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Cover Photo: National Place Museum, Taiwan, taken by Andrew MacDonald
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As time slips into 2005, East Asia continues to be unsettled. The Japanese people are still struggling with their wartime past, Japan’s role in the region and its relations with its neighbors. North Korea’s nuclear program is an ongoing worry to countries in the region. Taiwan and Beijing shared a brief moment of better relations with the first commercial cross-strait flights in nearly 50 years, but Beijing’s soon to be passed anti-secession law will no doubt heighten tensions. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia continues to be buffeted by the effects of one of the world’s worst disasters, the Christmas Tsunami. The sixth edition of the Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs includes articles that highlight some of the issues that contribute to this uncertainty.

In “Revisiting Tiananmen Square Incident: A Distorted Image from Both Sides of the Lens,” Albert Chang carefully examines conflicting claims about the number of casualties that occurred on the fateful morning of June 4th 1989 in Beijing. Using a variety of primary and secondary sources, he attempts to provide context to the Tiananmen Square incident.

“Taiwan’s Geopolitics and Chiang Ching-Kuo’s Decision to Democratize Taiwan,” by Ching-fen Hu, reviews the chronology of Taiwan’s democratization process and the role that Chiang Ching-guo played in that development process.

Exploring a growing internal issue in China, Diana Fu, in her article “China’s Paradox Passage into Modernity: A Study on the Portrayal of Sexual Harassment in Chinese Media,” uses Chinese media sources to determine government policy and attitudes towards sexual harassment in China.

An article that contributes to understanding the historical basis for modern thinking in Japan is “Japanese Fascism Revisited” by Marcus Willensky. He argues that under the commonly understood definition of fascism, pre-war Japan must be called a fascist power.
In “Tokdo or Takeshima? The International Law of Territorial Acquisition in the Japan-Korea Island Dispute,” Sean Fern explores the legal issues surrounding a disputed island located between the two countries. Fern compares the competing claims for the island with other, similar international legal conflicts and finds the Korean case to be more strongly rooted in international law.

In “The Sources of Regime Stability in North Korea: Insights from Democratization Theory,” Yun-Jo Cho uses recent research into how and why countries democratize to attempt to predict whether North Korea might begin moving towards a democracy.

Min-Dong Paul Lee, in his article, “Contested Narratives: Reclaiming National Identity through Historical Reappropriation among Korean Minorities in China,” examines the controversy over identity surrounding the Korean minority group, Chaoxianzu, in Northwestern China. Lee uses the issue as a way to explore differing conceptions of identity between various factions inside China.

Andrew Hall walks through the negotiation process that created SEATO in his piece, “Anglo-US Relations in the Formation of SEATO.” He pays particularly close attention to the negotiations between Anthony Eden, Eisenhower, and Dulles, emphasizing the restraining role that the British played. Perhaps the most complicated foreign relations question in East Asia is that of ASEAN relations with major powers, a subject discussed in “ASEAN’s Role and its Management of the Sino-Japanese Rivalry,” an article by Tai Wei Lim. He examines various strategies, as seen through recent incidents, which ASEAN has used to balance the major players in East Asia.
Revisiting the Tiananmen Square Incident: A Distorted Image from Both Sides of the Lens

Albert Chang

Overview

On June 4th, 1989, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) employed military force to suppress a student-led demonstration that had been gathering strength in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square since April 15th, 1989. As a result, the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square Movement resonated across the world as an egregious act, with countries and humanitarian groups openly castigating the CCP’s actions. In the United States in particular, a wide range of sources started to appear shortly after the event, dedicated to exposing the details of the Tiananmen Square Incident.

However, these journalistic reports, books and eyewitness accounts are all tied together by a common thread of inconsistency, presenting conflicting accounts of the military crackdown in two main areas: the number of casualties and whether the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) killed students inside the square (as opposed to only those blocking the army’s path on the main roads leading to the square).

In searching for factual answers that are not plagued by clouds of doubt, the questions ultimately arise: Does the specific number and location of deaths change anything about the event or how we should feel about it? Why is it important to deal with controversial details and why is it, if we indeed ought to concern ourselves with details, important that we deal with these specific issues of number and location?

I would posit that such an investigation is important for three distinct reasons. First, accepting a casualty number that is drastically smaller than the true number is immeasurably significant to those who actually perished on that June morning and to those who still mourn for them. Not being counted in the history books is ultimately equivalent to being denied an existence, thus forever eradicating her from history. Second, underreporting the death toll gives the Tiananmen Square Incident an air of uncertainty, ingraining in the historical record a sense of ambiguity. As a result, the event seems vague, its shape incomplete, and its impact lacking full gravity because of the influences of misinformation. A definite number lifts the Tiananmen Square Incident out of the category of the merely alleged, making the event concrete and providing objective evidence on which the Chinese and American public can solidify their desires for reconciliation, rooted not in contested myth but in factual information. And third, an indefinite number risks over-reporting the death toll. Professor Robert Lee of American
Revisiting the Tiananmen Square Incident

Civilization at Brown University articulates that searching for a more exact number is important “because the numbers will continue to grow depending on who we listen to. The ability to grasp the exact number may prevent this.” The impact of this argument draws on geopolitical implications. If in the long-term future the United States decides to take an aggressive containment stance toward China, then the US could garner domestic support by citing an exaggerated version of the Tiananmen Square Incident to demonize the CCP.

The inherent problems of over and underreporting the casualty figures invites the academic community to attempt to settle the controversies that spread across the sources. Yet, perhaps the difficult process of searching for a more exact number and location of casualties will lead us to conclude that looking for answers in a historical framework is inevitably subject to distortions. What we will be left with, then, is a lesson of infinitely more meaning and impact than had originally been expected — that the construction of history, no matter how thorough and seemingly objective, is never black and white.

Two Sources of Unresolved Controversy

In order to reconcile the conflicting reports regarding the Tiananmen Square Incident, one must first examine where the controversy exists. The first area of controversy is the number of casualties that resulted from the incident, with sources available presenting widely conflicting pictures of the event’s casualty figures. When looking at official Chinese government reports, official CCP State Council spokesman, Yuan Mu, put the number of deaths at twenty-three students and three hundred soldiers. However, this official government report is widely contested in many prominent sources, with some suggesting that the death toll was around one thousand. In Harry Harding’s book entitled, *A Fragile Relationship*, Harding discusses the political repercussions of the Tiananmen Square Incident on Sino-American relations, focusing less on the number but more on an objective evaluation of the political impacts of the event. Nevertheless, Harding reports that “Although the casualty figures are still uncertain, the best estimates are of perhaps a thousand dead and several thousand injured.” Other sources are more exact in their estimates, putting the total figures at roughly three thousand. For example, Scott Simmie and Bob Nixon report in their book *Tiananmen Square*, that “when contacted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation early Sunday morning, the Red Cross said that 2,600 people had been killed that night. An inconceivable 60,000 more were reported wounded.” Moreover, Liu Binyan, Ruan Ming, and Xu Gang write in *Tell the World: What Happened in China and Why*, a book whose authors were all dismissed from the Party in different fashions, reported that “As the sun rose on June 4, the morning clouds were red. . . More than 3,000 people were killed in Tiananmen Square and on the streets of Beijing.” All three authors have proclaimed that they are eager to see the disintegration of “the old social structure, the old political system, the old social relations, and the old ideology.” And lastly, Nan Lin writes in *The Struggle for Tiananmen* that “On June 7, *Dragon Daily*, a pro-China Hong
Kong newspaper that had become sympathetic to the movement, also reported 4,000 deaths.  

Further prominent sources expand upon the numbers, placing total casualty figures for June 4 to June 6 at more than a few thousand deaths. For example, *A Chronicle of the Chinese Democratic Uprising*, a report by a Hong Kong publishing house critical of the CCP, stated, “It is estimated that, among the people treated in the hospitals (June 4) of Beijing, the death toll came to over 2,600. . . The death toll on June 5 was over 5,000 and 30,000 injured. On June 6, the death toll exceeded 7,000. These figures do not include those who disappeared.” Furthermore, Gordon Thomas in his book *Chaos Under Heaven: The Shocking Story of China's Search for Democracy*, a book that draws from personal testimonies, states that “In the months after the massacre Amnesty International and other human rights groups estimate that 10,000 had died and perhaps twice that figure had been injured in the massacre in Beijing. The figures for the rest of China were put at 20,000 killed and around 40,000 injured.” Along similar lines, Yi Mu and Mark V. Thompson report in their book, *Crisis at Tiananmen*, a book that draws on testimonials from traumatized students, that “there were reports from students who claimed that at least 6,000 people were killed and 20,000 were wounded. Some put the death toll as high as 15,000. Some students also claimed that 1,000 to 2,000 students died in Tiananmen Square alone.”

