specific US policy objectives are being pursued by engaging in such a dialogue? If they are to provide American leadership in organising defence coalitions to supplement or replace the postwar bilateral alliance network, what type of specific security commitments are Americans prepared to extend towards the region?

The ambivalence of future US strategic involvement in the Asia-Pacific was accentuated in September 1993 when the US Defense Department announced its 'Bottom-Up Review' (BUR) of US defence strategy.<sup>78</sup> The

BUR argued that overall US force levels should be sufficient to fight two regional conflicts 'almost simultaneously'. However, it speculated that regional allies would have to contribute substantially to the 'holding' of an invading North Korean force until such time that US units deployed to defeat a Persian Gulf aggressor could be relocated to Northeast Asia.<sup>79</sup> This provided little reassurance to South Korea or Japan while doing nothing to satisfy American neo-isolationists who feared that any such strategy would be likely to embroil the United States in regional conflicts not directly related to its vital security interests. Moreover, neo-isolationists attacked the administration for overstating the nature of regional threats given their relative lack of technological sophistication and inability to threaten the American homeland.<sup>80</sup>

Pro-defence observers, meanwhile, attacked the BUR's strategic assumptions and its overall policy credibility. They questioned its neglect to address all but the most obvious major regional conflicts. Neither Southeastern Europe nor the Taiwan Strait, for example, appeared to be part of the scenario. Yet two of the most substantial deployments of US forces in the late 1990s took place in these locales. Nor did the BUR offer hard analysis on the state or utility of America's alliance systems. Both the neo-isolationist and power projectionist factions were arguing the same point from their respective ends of the philosophical spectrum: the Clinton Administration had failed to stipulate clearly what the United States' critical strategic interests were and how to implement them.<sup>81</sup>

In early 1995 the United States moved to reassure its Asia-Pacific allies of its intent to stay engaged in the region by releasing yet another version of EASI.<sup>82</sup> The thrust of the East Asia Strategy Review or EASR (also labelled the 'Nye Doctrine' after its primary author, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Joseph S. Nye, Jr), proved to be no more than an endorsement of the status quo. Additional US force reductions were rejected as a hedge against newly emerging regional threats (the force strength would be maintained at about 100 000 personnel). The centrality of US bilateral alliances in the region was also reaffirmed. This 'muddied' the Clinton Administration's earlier shift towards multilateralism because it failed to specify how the two concepts (bilateralism and multilateralism) would relate to each other. Nye's observation, that developing subregional or regional security dialogues 'is like an overlapping plate of armor ... a way to surround the hard core of our security alliances with a softer exterior of dialogues and consultations', appeared to further obfuscate rather than to clarify the US approach.<sup>83</sup> Left unexplained was how a preference for maintaining power-balancing alliances could be reconciled with an inclination to seek instruments for threat reduction and region-wide security collaboration. Alliances may be insurance in the event a preferred policy course of regional cooperation fails

but this is different from assigning US bilateral security treaties continued strategic priority, as the EASR clearly opted to do.

#### *Cross-comparisons*

Both the Bush and Clinton Administrations defined the United States' bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific as the most important components of US security politics in that region. They nevertheless posited two distinct approaches to the realist-liberal debate. Officials responsible for Asian security policies under President Bush, such as Richard Solomon (Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs) and Paul Wolfowitz (Under Secretary of Defense for Policy), adopted a cautiously realist posture. They minimised trade differences with Japan in favour of preserving the sanctity of US–Japanese security relations; emphasised the value of insulating regional defence and strategic cooperation from human rights issues; resisted regional confidence-building, arms control and other multilateral security initiatives in favour of reinforcing the United States' postwar bilateral treaty network; and sought to maintain substantial US military power to underwrite extended deterrence.<sup>84</sup>

The Clinton Administration's foreign policy, on the other hand, was initially shaped by Nye, Anthony Lake, and other well known advocates of the liberal paradigm. US security doctrine concerning the Asia-Pacific became increasingly entangled in value-driven rules and norms. During the first two years of Clinton's presidency this visionary path to conducting security relations was unsuccessful. It was perceived by Asian and American critics alike as leading to US policy mismanagement and to ineffective American diplomatic and strategic behaviour in the region. By May 1994 Winston Lord was warning Secretary of State Warren Christopher that US politico-security relations with Asia-Pacific states were eroding to the point where a regional 'malaise' had developed concerning US interests and policies.<sup>85</sup> While corrective measures were undertaken, including a strong performance by Clinton at the APEC summit in Bogor (Indonesia) during November 1994, strong concerns persisted during the remainder of his first term in office that US strategic doctrine had been subsumed by excessive expectations.