And lastly, in the book entitled *Culture and Politics in China: An Anatomy of Tiananmen Square*, edited by Peter Li, Steven Mark, and Marjorie H. Li, an eyewitness statement by student demonstration leader Wu’er Kaixi offers an even more dramatic account of the figures. Kaixi, an influential and later exiled leader states, “I cannot say at this time exactly how many people were killed. But I can tell you that the number killed on Tiananmen Square must be at least a thousand. As to the number killed total during the bloody suppression, I would estimate it without exaggeration at about 10,000. This is a conservative estimate.”

Upon examination, there exist wide discrepancies over the number of casualties that resulted from the event. Sources place figures anywhere between one thousand to ten thousand deaths. But perhaps of even more importance, the sources disagree overwhelmingly with the CCP’s official casualty report (twenty-three students and three hundred soldiers).

The second source of conflict is whether the PLA intentionally killed students inside Tiananmen Square or whether the deaths occurred solely on the streets leading into the Square. This is a major point of contention among prominent sources. Some sources claim that the students were allowed to peacefully exit the Square on the morning of June 4 (corroborating the CCP’s account) whereas others report that the PLA shot directly at the students on the Monument in the Square, not allowing some students to exit the Square. *Tiananmen Square*, by Scott Simmie and Bob Nixon, reports the government’s official account that at 4:30 AM on June 4, the government broadcasted an announcement on loudspeaker declaring that the army had agreed to allow the students...
to peacefully evacuate the Square. Upon hearing this, the government claims, “the students joined hands and started to leave the Square in an orderly manner. At about 5:00 AM troops vacated the wide corridor in the southeast part of the Square to allow the students to withdraw unhindered. A few students who refused to leave were forced to leave by policemen.”

This official government account is supported by many other prominent sources. For example, Peter Li, Stephen Mark, and Marjorie H. Li in *Culture and Politics in China*, a book that claims to offer an objective report of the events that unfolded on Tiananmen Square, also report that students were allowed to evacuate the Square peacefully. Additionally, a number of eyewitness accounts take the side of the government’s official report, claiming that there was no direct confrontation between CCP soldiers and the students in the Square. For instance, in the book *Children of the Dragon* by the organization Human Rights in China, an eyewitness named Lao Gui, who was on the Monument the morning of June 4, stated, “In fact, there was no conflict between the student and the troops. It was a peaceful retreat, and the students were calm. Some have said that when the students left the Square they ran like crazy, and that some were even trampled to death. But this is only a rumor. Because many students crowded together on the monument, it was a little chaotic for a moment, but then order was restored.”

Nan Lin’s *The Struggle for Tiananmen*, a book that focuses on “how the authorities engaged in the process — how they acted and reacted to internal conflicts and how they reached critical decisions regarding the ‘tumour’ and its termination,” also corroborates this account, reporting that “Negotiations between students and troops produced an agreement that the encamped students would be allowed to leave. At 4:30 AM, troops announced that they would enter the Square. At around 5:00 AM, students began evacuating the Square through a southeast path left opened by the troops. By 5:30 AM, tanks and soldiers retook the entire Square.” Additionally, Dingxin Zhao reports in *The Power of Tiananmen*, a book that focuses on the prevalence of rumors that were spread during the student movement against the CCP, that “students started to leave (the square), dragging along with them those who refused to go. . . Yet at the very rear there were still about a hundred or so people who refused to go further. Gao Xin, one of the four hunger strikers, happened to be there. According to Gao. . . when they shouted ‘Fascist!’ the soldiers rushed forward and started to shoot. They all ran to hide. Soldiers actually shot at the sky, but one student was still wounded.”

But, perhaps the most influential report to corroborate the official government account is the New York Times. On June 13, 1989, the New York Times’ Beijing correspondent Nicholas Kristof, basing his argument on eyewitness accounts, stated, “armored vehicles did not surround the monument - they stayed at the north end of the square - and troops did not attack students clustered around the monument.” Kristof stresses in his reports that the PLA did not shoot at students in the Square and that reports which

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11 Simmie and Nixon, 187-188.
12 Li, Mark, and Li, 18-19.
14 Lin, 7.
15 Ibid., 117.
indicate such shootings are exaggerations. Other sources such as Harry Harding’s A Fragile Relationship and Gordon Thomas’ Chaos Under Heaven do not even address the issue of army killings inside the Square; they simply assume that soldiers did not directly shoot at students in the Square. Most of the above sources maintain that the killings mostly took place as soldiers were advancing to the Square, blocked by worker and Chinese citizen blockades.

There are, however, sources that directly contradict the government’s account, claiming that the PLA did indeed shoot students inside the Square. For example, Chai Ling, a proud and oftentimes power hungry leader of the student movement, reports in a secret eyewitness interview given on the Sunday after the massacre that armored personnel carriers drove in and began crushing the bamboo and canvas tents. Although the government claims that only bedding and clothing were destroyed by the tanks, Chai Ling claims that many students had stayed in their tents, harboring the belief that they would merely be led away by the army. “But they were still in their tents,” she sobbed, “the tanks drove over their bodies and crushed them to meat.”18 However, Chai Ling does agree with the government that a path was cleared for the students to leave the Square peacefully at the southeast corner of the Square.

Yet, while some eyewitness accounts and sources agree with the government’s claim that the students exited the Monument from the southeast corner of the Square, other sources report something completely different. These sources disagree with the government’s account to a greater extent than Chai Ling does. In Timothy Brook’s book entitled Quelling the People, purportedly written to offer an objective evaluation of the events of the Tiananmen Square Incident and whose general bias is only against the CCP government, Brook offers several eyewitness accounts which claim that the CCP did indeed kill students inside of the Square. Drawing from his interview of June 4 survivors, Timothy Brook writes, “Another (student) standing at the base of the monument recalls the moment the guns went off with disturbing clarity. ‘Immediately the troops surrounding the Square began firing indiscriminately. Stray shots flew around the Square. A girl who was about three meters away from me suddenly went down with a bullet in her head.’ . . . The telltale signs of repaired bullet holes I found four months later on the west and south sides of the platforms and balustrades around the base of the Monument warn that she may not have been the only casualty.”19

Brook’s use of eyewitness accounts contradicts the reports that there were no student deaths in the Square. Brook further comments on the use of tanks to crush students still in their tents (as reported by Chai Ling).20 He writes “ Many (students) had vowed to remain where they lay to the bitter end. . . A Beida student did photograph what appeared to be the corpse of a crushed demonstrator in a tent. He displayed the picture at Beida at 7:30 that morning. ‘It was the most horrible photograph,’ as someone at Beida who saw it told me later. ‘It showed a student lying under a quilt in one of the tents on the Square. The picture was so clear. There was no doubt about it.’”21 Brook further reports, “One student source insists

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19 Timothy Brook, Quelling the People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146.
20 However, as Chai Ling herself reported, many students had come out of the tents at around 9 PM the previous evening and had gathered around the monument. Therefore, even if there were students who stayed in the tents, the number would have been low.
21 Brook, 147.

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that some students from Qinghua University refused to leave the Monument and were shot. Another says that students at the tail end of the file coming out the Southeast were shot.”

But perhaps the most controversial eyewitness account to challenge the government’s side of the story was published just days after the incident in the Hong Kong newspaper called Wenhui Pao Daily. In the Wenhui Pao Daily article, someone who claimed to be a Qinghua University student that had experienced first-hand the events on June 4 reported that soldiers started to beat the students clustered around the monument on the morning of June 4. The eyewitness then recalls, “When the students from the third level had moved to the ground, the submachine guns started firing. Some soldiers shot from a kneeling position, and their bullets flew over our heads. Some shot from a lying position; their bullets hit students in the chest and head. We regrouped and tried to move back up to the higher platforms of the monument. The machine guns ceased firing, but the clubs and rods forced us back to the ground level. As soon as we were off the monument, the guns started firing again.”

This account has become the major controversial source for many other similar reports.

For instance, Liu Binyan, Ruan Ming, and Xu Gang write in their book entitled Tell the World “At 4:40 AM, just as the students were starting to retreat out of the square, a red signal flare ripped the night sky. Students found that they were surrounded by armed soldiers wearing helmets. Some of them had already set up a line of more than a dozen machine guns, aimed at the students. Other soldiers rushed in among the students and beat them with electric cattle prods and rubber covered steel clubs. They tore their way up the base of the Monument to the People’s Heroes, and forced the students down, beating them until their heads were bleeding. As they reached the ground level, the machine guns opened fire.”

The Attempt to Uncover an Objective Truth

How then, does one resolve these inconsistencies? Many have tried to uncover the details of the Tiananmen Square Incident, but despite their efforts, the matter is still largely unsettled; a consistent statistic and version simply does not exist. With that, this paper will seek to uncover an objective version of the truth, while recognizing that such a task may be more complicated than it appears.

In order to trace the actual casualty figures, one must examine which sources are reliable and which are not. Although eyewitness accounts are plentiful, they are not suitable sources from which to draw a total casualty figure; no matter how dramatic and compelling an eyewitness account may be, it can only capture isolated events in pockets. It cannot account for the sum total that we are looking for. And lastly, eyewitness

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22 Ibid., 148.
24 Liu, Ming, and Xu, 62.

Volume 5  |  Number 1  |  Winter 2005
accounts often contradict each other as we have seen above; some claim to have seen people die and others claim that they did not see people die. Although eyewitnesses such as Chai Ling and Wu’er Kaixi may venture guesses at the number of deaths that resulted from the Tiananmen Square Incident, their estimates are ultimately unreliable.

The most reliable method of investigation, then, is to go back to a relatively objective source: hospital records. Hospitals were giving out casualty figures to investigators on the morning of June 4 but were then quickly silenced by the CCP. Timothy Brook, author of *Quelling the People*, offers an objective and systematic examination of the figures given out by Beijing’s different hospitals. In tracking the reports (some by doctors, some by students, and some by foreign journalists) taken at different times on June 4, Brook provides casualty statistics (albeit incomplete) from twelve civilian Beijing hospitals and one military hospital. The Beijing hospitals that he tracked down were Capital (40 dead), Chaoyang (not available), Children’s (55 dead), Erlonglu (not available), Friendship (43 dead), Fuxing (59 dead), Number Three (95 dead), People’s (4 dead), Posts and Telecommunications (28 dead), Railway General (85 dead), Second Artillery (4 dead), Xuanwu (50 dead), and an unnamed hospital (16 dead). What these figures add up to is that eleven Beijing hospitals received at least 478 dead on June 4. Brook notes that “The figure fits with what a Beijing doctor found when he contacted eleven hospitals Sunday morning; he calculated a death toll in those hospitals of over 500.”

The next question then becomes, how many casualties ended up in hospitals other than those listed in Brook’s study? To help answer this question, eyewitness accounts may help. Eyewitnesses stressed that hospitals all over Beijing on Sunday “were full of wounded and dying people. Even Haidan hospital, fifteen kilometers from the Square, was full.” Various sources also report that the number of casualties was so high that hospitals had to turn people away. Brook reports that “A doctor at People’s Hospital told Jasper Becker in the early hours of June 4 that over three hundred had come to his hospital that night but that ‘most were so bad we sent them on elsewhere.’ People’s was able to handle only a third of those who showed up.” This leads one to believe that there were many more casualties that ended up in the hospitals but were not included in the eleven hospital reports.

Brook conscientiously accounts for this factor. He writes, “Not all of the 124 medical facilities listed in the 1989 city telephone directory received casualties, nor in the same numbers that those in Table 6-1 (table of eleven hospitals and death reports) did. But many did receive large numbers of dead and wounded. We can generate an estimate by using as a base figure the thirty-two hospitals in the city that ministered to the hunger strikers in May. Suppose these thirty-two handled casualties on Saturday night, and suppose that on average they handled them at the same rates as those for which we have reports/estimates. That would give figures of fourteen hundred dead and thirty-seven hundred wounded by dawn Sunday. Add to this base almost a hundred smaller facilities and clinics, as well as the many military hospitals in Beijing, and the totals could rise to twice that.”

However, even this is not the extent of
the numbers. Brook notes, “A corpse could be just as incriminating for his relatives. The family of a counter-revolutionary rebel faced political sanctions and hefty fines. As much as possible therefore, bodies were disposed of privately or taken out to the countryside for burial.” Therefore, using rudimentary but logical extrapolations can lead one to conclude that there were at least 3,000 deaths that resulted from the Tiananmen Square Incident (This figure is most likely an unknown number larger because it does not include those deaths that were covered up by families and those that were taken away off the street by the PLA before they could be counted in the hospitals). In the end, the true number seems to be somewhere far above the official figure of 300 dead and perhaps somewhere below the reports of tens of thousands dead.

The controversy over whether the PLA killed students inside of the Square is more difficult to resolve. The reason is that there are no objective sources like hospital records from which one can draw information. Instead, the controversy is rooted in conflicting eyewitness accounts. Different people in the same place at the same time give accounts that completely contradict each other. To take the side of one eyewitness’s account is to deny the account of another eyewitness. The problem is that the consequence of being wrong on such an issue potentially denies that the deaths of innocent people.

Nevertheless, one student account seems to be especially reliable. In the documentary video entitled “The Gate of Heavenly Peace,” directed by Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton, Taiwan pop star Hou Dejian gave an eyewitness account that corroborated the government’s story. Hou, one of the hunger strikers who remained in the Square until the very end, claimed that he was one of the last people to leave the Square and that everyone had decided to leave relatively peacefully. Whereas other accounts claim that people in the north side of the monument refused to leave, Hou himself explicitly states that he went to the north side of the monument where the machine guns were supposedly lined up and dragged each person that was sitting in protest off the ground and pushed them to the southeast exit. In the documentary, Hou appears genuine, his demeanor sincere and his expression moving. The traumatized Hou even states in the documentary, “if we start to exaggerate and falsify the facts, then we are no better than the government.” Hou’s account is supported by a large number of foreign journalists who were in Beijing at that time; these journalists also reported that there were no killings inside of the Square.

Conversely, the accounts that claim there was a massacre inside of the Square comes from sources that draw information from the one eyewitness account published in the Hong Kong Wenhu Pao Daily newspaper. To take a firm stance on an issue such as this one is problematic because there is no way to corroborate what one thinks is the truth. Whereas casualty figures rely on objective sources like hospitals to report accurate information, the question of a massacre inside

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Footnotes:
29 Ibid.
of the Square is subject to conflicting eyewitness reports. In the end, regardless of how compelling Hou’s account is or how authoritative New York Times correspondent Kristof seems, one is simply left to believe for herself the side that is most instinctively compelling.

The Barriers to a Transparent Understanding

Although efforts thus far have focused on revealing a more exact number and location of deaths, it seems as if there is still no way to stand firm in our findings without reservations. When viewed through a pure veil, it seems almost absurd that the event that has had the most lasting negative impact on China’s image over the past decade is still such an impenetrable mystery. The question, then, ultimately becomes, “Why is it so difficult to settle on an accepted version of what happened on June 4, 1989?” The answer, it would seem, lies in the actions taken, both intentionally and unintentionally, by both the CCP and the student eyewitnesses to distort and skew the facts of the event.

A large number of sources agree that during the Chinese army’s crackdown on the Square, CCP soldiers shot at ambulances trying to save the wounded. In the book, Children of the Dragon, by the organization Human Rights in China, a Capital Steel Mill worker recalls, “‘A makeshift ambulance tried to enter the square to take the wounded away, but it was stopped by several rounds of gunshots that completely destroyed its windshield. A real ambulance was also stopped. . . Off and on, the soldiers continued to shoot at the wounded.’”31 Also, an eyewitness account by American journalist Margaret Herbst in Scott Simmie’s and Bob Nixon’s book, Tiananmen Square, reports, “‘I was just numb. Twenty people were lying in this corridor. I talked to ambulance drivers, and they said one of those shot in the head was a colleague who had gone to pick up the injured. Eight people were in the morgue at four thirty, and a number of them were pedicab drivers who had been shot while trying to bring wounded back.’”32

Contributing to the unknown number of uncounted people, the CCP did not permit any ambulances, or people for that matter, to enter the Square on the morning of June 4, preventing not only the discovery of an accurate casualty figure but also any possibility of discovering what the soldiers had done to the students inside of the Square. Brook reports, “Two ambulances approached almost immediately but were prevented from fetching bodies. The soldiers ambushed one and set it on fire at 10:20 AM. Over the next half hour, two men who tried to drag the wounded to safety were gunned down.”33 Furthermore, Chai Ling reports in her secret eyewitness statement, “Later we learned that troops collected the bodies that had fallen to the ground while they had forced their way forward. The bodies, some still alive, were dumped onto buses or tricycles, leaving no chance for the injured people to survive.”34