#### *Doctrinal Planning and the Forces of Change*

Assumptions that key Asia-Pacific states would conform to American efforts to link its economic agenda in the region to security politics proved especially ill-founded. The Clinton Administration's campaign to impose 'managed trade' criteria on US–Japan relations was a graphic case-in-point. Soon after Clinton's inauguration, US Special Trade Rep-

resentative Mickey Kantor and Japan's Minister for International Trade and Industry (MITI), Hashimoto Ryutaro, began exchanging insults on Japanese and American trade practices.<sup>86</sup> The atmosphere became sufficiently poisoned to cause a breakdown in economic and trade negotiations at the Clinton–Hosokawa summit meeting in February 1994. The United States was insistent that managed trade would be applied to relations with Japan: linking the opening of Japan's domestic markets to US products and services to the overall health of bilateral ties. The reasoning was stipulated clearly by Secretary of State Christopher in a subsequent speech to the US Business Council in May 1996, 'economic diplomacy is not only essential to advancing our economic ties for achieving other foreign policy goals ... it is essential to undergird peace, stability and progress toward democracy'.<sup>87</sup>

Initial US pressure against Japan was positive but short-lived. Between 1993 and 1996 US exports to Japan increased 34 per cent. By early 1999, however, the US–Japan bilateral trade deficit had returned to record high levels (nearly US\$66 billion). In the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, US officials were lamenting Japan's economic 'sluggishness' as well as their own Congress' refusal to pass 'fast-track' legislation giving the President greater discretionary power to negotiate trade agreements with Asian and other trading partners. They were also pleading with Japan to deregulate and open its domestic markets still further.<sup>88</sup> Emerging factors of globalisation including asymmetrical demand for energy sources, differing rates of technology flows and intensified links between nationalist agendas and communications modes (that is, the media) presented the Clinton Administration's policy planners with little or no warning for adjusting trade policy to core US policy interests.

Yet the flawed calculation that the Asia-Pacific security environment would remain largely unchanged (with the Korean Peninsula being posited as the one possible exception) was implicit within the Clinton Administration's EASR. It assumed that China would not seek regional hegemony, that ASEAN would initiate symbolic but mostly cosmetic security dialogues, and that the common motive of pursuing wealth would remain so predominant in the region that it would effectively preclude conflict escalation. It also failed to address how declining US defence budgets and projections for even deeper cuts in the future would impact on US strategy and force commitments in the region.

There was growing evidence throughout 1996 that a few of the realists who occupied positions in the Clinton Administration were beginning to assert their views on Asia-Pacific security affairs. In part, external developments strengthened their case. These included China's confrontation with Taiwan in the lead up to the March 1996 Taiwanese presidential election, North Korea's denunciation of the UN armistice and its violations of

the DMZ in April 1996, and signs emerging throughout the year of a qualified but still tangible Sino-Russian push to form a strategic partnership aimed at countering American global power.

In May 1997 two definitive reports mandated by Congress set the context for US strategy during the Clinton Administration's second term of office: a presidential report on *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* and the US Defense Department's 'Quadrennial Defense Review' (QDR) reviewing US defence strategy for the years 1998–2005.<sup>89</sup> An updated version of the East Asian Strategy Report (EASR II) was released in November 1998.<sup>90</sup> All of these documents emphasised the Asia-Pacific region's continued importance to US global strategy. The QDR was the most significant of these documents because it attempted to address specific criticisms directed towards the BUR.<sup>91</sup> The EASR II attempted to apply the QDR's strategic reasoning specifically to the Asia-Pacific region.

The QDR retained the BUR's emphasis on US forces capable of fighting two major regional conflicts simultaneously and noted that no other power would be able to contest the United States as a 'global peer competitor' until at least 2015. However, the QDR emphasised that in the event the United States became involved in one theatre war, 'it would need to be extremely selective in making any additional commitments to either engagement activities or smaller-scale contingency operations'. If engaged in two simultaneous conflicts, 'US forces would be withdrawn from peacetime engagement activities and smaller-scale contingency operations as quickly as possible'. The Defense Department argued that the QDR thus differed from the BUR by placing greater reliance on emerging technologies, by updating operational concepts and by achieving more efficient resource management'.<sup>92</sup> The QDR hedged on the type and timing of military contingencies which would involve US forces and it was more resource-sensitive than its doctrinal predecessor.

The QDR's integrated concepts of 'Shape, Respond and Prepare' were applied to EASR II. The United States intended to shape and promote a 'secure, prosperous and peaceful' Asia-Pacific community 'in which the United States is an active player, partner and beneficiary'. It would be capable, however, of responding to a full spectrum of regional crises. It would also prepare for future strategic uncertainties.<sup>93</sup>

The QDR's key planning assumptions were that the region would remain one 'mostly at peace' and that US deterrence strategy would be primarily directed towards 'critical localized areas such as the Korean Peninsula'. Approximately 100 000 US forces would remain stationed in both the European and Asia-Pacific theatres of operation as a political symbol of US strategic interest. In a two-conflict scenario, selected rapid response forces (that is, bombers and amphibious assault forces) would swing between the two theatres. The most important force capabilities,

however, would be new weapons technologies introduced to enhance the precision and lethality of US firepower that could be deployed and projected quickly in future crises. Existing US bilateral security alliances would remain key components of the US deterrence posture in the Asia-Pacific, with US bases in Japan and Korea central to implementation of the QDR's rapid response strategy. China would remain critical to regional peace and stability and it would continue to be engaged as a 'responsible' rather than threatening regional player. Chinese military modernisation would be closely monitored, however, for signs that the PRC was becoming a major military competitor to the United States. The QDR projected this would be of greater concern to US force planners after the year 2015. 'Security pluralism' would also be pursued as part of the United States' overall regional strategy – the development of cooperative and complementary frameworks in which nations seek to address their security concerns through bilateral and multilateral relationships and dialogue.<sup>94</sup>

The QDR incurred similar criticisms to those directed towards the BUR by those convinced that US mission requirements far exceeded projected US force capabilities. Force readiness was a major issue. The QDR projected the US navy decommissioning twelve to fifteen surface ships and at least two submarines. Active duty personnel would be reduced by an additional 4 per cent (active US army divisions had already been trimmed from eighteen divisions maintained at the time of the Persian Gulf War to a projected ten by the end of the century). Fighter and bomber wings would be consolidated and quantities of new weapons procurements would also be reduced sharply. Assumptions about the efficiency of the RMA high technology were also attacked as assuming that 'any adversary will cooperate by being exactly when and where the RMA dictates', ignoring fundamental Clausewitzian principles on the 'fog of war'. The QDR was wedded to traditional threat analysis and to maintaining the status quo when real threats facing the United States could emanate from 'rogue states' such as North Korea or from various nuclear proliferants intent on compromising US global power as a means to achieve their own limited strategic ends. By early 1999 the Clinton Administration had relented to Congressional Republicans, who had led the charge for a more broadly based threat assessment spectrum. It concurred with increasing the defence budget by an additional \$12 billion for the fiscal year 2000 (US defence spending had declined 38 per cent in real terms between 1985 and 1997). It also agreed to explore various options for deploying both a nationwide anti-missile defence system and TMD systems in both Europe and Asia.<sup>95</sup>

The sceptics also linked their overall concerns about inadequate means underwriting ill-defined policy ends to a specific Asia-Pacific

context. Of greatest concern was the prospect that ongoing Chinese military modernisation programs discredited the Clinton Administration's engagement strategy. North Korean missile tests similarly undermined US diplomacy. These critics also viewed an effective TMD as a panacea for inadequate forward-deployed US forces to protect increasingly vulnerable friends and allies such as Taiwan and Japan.<sup>96</sup> In almost every instance, critics targeted liberal assumptions about trust building, arms control and integration of regional markets as the basis of their arguments.