Efforts to collect bodies in hospitals before they could be counted continued throughout the days following the crackdown. Brook continues to report, “Some corpses left in the open were collected and removed by truck. On Sunday at 11:20 AM, a foreign diplomat watched troops in the Jianguomen area load bodies onto trucks; other soldiers kept the crowd away from the

31 Human Rights in China, 149.
32 Simmie and Nixon, 188-189.
33 Brook, 164-165.
34 Thompson and Yi, 269.
bodies to prevent them from being observed. Also on Sunday morning, at least one truck with Capital Iron and Steel markings carrying men in yellow hard hats was sighted on the western side of the 3rd Ring Road removing human remains and taking them westward. Sunday and Monday nights, the work of removing new corpses from public places was done by unmarked white morgue trucks that prowled the streets after dark. These trucks did not deliver their contents to civilian hospitals.35

Furthermore, various eyewitness reports including Chai Ling’s and the Qinghua student’s (published in Wenhui Pao Daily) allude to the burning of bodies in the Square. Brook also reports, “At 5:58 AM, almost as soon as the last students were leaving Tiananmen, a column of smoke began to rise from the Square. Another fire started at 6:40. A Beida student watching the Square from a building to the south saw the flames rise and fall as new debris was tossed on. The smoke was thick and black, suggesting that gasoline was used to soak whatever was being burned. It thickened three times between 6:45 and 7:30 AM, for about five minutes each time.”36

Rumors of burnings were circulated among a wide range of sources. Brook notes that a Qinghua student perched in a tree at the south end of the Square stated that at about 6:45AM, he could see soldiers throwing plastic body bags together and covering them with a tarpaulin. He did not, however, say that they were then burned. Brook further reports that a Beida student leaflet reported that the “Army used bulldozers to shovel bodies into piles and burn them.”37

However, there is controversy over whether this act of cremation occurred to the degree that these sources suggest. Brook notes, “Because the number of people who died on the Square was limited — and many of them were removed by ambulance — the image of corpses bulldozed and burned is far-fetched. Most of the evidence of immediate cremation is circumstantial; plus there are practical reasons that incineration did not occur. A human body does not burn quickly. Incinerating a body takes several hours at high heat. . . Strong burn marks on the concrete paving stones on the Square behind the Martyrs’ Monument could also have been made as a result of burning pulped bodies. Other burn marks on the Square, however, suggest the lower heat needed to burn tents and other flammable objects, not bodies.”38 Thus we are left with a sense of ambiguity. But given the logistical aspects, it seems that if the army did burn corpses, then the number would have been comparatively low.

Further controversy obfuscates one’s ability to grasp the facts. Brook states, “from two separate sources I have heard that students were executed inside the Workers’ Culture Palace. . . From several firsthand sources, we know that the Culture Palace served as a temporary detention center for people rounded up Sunday morning. . . It has been alleged that PLA soldiers not only tortured but executed by rifle butt close to two thousand people on Sunday morning. The story is attributed to the grandson of a prominent Army general, who was among the students taken into the Culture Palace but who was spared when police supervisors learned of his identity. A completely different source tells the same story, but says that the soldiers used knives to execute the detainees.”39 This presents a troublesome
account. It is difficult to imagine that soldiers could have sustained systematic executions of two thousand people by hand. Once again, CCP efforts to carry out actions behind a black veil give way to controversies that cannot be settled with certainty.

In addition to harboring these unclear allegations, the CCP took conscious and systematic actions to keep the facts from surfacing in three ways. First, the government used its Public Security Bureau to infiltrate institutions that had the ability to give out information about the Tiananmen Square Incident. Yi Mu and Mark V. Thompson write in *Crisis at Tiananmen* that “On June 4, shortly after the shooting began, the official Radio Beijing reported that ‘thousands of people’ were murdered, ‘including our colleagues at Radio Beijing.’ However, the announcer who broadcast the report was quickly removed from his anchor post and substituted by another individual who repeated the government’s account.”

Scott Simmie and Bob Nixon write in *Tiananmen Square* that “A few hospitals which had earlier released figures were saying nothing. There were reports that some facilities had been infiltrated by agents of the Public Security Bureau. Unknown men wearing white lab coats were said to be wandering the halls of several hospitals, looking carefully — but not examining — student victims.” Brook writes that “Many people tramped around to the hospitals Sunday morning not to find missing relatives but to count the casualties. People simply wanted to know, and medical staff were sometimes willing to share what they knew, often against the objections of hospital authorities and the police. A history student from Beida was apprehended by police and detained for about ten days for collecting casualty statistics from hospitals.”

Second, efforts were made after the crackdown to silence those in charge or in support of the movement. The Kwang Hua Publishing Company’s book entitled *The Peking Massacre* states, “a frightening wave of arrests has already begun, ordered by Chinese Communist premier Li Peng. Mass media reports indicate that Li has ordered the arrest of 20,000 people. The atmosphere of a ‘great clean-up’ and a ‘great purge’ accordingly has plunged the people of Peking into a state of insecurity and terror.”

Harry Harding’s *A Fragile Relationship* also reports that, “The demonstrations in Tiananmen Square were officially depicted as a counterrevolutionary riot that resulted from an antigovernment conspiracy. Police combed the country for leaders of the protests, many of whom were seeking to flee...”

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83 Thompson and Yi, 97.
84 Simmie and Nixon, 194.
85 Brook, 151.
86 Ibid., 167.
87 Kwang Hua Co., 5-6.
The arbitrary nature of these arrests was epitomized in Beijing’s decision to arrest Xiao Bin, a forty-two-year-old factory official; Xiao Bin was sentenced to a ten-year prison term for “rumor mongering.” He had been interviewed on ABC News and had spontaneously told ABC that soldiers had killed thousands in the June 4 crackdown and that students had been run down by tanks. This type of persecution of anyone who spread a story inconsistent with the government’s account effectively silenced those whose views conflicted with the government’s. In an interview conducted on April 10th, 2003, with Ma Jia, Professor of East Asian Studies at Brown University, Ma states (translated from Mandarin to English by author), “During that time, no one would publicly say, ‘Oh yes, I don’t believe the government’s account. I think 1,000 died, not 300.’ The only time people would talk about their personal feelings about the incident would be in private. But even then people avoided talking about it for fear of what might happen to them.” Third and finally, the government implemented strict regulations to have all people “study” the nature of the Tiananmen Square movement in a manner consistent with the government’s view. In Liu Binyan’s book entitled *Tell the World*, Liu writes that “All college students and graduates were forced to ‘study’ Deng’s speech and other such documents. All those who work in government institutions and social organizations have to spend two hours each day ‘studying’ such documents, and furthermore, have to speak about what ways they have enhanced their understanding of this ‘counterrevolutionary rebellion’ and corrected their mistaken conceptions.” Furthermore, in an April 3, 2003 Interview with Brown University Political Science Professor Su Fubing, Su recalls that “students were all required to write written statements of their involvement in the movement. These reports were then all reviewed and ‘suspicious’ reports were further investigated. We all underwent reeducation in Communist and Marxist lessons and lessons on the counterrevolutionaries.” It would seem, then, that constant surveillance and punishment by the government cast a shadow of suspicion over anyone whose story conflicted with that of the government, dissuading a large number of people from coming forward with more facts and making it even more difficult to resolve the controversial areas of the Tiananmen Square Incident.

**The Motives for Distortion from Both Sides of the Lens**

Why did the CCP, a Party that has made such a concerted effort in becoming a sophisticated and respected regional power, feel it was necessary to hide the facts so systematically and punish/silence the demonstrators so severely? Yi Mu and Mark Thompson write in *Crisis at Tiananmen*, “As Mao Zedong explicitly put it, the Party had to have two ‘barrels’ in its hand — namely the barrel of the gun and that of the pen — if it were to establish and consolidate its political powers.” In the context of political face, historical experience and the confidence that the Party could effectively contain public opinion as it had done since the 1950s, the CCP chose to squash and cover up the movement for three reasons.