In its last year in office, the Clinton Administration appeared to be moving increasingly towards accepting at least some of these realist postulates but was far from ready to discard completely its liberal world views. Indeed, the realists have pressed their case forcefully that the history of Asian security relations has been characterised by great-power domination and an absence of shared interests or values.<sup>97</sup> In his landmark study, *Diplomacy*, Henry Kissinger has argued that it would be wrong to deny the continued relevance of power balancing to this region and premature to expect most Asian states to jump on the liberal bandwagon:

Wilsonianism has few disciples in Asia. There is no pretence of collective security or that cooperation should be based on shared domestic values ... The emphasis is all on equilibrium and national interest ... other Asian nations are likely to seek counterweights to an increasingly powerful China as they already do to Japan ... And that ... is why ASEAN is asking the United States to remain engaged in their region.<sup>98</sup>

Realism's 'relevance', however, is not necessarily synonymous with complete dominance as Kissinger might lead us to believe. The Clinton Administration was understandably reluctant to acknowledge that liberal policy approaches are completely irrelevant, even in such a physically and culturally diverse region. It continued to demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for developing multilateral economic and security cooperation in such established forums as APEC and the ARF. Stanley Roth, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, argued to Congress in early 1999 that 'one of the main accomplishments of the Clinton Administration in Asia has been vigorous support for the establishment and strengthening of regional institutions'. APEC continued to be represented as the best possible vehicle for trade and investment liberalisation. The ARF and ASEAN itself were experiencing 'temporary difficulties' but their overall record of diplomatic achievements in Indochina and elsewhere still merited US support.<sup>99</sup> The President conducted two summits with his Chinese counterpart in 1997 and 1998, expressing confidence on both occasions that the world views of China and the United States were not all that different.

The major danger confronting American interests by adhering to such a liberal perspective, realists insisted, is that intra-regional actors would respond by becoming increasingly dismissive of US interests in their determination to forge a new regional security order on their own terms. Little alternative existed for maintaining American regional influence to strengthening the US bilateral alliance network at a time when ASEAN was shifting towards closer relations with China via the 'ASEAN + 3' grouping, involving as well, a reluctant Japan and somewhat more enthusiastic South Korea. A key foreign policy adviser to then-Presidential candidate George W. Bush argued that Asia was becoming a more organic geoeconomic and geopolitical whole (as demonstrated by the 'ripple effects' of the Asian financial crisis). Given this condition, US alliances in the region needed to be strengthened to cope with 'fresh sources of potential conflict' and to update allied security coordination in accordance with post-Cold War structural changes occurring in Asia.<sup>100</sup>

#### Reconciling Strategy Approaches: Securing US Interests in the Asia-Pacific

At present, there is no one issue in Asia-Pacific which is viewed as so challenging to the United States' vital interests that American public opinion has been galvanised into supporting a single vision or strategy. As one long-time observer of US policy in the region has noted, any such policy malaise cannot be attributed to any one particular administration nor to the US Congress. It instead relates to a collective failure within the American polity to fully recognise or understand the pace and depth of change in Asia and how this process can transform latent threats into immediate crises.<sup>101</sup>

In a strategic context, the Asia-Pacific region, rather than Europe or the Middle East, fields the world's largest armed forces and these are becoming among the most capable as increasing regional wealth is gradually translated into military strength. The US Secretary of Defense may still be able to tell his Chinese and other Asian counterparts that the United States is the world's greatest power and one to be reckoned with in any regional dispute, but how much longer this warning will remain uncontested is uncertain. Southeast Asia is less defensible now that American forces are no longer permanently based in the Philippines. Northeast Asia would be too if the Okinawan installations were to become inaccessible and a reunified Korea precluded the deployment of American forces on the Peninsula. As Paul Dibb has correctly observed, 'the US will remain the predominant global power in the next century, but it will have difficulty responding to the diverse strategic challenges of the post-Cold War

era while also attending to its pressing domestic problems and the decline in its power'.<sup>102</sup> Under such conditions, it is critical for American policy makers to continue demarcating what its vital interests are in the region and to adopt a coherent regional strategy to secure them.

#### *Balancing China and Russia*

The first essential component of a focused US regional strategy is to prevent a Sino–Russian coalition directed against the United States. Russia and China are the only great powers in a position to threaten the survival of the United States in the early part of the twenty-first century under any rational warfighting scenario.<sup>103</sup> Like the United States, Russian power is also declining (its industrial power declined by more than half between 1991 and 1996). In dealing with this reality, Russia is likely to seek a coalition with either China or perhaps with a unified Korea, in order to maintain its position as an influential Asia-Pacific power. Fortunately, at this point in time, US *vital* interests are still not in conflict with either Moscow or Beijing.

From a realist viewpoint, this could change if Sino–Russian strategic collaboration were to intensify. As noted in previous chapters, such cooperation might be designed to exclude American access and influence in Eurasia (including the reconstitution of Russian land power in Eastern Europe and an open-ended expansion of China's maritime capabilities). From an institutionalist perspective, Russian and Chinese inclusion in multilateral regional security arrangements and forums might dampen the incentive for Moscow and Beijing to coalesce with each other. China's participation in regional and international arms control may minimise the risk that its nuclear force could eventually be rendered obsolete by emerging US missile defence technology. Finally, a wealthy China could eventually become a more democratic nation less hostile to the West.

#### *Combining Deterrence with Power Balancing*

A major source of confusion about US strategic intentions in Asia has evolved from Washington's inability to reconcile two apparently diverse policy approaches. One is that the United States' bilateral alliances in the region must be strengthened, despite what appears to be a less threatening regional security environment in the post-Cold War world. This policy approach, however, has been obfuscated by the Clinton Administration's apparent decision to eschew power balancing as a means of pursuing regional stability. The second policy track – engagement – implies that the United States will employ what Jonathan Pollack has termed an 'integration-based logic'. Potential adversaries will be encouraged by the United

States to pursue their interests within a framework of dialogues and rules. But Washington also insists that preserving and strengthening the old instruments of Cold War containment – America's bilateral alliances – is compatible with this logic. There has been, understandably, widespread confusion among regional allies and potential competitors, and within the American electorate, as to just what the engagement strategy actually means.<sup>104</sup>

It is essential that these two diverse policy approaches be clarified, if not reconciled. Future US administrations will be required to convey more precisely how the postwar US bilateral alliance network in the Asia-Pacific is relevant to contemporary regional security trends. The alliances could be represented as:

- Components of a potentially critical infrastructure from which counter-coalitions may be formed to contend with hostile hegemonic contenders which may arise in the region; or
- Short-term deterrence mechanisms to prevent states from committing aggression against their neighbours; or
- Long-term instruments of strategic reassurance designed to instil confidence in regional friends and allies that the United States will remain strategically involved in the Asia-Pacific.

#### *Alliances, Counter-Coalitions, Transparency*

As discussed earlier in the chapter, China is the most obvious candidate for hegemonic status in the region. Particularly since 1994, the Clinton Administration intensified its efforts to prevent Beijing from assuming this mantle by identifying and pursuing areas of mutual strategic cooperation. In doing so, it adhered to the liberal assumption that the Chinese leadership is intent on making its country prosperous and powerful and that, with Western financial and technological assistance, China will derive absolute gains. This outcome is preferable to that of China seeking relative advantage over its regional neighbours and great power competitors.