First, partial CCP power remained in the
hands of the first-generation revolutionaries. These old revolutionaries were those who were present during the glory stories of the CCP’s triumph over the Nationalist Party during the famous Long March in 1933-1934. These were veterans who believed that they were the true founders and revolutionaries of the Communist party in China and believed themselves to be the true revolutionaries. Although Deng Xiaoping declared in 1982 that it was time for the veteran revolutionaries to retire from the front line of power and give authority to the second line, ceremonial and advisory posts in the Party and government were nonetheless created for the retiring veterans.\(^\text{48}\) Because the first generation revolutionaries still held power and influence within the Party, their attitudes toward the Tiananmen Square protests had a big impact on the crackdown that ensued afterwards.

Nan Lin writes in *The Struggle for Tiananmen*, “The veterans saw their (protestors) demands as direct challenges to individual leaders and the foundations of leadership and authority. They concluded that these marches and demonstrations were intended to eventually to overthrow the regime and the political system. . . Once Deng became alarmed, the old veterans openly reinforced Deng in his judgment and determination. They feared that the ideology and the system they helped establish were now being challenged and on the verge of being overthrown. Seeing a genuine threat, they were not about to let the system and state they helped create vanish.”\(^\text{49}\) Thus, the efforts to suppress the ideas and legitimacy of the Tiananmen Square movement after the crackdown were driven largely by the first generation revolutionaries’ fears that the way of life they helped build was being torn down.

Second, the revolutionary veterans’ own experiences with protests also painted the Tiananmen Movement as a deadly force that needed to be crushed. They arrested and silenced eyewitnesses because the CCP leaders understood the implications of revolutionary movements. Nan Lin continues to write, “Many of these veterans were students during the 1920s through the 1940s when they were underground Communists agitating against the Nationalist government. They were proud of the fact that their agitation and leadership in student marches and demonstrations significantly contributed to the eventual downfall of the Nationalist government and the coming to power of the Communist Party.”\(^\text{50}\) In the end, past experiences compelled the CCP to suppress the facts and demonize a threatening challenging party.

Third and finally, the new leaders, or second-generation leaders, played a significant role in the silencing of the Tiananmen Movement ideas and leaders as well. Not only did these leaders share the veteran revolutionaries’ perception that the student movement threatened the stability of the Party, but they also lived through the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and equated the Tiananmen Movement to it. In an interview with Brown University visiting lecturer Huang Zhao Yu on March 20th, 2003, Huang commented on the state of social conditions during the movement. Huang, an intellectual in China who supports the actions of the CCP in its decision to use force to clear the Square recalls (translated from Mandarin to English by author) that “the situation was out of control. People were

\(^\text{48}\) Such veterans, according to Nan Lin in *The Struggle for Tiananmen*, were Chen Yu, Wang Zheng, Peng Zheng, Li Xiannian, and Bo Yibo.
\(^\text{49}\) Lin, 135-136.
\(^\text{50}\) Ibid., 139.
noisy and out of hand. It looked like it was impossible to solve. People were riding motorcycles through the crowds cheering. There were two groups of people: the rational and the crazy. Those who were crazy greatly outnumbered those who were rational. Outside of the Square people were robbing stores. Street vendors were taking advantage of the situation by raising their prices very high. The rational people were becoming greatly influenced by the crazy emotional people. Taxis were not charging people anymore to show their support for the movement. All transportation shut down. People could not get to work. People were concerned about international affairs (referring to Gorbachev’s visit).”

The link between Huang’s views and that of the leaders of the CCP is explained by his peers. In an interview with Su Fubing on April 3, 2003, Su states, “Huang’s comments are shaped by his position in China. Currently, he is working for the Modern/Contemporary International Relations Research Institute in Beijing, China. This is a think tank for the Communist Party and State Council. One of the most secretive organizations in the Chinese system, the Research Institute goes through serious security checks. Political correctness is definitely an issue among its workers.” Therefore, one can take Huang’s views as more or less the views of the CCP towards the movement. Thus, Huang’s description of the social turmoil in Beijing indicates how the Tiananmen Square movement likely triggered flashbacks of the Cultural Revolution in the minds of the second-generation leaders who experienced first hand the horrors of the 1970s chaos.

However, while the CCP had powerful motives to muddle the facts after the crackdown, it should be noted that part of the distortion of facts is due to the political motives of the student protestors and nature of the student movement. There are three factors that contribute to the exaggeration of both the casualty figures and the brutality of the PLA under the CCP. The first factor is a rational exaggeration of the facts. It is conceivable that, in the face of traumatizing events, victims of abuse would want to fully convey the immorality of the acts to third parties through dramatization or exaggeration. Such rational exaggeration would also help build support for the movement and its ideals by emphasizing the brutality of the party that opposes said ideals. These exaggerations spread through a specific avenue of communication: rumors.

In the interview with Su Fubing, Su states, “Inherently, it was difficult to determine the truth during the movement. While in Tianjin, I heard news of the protest movement on loudspeakers. We didn’t know where the news was coming from but it was always biased toward the movement. This is understandable because people needed to amplify the news as well as pass it on. This is an inherent dynamic to mass organization because there is a lack of organization. I do not know any one that was killed nor do my friends know anyone that was killed. Rumors were the most powerful weapon for the movement. There were no checks on the information getting through. It was chaotic news.” Su’s stance on rumors as a powerful mode of communication is supported by Dingxin Zhao in his book The Power of Tiananmen. Zhao argues, “Now that the public was concerned about and sympathetic to the movement and dissatisfied with the news in the official media, the public turned to other communication channels. Much of the news in these channels turned out to be unfounded rumors and deliberate fabrications. Yet because the public was unhappy about the situation and distrustful of the government, rumors that could create an image of an unreasonable government tended to be
believed and passed on regardless of their truth value.” 51 Zhao continues, “Active participants in a social movement usually believe what they are fighting for. Therefore, the fabrication of rumors may not be considered as immoral in itself so long as the participants believe that this will increase the chances of obtaining the collective goods for which they are fighting.” 52

The second factor is a subconscious or unintentional distortion of the figures and location of deaths. This can be attributed to genuine uncertainty on the part of eyewitnesses. When eyewitnesses were asked to estimate how many deaths resulted from the crackdown, they were being given an utterly impossible task. Even if an eyewitness sees first hand a brutal act carried out by the PLA, what he/she is seeing is only an isolated event. She cannot possibly put together a number that accounts for the entire incident. But, having just witnessed a traumatizing event, she would be more likely, due to the dramatic nature of his or her experience, to overestimate rather than underestimate. These genuine estimations are subsequently passed on as first hand sources for other second hand sources to cite. Dingxin Zhao reports that many exaggerated rumors were floating around immediately after the crackdown. Such rumors included, “Over twenty thousand civilians died in the massacre.” 53 Thus, the distortion of the facts may also be partially attributed to unintentional exaggerations arising from genuine uncertainty.

And third, a distortion of the event’s nuances may be due to the biases that Western sources have toward the Tiananmen Square Incident. Specifically, certain scholarly sources seem to avoid giving full weight to the CCP’s limited options in dealing with the student movement, ultimately skewing the tone and nuances of the event against the CCP. While the limited options in no way absolve the CCP of culpability, they do reveal an interesting dynamic which puts into perspective the manner in which the CCP acted, a perspective consistently overlooked in a large number of the sources.

First, the CCP was not equipped to deal with protest demonstrations; China had a police force and a military, but neither was trained to deal with displacing large masses of people out of a location the masses were not willing to leave. The police were not trained to deal with this type of protest movement so it was unlikely for them to be called in. The People’s Liberation Army was trained only to use guns and perhaps tear gas, and was not equipped with the tools necessary to deal with protests (e.g. water canons, rubber bullets, etc.). During the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the United States depended largely on such tools as water canons to force large groups to disperse from a location, but China did not have this type of weaponry or training during the months of the Tiananmen Square Incident. The CCP viewed its choices as binary in terms of having the army either use real guns and force their way into the Square or refrain from using guns and remain on the periphery, unable to enter the city.