Realists discount the assumption that China would be content to join any multilateral regional security system in which it must share equal status with the United States. They believe that the Asia-Pacific region cannot remain at peace without the Americans actively balancing Chinese power through the establishment of effective counter-coalitions.<sup>105</sup> The Clinton Administration's EASR policy reviews acknowledged the growth of China's nuclear weapons force and overall military power. They also appeared deliberately reticent, however, in discussing the implications of such capabilities for US national security, apart from, that is, stating that 'the United States and China's neighbours would welcome greater transparency in China's defence programs, strategy and doctrine'.<sup>106</sup> Realists

insist that US strategic doctrine must be more precise in specifying the contingencies under which China's use of military force would encroach on US vital interests. Yet the Chinese must also be assured that the United States will not oppose China as long as its interests are respected and its allies are not threatened. Failure to specify unacceptable Chinese behaviour, realists argue, could help escalate tensions between China and the United States in any future regional crises, needlessly triggering policy miscalculations. Three typical contingencies currently need to be addressed in this context: (1) an outright Chinese invasion of Taiwan which would threaten its survival; (2) a highly improbable Chinese decision to back its North Korean treaty ally if Pyongyang were to decide to invade South Korea; and (3) Chinese efforts to block or interdict US or allied shipping in the South China Sea.

Discussing these contingencies extensively in US policy-making circles may reinforce already strong Chinese perceptions that the United States is orchestrating a post-Cold War containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific directed against itself. It could therefore be less inclined to participate in various regional multilateral frameworks where the United States is involved. However, this risk is not unacceptably high as Beijing's leadership has demonstrated sufficient diplomatic sophistication in using these forums to press its own position when it has perceived that multilateralism is working to its advantage in the region. The benefits of embracing strategic ambiguity as a posture in dealing with Beijing must be weighed against the benefits of reducing US policy uncertainty. The benefits of maximising policy transparency in the pursuit of critical national security interests are especially apparent in regard to such critical issues as Taiwan, TMD and the future of US alliance politics in the region. Early signs posited by the new George W. Bush Administration concurred with such thinking.<sup>107</sup>

Another rationale for the United States sustaining its Asia-Pacific alliance network in a 'threat-fluid' environment corresponds with 'alliance mutuality'. This concept is defined as 'those collective or shared interests that cut across different alliances, particularly bilateral ones, to reinforce cooperation throughout an entire network of alliances'.<sup>108</sup> The United States functions as a benevolent alliance leader or hegemon by maintaining loose security commitments and providing economic gains (markets, investments, etc) to its regional allies and by precluding the rise of a hostile regional hegemon through selective crisis intervention and through deployments of superior military power in the region. This approach to alliance relationships challenges a fundamental axiom of the realist school: that alliances inevitably dissolve when there is a significant decrease in the level of threat its members face. It is debatable, however, if such relationships are viable on their own terms. Liberals would argue that they are merely interim phases to increasingly more compre-

hensive multilateral frameworks that will eventually underwrite regional security. Realists would view them as interim arrangements to emerging, more comprehensive alliances or coalitions that will become more explicit in response to emerging threats or security dilemmas.

#### *Deterrence versus Reassurance*<sup>109</sup>

Continued US strategic involvement in the Asia-Pacific through maintaining alliance commitments can lend specificity and form to its regional interests and commitments until such time as multilateral security arrangements based on a level of regional consensus emerge. The challenge confronting US defence planners and their allies is how to devise ways and means of achieving a stable and orderly transition from dependence on their old alliance relations to new and effective forms of regional security in which the United States will still play a vital role. The timing and context of this transitional task is critical, involving a carefully planned and appropriately timed shift of American politics in the region from a strategy of postwar deterrence to one of strategic reassurance.

This transitional process is complicated even more by increasing allied expectations that military cooperation with the United States be conducted on the basis of greater equality and consultation in return for shifting from a tight bilateral security association with the United States to a broadened, less explicit relationship. Achieving strategic reassurance relates to pursuing shared interests in maintaining regional stability and, as importantly, ensuring that residual US commitments are retained, are credible, and are consistent.<sup>110</sup> Identifying the means by which alliance coordination and burden-sharing can be enhanced is critical. The revision of the US-Japan Defense Guidelines was illustrative of how this transition could be realised. The Japanese will expand their security role by providing greater logistical support, fuel supplies and related military assistance to US forces deployed in Japan that are involved in future regional conflicts. The United States also needs to consider how to incorporate other bilateral allies, particularly South Korea and Australia, more systematically into a web of regional security consultations without advertising these as a NATO-style joint high command which could only antagonise the Chinese. An informal but reliable network of security consultations among all of the United States' allies in the Asia-Pacific could facilitate trust-building as a necessary pre-condition for the development of more extensive regional multilateral security cooperation. Some American policy planners have coined the term 'enriched bilateralism' to describe this development.<sup>111</sup>

America's bilateral security alliances in Asia can thus be adjusted most effectively by reassessing the commitment rationales underlying their



continuation. An effective bilateral alliance should facilitate a US presence in the Asia-Pacific that serves regional and/or international security, but ideally at a manageable cost to Washington. It should not be justified on the grounds of inertia; nor should it be allowed to assume a political life of its own. Balancing and continually re-evaluating mutual security interests and committing appropriate military capabilities within an alliance context to meet those interests is the best process for alliance maintenance. By applying this principle, the United States will be more likely to retain the confidence of its allies and to encourage a viable interim power equilibrium in Asia.

#### *Moving Towards Multilateralism?*

By pursuing the procedures described above, the United States could revise its security posture in the Asia-Pacific more successfully and preserve its strategic influence in the region. It could then work with its bilateral security allies to create new consultative architectures directed towards defusing specific crises points and accommodating varying great and middle power interests. The implementation of the Four Power Talks between the two Koreas, China and the United States to negotiate a new peace accord for the Korean Peninsula in lieu of the existing UN armistice illustrates how this process could work. The United States conducted extensive consultations with both South Korea and Japan prior to the talks being formally proposed in April 1996 by President Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam. By including China in the talks the United States properly acknowledged Beijing's great-power status while at the same time reaffirming its determination to ensure the security of South Korea and Japan in the event that North Korea ultimately rejected the proposal. The United States may be well served by exploring other opportunities for integrating deterrence and reassurance strategy. For example, regional nuclear arms control initiatives with Russia, China and possibly India, as well as crisis avoidance on the high seas, both present themselves as policy areas where such an approach may be constructive.

Future American strategy and doctrine will need to acknowledge more explicitly that Southeast Asia constitutes a separate subregion with a different array of security challenges than those confronting Northeast Asia. Accordingly, the United States will need to take gradual steps to transform its existing Southeast Asia bilateral security ties into a multilateral system if its interests are to accord with the future policy agendas of ASEAN and the ARF. Formal US defence relations with at least three of the seven ASEAN states (Thailand and the Philippines by treaty and Singapore by a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding) provide Washington with a natural point of entry into local discussions about

conflict prevention. Keeping the Strait of Malacca and other key maritime chokepoints accessible to US military and commercial traffic is the one unquestionably critical US strategic objective in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific subregions that has global strategic ramifications.<sup>112</sup> Current bilateral arrangements between the United States and the three ASEAN states with which it entertains formal security ties provide an adequate infrastructure, but one that can be multilaterally strengthened to fulfil this objective.

Any multilateral strategy for Southeast Asia must confront persistent and well-known policy constraints. Opportunities for security collaboration will be limited to contingencies where American and local ASEAN interests coincide to a high degree. Washington's effectiveness will be restricted by the precondition that key neighbouring states will need to support any US strategic presence in, or involvement with, any given sub-regional security issue. For example, American efforts to establish new, permanent basing facilities adjacent to Indonesia or Malaysia for safeguarding the Strait of Malacca would be strongly opposed by these two states. This would be the case even though they currently sustain logistical cooperation with the United States Navy via informal Memorandums of Understanding. These governments, along with the other ASEAN states, would prefer an indirect American involvement which would 'focus on assisting regional armed services in developing their own capacities to monitor and defend their maritime spaces'.<sup>113</sup>

Finally, Washington will need to find a basis for dialogue with Asian governments on the issue of values. The growing sense of Asian self-identity will make it virtually impossible for the United States to establish itself as the undisputed leader of a 'Pacific Community' in the twenty-first century. Most Asian governments want a continued American military presence in the region and continued American interest (if not a direct involvement) in Asia's political and economic affairs. However, they are not about to trade their new-found independence to achieve these goals. Asian nationalism and 'Asian Values' mean that the United States must play a subtle role in the region. This is particularly true in regard to an increasingly fragmented and vulnerable Indonesia. The United States can only manage this role if it demonstrates a clear understanding of the cultural and social roots of key regional actors.