Second, the CCP leadership and PLA were caught by surprise when the people

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51 Zhao, 326.
52 Ibid., 328.
53 Ibid., 319.
blocking the entryways into the Square began attacking the PLA on the days before and after June 4. Original government statements claim that the majority of deaths that resulted from the incident were PLA soldiers at the hands of violent demonstrators. The fact that even some soldiers died introduces an interesting dynamic. Traditionally, the PLA was thought of as the People’s Army, an army that performed civil service acts such as the building of dams and providing flood disaster relief. The fact that the demonstrators began to attack the soldiers must have come as a very big shock to the army. According to Professor Robert Lee, not even during the Cultural Revolution was the PLA viewed with such disdain as they were during the Tiananmen Square Incident. This new condition forced the CCP to alter its decisions in dealing with the movement, causing them to be more aggressive in light of the unexpected conflict. This argument is highlighted by the fact that the CCP probably had no specific plan to deal with massive resistance. Professor Robert Lee suggests that the CCP may have originally planned to use the army merely as a political presence to symbolically compel the students to leave the Square. It thought that the mere presence of the PLA would be enough because of the PLA’s reputation as keepers of the peace. When the student demonstrators began to act out against the PLA, this most likely had a very big impact on the army commanders. The incorrect assumptions that the PLA would be met peacefully by the demonstrators forced the PLA to react spontaneously, resulting in a more aggressive approach than what was originally intended.

Although these conditions in no way excuse the CCP of its actions, they help to offer both sides of the story. These conditions, however, are rarely the focal points in major sources covering the Tiananmen Square Incident. Whereas the CCP blurred the truth by consciously hiding the facts, eyewitnesses and various scholarly sources critical of the CCP employ a less extreme form of bias, exaggerating the details and skirting away from topics which may very well draw unexpected empathy towards or reluctant understanding of the CCP’s actions.

Conclusion: Challenging a Distorted Picture

In light of the inconsistencies and distortions on both sides, it seems as if the CCP is winning the “war on numbers and location” in Mainland China. Most Chinese generally believe that the CCP’s official figures and accounts are more truthful than the Western sources that contradict the CCP’s account. This was not always the case. Immediately after the crackdown, Chinese students believed that the death tolls were in the thousands.54 Only after the movement’s defeat and the CCP’s crackdown on dissenters did the views change. In the interviews conducted with Brown University professors Su Fubing and Huang Zhao Yu (from Mainland China), both remarked separately that they did not think the death toll was any higher than 300 people. Su Fubing stated that he believed most soldiers simply fired into the sky. Huang Zhao Yu stated that because he did not personally see anyone die, and because he did not see soldiers armed, he believed the government’s figures. Professor Ma Jia and Lingzhen Wang of the East Asian Studies Department both declined to venture a guess at the numbers because they said they simply did not know. But, all professors seemed to express doubt in their earlier speculations as young adults and

54 Brook, 168-169.
felt that their initial guesses immediately after the event were wishful thinking. They say that they, having all participated in the event, were a bit foolish and did not realize the enormity of their actions.

Brook quotes a Chinese student in Beijing as stating, “you have to believe the government’s statistic. The Chinese government never lies when it states facts. What it tries to do is hide the facts. But when it says that something happened, then it happened. You have to believe it’. . . People recognize that they do not have the evidence to verify the death count they feel is right. Private estimates become subject more and more to doubt. This doubt, combined with the deep-seated conviction among Chinese that the government never lies about facts but only misrepresents them, has induced many to err on the side of caution and accept hundreds over thousands. Even the international press has bowed to the shift in the decimal point: the dead are conventionally referred to now as numbering in the hundreds, not the thousands.”

In the past year, through a student organization at Stanford University called the Forum for American/Chinese Exchange at Stanford, I have become close friends with a small group of intelligent Chinese students from Universities in Beijing and Shanghai. On one occasion, my conversation with one such friend regarding the question of US foreign policy towards Taiwan turned to the subject of the Tiananmen Square Incident. The more I spoke about what I thought I knew (at the time), the more my friend became both immensely confused but uncontrollably anxious to hear more. “In China,” he said, “we are not told anything about this, except that we should not talk about it. I don’t learn about it in the schools. Even my parents and grandparents. . . they experienced it. . . even they will not talk to anyone about it.” In ignorantly assuming that any report which contradicted that of the CCP’s had a good chance of being accurate, I confidently “taught” my friend all the things he did not know because of CCP efforts to hide the facts. However, as I look back now on the days when we sat in the Stanford Oval, trying to reconcile our conflicting versions of events, I have come to the realization that what I myself claimed to know against the backdrop of supposed legitimate sources was as subject to historical distortion as that which my Chinese friend claimed to know against the backdrop of suppressed information.

In the end, we, as scholars in search of truth, must internalize the lesson that the construction of history will always be skewed by vested players. When formulating an image of a country such as China, one must realize that its history is never black and white. What ends up in interviews, books and eyewitness accounts is often subject to acts of distortion from both sides, acts that ultimately bias the interpretation of historical events in the eyes of wholly different people from vastly different parts of the world. Moving forward, therefore, requires that each of us recognize the distortions and where they exist, that each of us proceed to study, internalize and convey with the understanding that the objective truth we seek may very well be the one that is hidden layers beneath what is readily apparent.

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55 Brook, 169.
Taiwan’s successful transition from authoritarian regime to democracy suggests that neither a Leninist party structure nor a Confucian cultural heritage is a bar to democratization. Taiwan’s experience also clearly illustrates that democracy can be achieved through political leadership, a mode of democratic transition that has been emphasized in recent scholarship by Samuel Huntington,\(^1\) Bruce Dickson,\(^2\) and Steven Hood, the lattermost of whom argues that democratic transitions are brought about by political elites who have changed their attitudes about democracy. This process has been described by Nancy Bermeo as “political learning,” meaning the process by which “authoritarians come to realize the benefits, or in some cases their only option for survival, is to move towards a democratic solution.”\(^3\)

As the paramount leader of the Kuomintang (KMT), the decision to move forward with Taiwan’s democratization in 1986 ultimately belonged to Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK). Although CCK initially supported the status quo, he eventually came to realize that a democratic solution would benefit the KMT, and that failure to liberalize the system could result in violent conflict.\(^4\) However, little research has been done on CCK’s political learning process.\(^5\) The link between Taiwan’s geopolitics and CCK’s decision to ease the political system onto a path of liberalization and finally democracy is the primary focus of this research paper. I argue that Taiwan’s growing diplomatic isolation was the driving force behind CCK’s transformation from head of the feared secret police in the 1950s to political reformer in the 1970s and 1980s. Since Taiwan could not hope to compete with the PRC for power, CCK opted to secure Taiwan’s foreign relations by building a relatively free and prosperous Taiwan, putting Taiwan on the road to reunification on its own terms. So long as CCK was confident in the US commitment to defend Taiwan, there was little incentive to change the political system. Once President Nixon made clear his intention to play the China card, and international support for his regime began rapidly eroding, CCK took decisive steps to

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\(^1\) Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 316. Huntington suggests that “economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real.”


\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Although many studies on Taiwan’s democratization consider the international environment to be a key factor, few have linked it directly to CCK’s decision to move toward a democratic system.
Taiwanize the regime and to move toward a more representative government. The US de-recognition of Taiwan in 1978 and Deng Xiaoping’s reform and open door policy reaffirmed CCK’s belief that Taiwan must pursue a democratic path in order to survive.

My examination of the process of CCK’s political learning will be organized into three distinct phases based on Taiwan’s changing geopolitical conditions: the strong US-ROC alliance (1950s-mid 1960s); the new world order of the 1960s; the US de-recognition of Taiwan and Deng Xiaoping’s reforms (1979-1987).

**Strong US-ROC Alliance (1950s - mid 1960s)**

From 1950 to the first half of the 1960s, Taiwan’s security rested solely on the military and economic aid provided by the United States. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 was perceived by the Truman administration as a general communist offensive in the Pacific region by the newly formed Sino-Soviet alliance between Mao and Stalin. As such, the Truman administration decided to defend South Korea and simultaneously reversed its earlier decision not to defend Taiwan. On June 27, 1950, President Truman dispatched the seventh fleet of the United States naval force to neutralize the Taiwan Strait, or in other words, to prevent either side from attacking the other. In practice, considering the enormous disparity in size between the two sides, this meant protecting Taiwan from the mainland. During the Korean War, the US considered Taiwan to be strategically important to its security in the Pacific, and as a result the Government of the Republic of China (GRC) had enormous leverage over the United States. In 1954, under President Eisenhower, the United States and the GRC signed a mutual defense treaty covering Taiwan and certain islands immediately adjacent to it. This treaty formally incorporated the ROC into the US’s collective security system in Asia. For the next two decades, the United States would recognize the KMT regime on Taiwan as the sole legitimate Chinese government.