#### **Conclusion**

The future success of US security policies in the Asia-Pacific will be determined primarily by two developments. The first is how clearly Washington correlates its most important interests with the emerging strategic priorities of key regional actors. The second is whether or not Washington can

actually allocate sufficient resources to secure its objectives. An adjunct to these two points is that it will also be essential that present and future US Administrations clearly and effectively communicate their policies, objectives, interests and commitments both to their domestic audiences as well as to their allies in the Asia-Pacific.

The 'Reagan Doctrine' discussed at this chapter's outset underscored the continuing 'interest-ideals' dilemma confronting US policy makers. Another postwar president, however, provided a more relevant policy doctrine to define the American 'national interest' as it applies to the Asia-Pacific region. If they are contemplating success, contemporary US policy makers will be required to formulate a successor to the 'Nixon Doctrine'. Introduced in 1969, this policy statement laid down the basic premises that have shaped most subsequent American approaches to Asia-Pacific security policy. They are: deter potential regional threats with cost-effective force assets; encourage regional allies to assume ever greater responsibilities for their own defence; and manage regional security through systematic consultations with Russia, China and Japan as the region's other great powers.<sup>114</sup> US doctrinal credibility has been undermined by Asian doubts about both the intensity and the scope of American commitments to the region. It is now confronted even more directly by structural change in the region that challenges the future relevance of American bilateral alliances – the traditional mechanism for translating American commitments into policy action. Clearly a successor to the Nixon Doctrine is long overdue.

The United States faces the prospect of having to deal with an increasingly capable Asia that can test its historical dominance over the eastern Eurasia rimlands and littorals. Its economic interdependence with the region will continue to intensify. Any successor doctrine must therefore take these capabilities and that interdependence into account in ways not apparent nearly three decades ago when the Nixon Doctrine came into force. America will be compelled to become a regional power balancer during the first part of this new century while simultaneously cultivating a regional order which will ultimately render power balancing unnecessary. This policy challenge is at least as difficult as that which confronted the United States at the outset of the Cold War when Kennan's Long Telegram prescribed an American grand strategy for the postwar period. Rallying American domestic support for a new strategic blueprint while simultaneously winning the confidence and respect of both friends and competitors in the Asia-Pacific makes that challenge all the more formidable.

## CHAPTER 7

### *Conclusion: Shaping Convergent Security*

The strategic configuration of the Asia-Pacific region is in a major state of flux. Its economic and security institutions are confronting an intensification of irredentist and territorial disputes, a possible fragmentation of several key polities and uncertainties regarding both the intentions and capabilities of the region's key strategic actors.<sup>1</sup> These factors have generated internal and external security problems, many of which are inter-related, and all of which constitute major policy challenges for regional decision makers. Their resolution would create major opportunities for advancing regional security.

While the realist and liberal approaches are both concerned with ensuring long-term Asia-Pacific stability, they suggest different strategies for attaining it. These two approaches have forged a consensus, however, on at least two key points. One is the recognition that a new regional security complex is now emerging in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific security environment. The other is the imperative of re-examining how regional security can be better managed to ensure stability in the Asia-Pacific during the course of the new century.

Both realists and liberals acknowledge the emergence in the Asia-Pacific of what Barry Buzan has termed a 'regional security complex'. A security complex is a group of states whose security concerns are so closely linked that the security concerns of one individual state cannot be considered in isolation from that of others.<sup>2</sup> The Cold War instigated distinct changes in the Asia-Pacific regional security order: from bipolar superpower dominance to regionalisation and localisation of conflict management. As the 1990s unfolded, however, it became clear that Asia-Pacific states could not isolate themselves from broader international security trends and that a complex interplay of cooperative security models at the regional level and realist power balancing at the global level was actually occurring.