During the 1950s, CCK, as the chief of Taiwan’s secret police and intelligence agency, came to be identified as the enforcer of the White Terror. Wu Kuo-cheng, a former governor of Taiwan and a standing member of the KMT central committee, accused CCK of establishing a spy network that created fear not only throughout the society, but within the KMT as well. Wu claimed that only 18 out of 998 arrests made by the secret police in 1952 were for serious crimes. The rest were made to intimidate and root out opposition to the party. In July 1950 the CIA reported a noticeable increase in repressive activities and a resultant “popular [Taiwanese] revulsion against the regime.” The American chargé d’affaires before Rankin called it a “reign of terror,” suggesting that even mild criticism of the regime could result in arrest and disappearance. Such allegations reinforced CCK’s growing reputation for ruthlessness, and raised concerns in Washington. Although Secretary of State Dulles commented on CCK’s “roughness” in handling security matters during the intelligence chief’s first visit to the United States in 1953, CCK remained convinced that repressive action was necessary to combat communist infiltration and

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* Hood, 35.
Taiwan’s Geopolitics and Chiang Ching-Kuo’s Decision to Democratize Taiwan

subversive activity, and that an open democratic society such as the one he witnessed in the US was a distant goal for his country. It was also clear to CCK that US support for his government would continue whatever the degree of “roughness” in his methods. According to US Ambassador Rankin’s 1957 report, since mid-1950, combined US economic and military aid to Taiwan amounted to approximately US$2 billion. In early 1958, about one-third of the cost of the ROC’s military establishment of 650,000 men, one of the largest in the world, was being met by US aid.

However, as CCK and his father would soon learn during the Battle of Quemoy in 1958, most Americans and United Nations members favored a two Chinas solution that was unacceptable to both the GRC and the CCP. The Chiangs learned from Dulles that most UN members supported the withdrawal of ROC forces from the offshore islands, adding that the KMT’s military buildup on its offshore islands was perceived abroad as “militaristic...apt to precipitate a world war.” Dulles had made it clear to the Chiangs that most Americans favored a de facto if not de jure two Chinas solution, and that even a conservative Republican administration in Washington would not easily be drawn into a war with China. After three days of intensive consultations between Secretary Dulles and the Chiangs, the government of the United States and the GRC signed a joint communiqué on October 24, 1958, in which Chiang Kai-shek renounced the use of force to recover the mainland. Chiang Kai-shek (CKS) stated in the communiqué that the GRC “considers that the restoration of freedom to its people on the Mainland is its sacred mission...and that the principle means of successfully achieving its mission is the implementation of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s ‘Three People’s Principles’ (nationalism, democracy and social well-being) and not the use of force.”

It was during the Quemoy crisis that CCK first came to realize that military return to the mainland was a distant, if not impossible, dream, and that the future of his regime rested on the wellbeing of people in Taiwan. According to Ray Cline, CIA representative in Taiwan from 1958 to 1962, CCK was convinced that the only way to win back the mainland was to preserve Taiwan as a free society, improving and perfecting it into a showcase for democracy that would entice the people of mainland China.

However, so long as the KMT leadership was confident about the US commitment to defend Taiwan, there was little incentive to change the political system. CCK was fully aware that a free and democratic election would likely result in a Taiwanese, non-KMT and even pro-independence government.

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2 Ibid.
5 Taylor, 245.
6 Ibid., 247.
Chiang Kai-shek and his regime paid little more than lip service to the party’s democratic claim. One-party local elections in which independent candidates were allowed to run for office were the only concession CKS made towards creating a democratic system, the minimum the KMT leadership considered necessary to engage the Taiwanese and placate the Americans. \(^{17}\) CCK’s attitude toward political rights at this time was best reflected in his tough position against Lei Chen, a well-known KMT critic who announced his intention to form the China Democratic Party. Lei and his business associate, Liu Tzu-ying were arrested and sentenced by military court to 10 years in prison on charges that they had conducted communist activities. While there were different opinions within the KMT on how to react, CCK took a tough position, arguing that “if an effective political opposition should ever be able to organize, it would inevitably devolve into a Taiwanese organ and portray the KMT as a mainlander dominated party...in honest elections, the KMT would almost certainly be doomed.” \(^{18}\) CCK did not believe it was wise to promote any democratic changes under the circumstance, and showed no sign of loosening up its control over dissidents; independent political thinking remained dangerous in Taiwan.

**The New World Order of the 1960s**

* Sino-Soviet Breakup

By 1960, the Sino-Soviet alliance was deteriorating rapidly. Sino-Soviet hostility first became evident after 1956 when the CCP leadership began to distrust Khrushchev, especially after his denunciation of Stalin and his invasion of Hungary and grew as the war in Vietnam escalated in 1965. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 and the subsequent statement of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which effectively allowed the Soviet Union to overthrow any communist government of which it did not approve, as well as a massive build-up of Soviet forces on the Chinese border, Beijing now considered the Soviet Union to be a major threat to China’s national security. The growing tension between Beijing and Moscow was further increased by a frontier clash between Chinese and Soviet forces on Damansky Island in March 1969. The rising tensions put serious military constraints on the PRC, forcing it to defend its northern border, thus reducing its threat to the region. In the 1950s, Taiwan’s security (and more importantly, the survival of the KMT as the ruling party on the island) was guaranteed only by the US commitment to defend the island as part of its policy of containing Chinese communist expansionism. The geopolitical shift caused by the rapid deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the early 1960s would severely undermine Taiwan’s strategic importance to US security in the region.

*Changing U.S.-China Relations and Taiwan’s Growing Isolation*

Meanwhile, the United States began to reconsider its China policy, in part because of Nixon’s desire to promote détente with the Soviet Union, and in part because of the need to end US involvement in Vietnam. Playing the China card could be a means of accomplishing both objectives. \(^{19}\) In an October 1967 article in *Foreign Affairs*,

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\(^{17}\) Taylor, 203.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 259; this quote is not from CCK but from Ambassador Drumright’s analysis of the situation, though Taylor believed CCK assuredly held the same view (see Taylor’s reference note #14 on page 487).

Taiwan’s Geopolitics and Chiang Ching-Kuo’s Decision to Democratize Taiwan

Nixon wrote:

“... [A]ny American policy toward Asia must come urgently to grips with the reality of China... There is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able people to live in angry isolation... The world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus our aim... should be to induce change. The way to do this is to persuade China... that its own national interest requires a turning away from foreign adventuring and a turning inward toward the solution of its own domestic problems.”

Soon after Nixon entered the White House in January 1969, his administration relaxed restrictions on travel and trade with China, and ended US naval patrols of the Taiwan Strait and reconnaissance flights over Chinese territory, suggesting the administration’s strong desire to improve relations with the PRC. In 1970, CCK made his last visit to the United States to find out what concessions President Nixon was preparing to offer Beijing. CCK met with President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Nixon reportedly “listened to Ching-kuo very closely but did not make any promises” regarding US relations with Beijing. Kissinger tried to get CCK’s reaction on moving Sino-American talks from Warsaw to Washington or Beijing, an indication of the seriousness of their discussion. Having acted as chief negotiator with the US on behalf of his father since the 1950s, CCK understood the serious implications of the geopolitical shift for US-Taiwan relations. He also understood that the issue of Taiwan was the key to a breakthrough in US-PRC relations. The following year, the United Nations passed a resolution by a large majority to “restore all its rights to the People’s Republic of China and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.” The UN’s decision clearly suggested that the international community rejected the KMT’s claim to rule over the local Taiwanese as the head of a temporarily-exiled Republic of China representing all of the Chinese people. In February 1972, Washington and Beijing issued a joint communiqué, known as the Shanghai Communiqué, as a result of President Nixon’s historical visit to Beijing. In this communiqué, both sides agreed that “progress toward the normalization of relations between China and the United States is in the interests of all countries.” The PRC reaffirmed its position that “the Taiwan question is the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States... Taiwan is a province of China... the liberation of Taiwan is China’s internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere; and all US forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan.” The United States, while acknowledging that there was only one China, stated that it was in the US’s interest to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully. With this in mind, the US affirmed its ultimate goal of “the withdrawal of all US forces and military installations from Taiwan.” On the one hand, the Shanghai Communiqué suggested that the normalization of relations between Washington and Beijing was just a matter of time. On the other hand, however, it linked

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21 Taylor, 296.
23 Ibid., 298.
25 Ibid., 111-114; text of Shanghai Communiqué of 1972.
US-ROC military relations to a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. Later that year, Japan, Taiwan’s most important supporter and trading partner after the US, switched its diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing. More countries would soon follow suit. It was reported that of the states with formal diplomatic relations with the ROC in 1971, 45 percent had switched ties to the PRC from 1971 to 1973. Taiwan’s growing diplomatic isolation brought home the reality that “whatever the differences Taiwanese and mainlanders once had or still have, they are sharing the lifeboat of Taiwan.” The KMT leadership finally realized the task confronting them was that of survival.

**CCK’s Pragmatic Approach**

Faced with dwindling international support, CCK began to take concrete measures towards building a more representative government that allowed for a much wider range of dissident views. In 1966, CCK pushed the National Assembly to approve a constitutional amendment that allowed a supplementary election be held in Taiwan to add a number of new legislative seats to reflect Taiwan’s population growth: 11 new seats to the Legislative Yuan, 15 seats to the National Assembly and 2 seats to the Control Yuan. While the number of new seats was insignificant vis-à-vis the total number of legislative representatives required by the constitution (3,045 seats for the National Assembly, 773 for the Legislative Yuan and 223 seats for the Control Yuan), it was a tiny, but symbolically significant first step toward a more representative government. The election was held in 1969, the year that CCK finally assumed a formal leadership role as the vice premier. During the December election, CCK permitted unprecedented criticism of the regime by non-KMT candidates, including charges of discrimination against native Taiwanese, governmental corruption, and complaints that the lion’s share of government spending went to the military. Some even suggested that the vice-presidency be held by a Taiwanese and martial law lifted. One of the non-party candidates Huang Hsin-chien went so far as to say that return to the mainland was hopeless and the country would suffer if president CKS remained in office much longer. Huang received a warning to tone down his attack, but was allowed to continue his campaign. Three non-party candidates including Huang were elected, with the KMT winning 23 out of all 26 new seats. The harsh criticism of the regime made by the Taiwanese candidates suggested a deep resentment of mainlander dominance on the island, underscoring the dilemma faced by the Nationalist party as CCK embarked on a path to gradually open up the system without losing the party’s grip on power. Following Taiwan’s expulsion from the United Nations in 1971, another amendment to the temporary provisions to add additional new seats to the legislative bodies was passed, further broadening political participation on the island and

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29 Tien, 146, Table 6.1.
Taiwan’s Geopolitics and Chiang Ching-Kuo’s Decision to Democratize Taiwan

In marked contrast to his tough stand against Lei Chen in 1960, CCK now perceived political reform as a means to strengthen the KMT’s ruling position abroad and at home.

Meanwhile, CCK stepped up his effort to co-opt young, talented Taiwanese into the leadership ranks. Beginning in 1969-1970, growing numbers of Taiwanese were appointed to chair the party’s local committees, a direct result of CCK’s efforts to wean out older and incompetent cadres. Between 1968 and 1971, 641 older functionaries, or 37 percent of the total staff in the party’s provincial headquarters retired or left office.44 By 1977, about one third of all county and city chairmen were Taiwanese, and by 1984, half were Taiwanese.45 Lee Huan, who held various important party posts and was instrumental in carrying out CCK’s recruitment policy, described CCK as eager to promote Taiwanese to the party’s provincial offices, describing CCK’s criteria as “Taiwanese, with advanced degrees, possessed new ideas.”46 CCK also made clear to Lee Huan his plan to appoint younger and better educated Taiwanese to central leadership positions in the future. In 1976, CCK instructed Lee Huan to select several dozen young party leaders for the highest-level cadre training program at the party school. Among the 60 individuals chosen for the training, half were Taiwanese, including Lien Chan (a CSC member and minister of foreign affairs), Wu Po-hsiung (a CSC member and mayor of Taipei), Shih Ch’i-yang (a CSC member and vice premier).47

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31 Chiu 1986a, 9-10, quoted in Tien, 145.  The first time a supplementary election was authorized was in 1966 in response to the 47-47 tie vote in the UN to expel the ROC; the 2nd time was after the ROC lost its UN seat, and the 3rd time was after the US-PRC normalized their relations in 1978.
34 Tien, The Great Transition, 70.
35 Ibid., 69-70.
When CCK assumed the premiership in 1972, he appointed six Taiwanese to cabinet posts, including the vice-premiership that was previously held by CCK himself. Three of the remaining four Yuans, the Judicial, Legislative, Examination and Control, had Taiwanese vice-presidents. Also, for the first time a Taiwanese, Hsieh Tung-min was appointed governor of the province of Taiwan. CCK’s appointments of native Taiwanese were hailed by Ta-hsueh ta-chih, Taiwan’s most outspoken independent journal at the time, as “fully reflect[ing] the realities of the political situation.” During the inaugural ceremony of Taiwan’s new Taiwanese governor, CCK emphasized the importance of societal harmony (ren-he) in achieving national unity, and outlined his vision of developing Taiwan into a democratic society as a means to recover the mainland. CCK stated:

“... national unity can only be achieved through ethnic harmony (jen-he). The union of Taiwan’s 15 million people is strong enough to not only guarantee Taiwan’s security, but also to achieve our historical mission of second Northern Expedition [return to the mainland]. In the past, Guangzhou was the base for the victorious Northern Expedition, and Chongqing was the base for our victorious resistance against the Japanese invasion; now Taiwan is the base for victorious return to the mainland. To make greater strides in developing Taiwan today, we must strengthen our democratic political system to ensure that everyone in Taiwan enjoys a freer and more prosperous life in marked contrast to the miserable life under the Communist regime.”

Once CCK was elected party chairman after his father’s death in 1975, additional steps were taken to include Taiwanese in the party’s central organ where the real power resided. Taiwanese membership in the party’s Central Standing Committee (CSC) grew from 2 out of 21 seats in 1969 to 5 out of 22 in 1976, 9 out of 27 in 1979 and 16 out of 31 in 1988. However, the expansion in the size of the CSC was a compromise to avoid the perception that the Taiwanese were squeezing mainlanders out of key posts, showing the delicate line that CCK walked in his effort to fold Taiwanese into the political process.

The increasing number of Taiwanese admitted to the party elite reflected CCK’s willingness to adapt to political reality and shift the party from a temporary government in exile to the ruling party of Taiwan. This rise in political concessions to native Taiwanese followed Taiwan’s loss of its UN seat in 1971 and the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972, suggesting that a shift in the geopolitical balance coupled with Beijing’s aggressive efforts to win Taiwanese sympathy convinced CCK of the urgency of making some political concessions. In his memoir, Lee Huan suggested that CCK’s...
decision to Taiwanese the regime was influenced by both external and internal developments. “Internationally, support for the ROC as China’s legitimate government was rapidly eroding. Domestically, the party was under growing pressure from a younger generation of opposition leaders to open up its political system. To consolidate its power as the ruling party, the KMT had to seek support from, and identify itself with the island’s majority Taiwanese population.”42

Years later, CCK told Hao Pei-ts’un, his chief military advisor, that he chose Lee Teng-hui, a native Taiwanese, as his constitutional successor simply because of the political reality; “it [the next vice president] has to be a Taiwanese.”43 P’eng Ming-min, a prominent dissident supporting Taiwanese independence whom CCK repeatedly tried to co-opt into working within the system in the 1960s, explained that “CCK realized his regime would not be able to return to the mainland, and his only hope for survival is to develop Taiwan and to take every measure to ensure that Taiwanese gradually come to accept his government.”44 On the other hand, CCK was careful to ensure that all sensitive posts remained in the hands of mainlanders. As Jonathan Unger pointed out in his March 6, 1975 report for *Christian Science Monitor*, “The KMT has shown little intention of sharing its power with the Taiwanese.” Furthermore, Unger reported, “political controls have lessened only slightly since Chang Ching-kuo attained power. The press, books, films and TV remain heavily censored; the island’s large network of secret police and informants remains intact, and the jails still hold considerable numbers of political prisoners.”45

To further develop Taiwan’s economy, CCK’s government undertook the “Ten Major Development Projects” to improve Taiwan’s economic infrastructure, focusing on transportation and the capital-intensive petrochemical, iron, and steel industries. Despite their astronomical cost, CCK insisted that the development projects must proceed, noting that “if we don’t do it today, tomorrow we will regret it.”46 The success of the ten major projects played a key role in sustaining Taiwan’s economic growth during the global economic slowdown and energy crisis of the 1970s, and at the same time, enabled the GRC to maintain foreign relations through trade and cultural ties.

Additional evidence of CCK’s changing political agenda can be seen in the gradual reduction of government spending on defense, beginning with the CCK era in 1969. Net government expenditures in general administration and defense as a percentage of GNP decreased from around 60 percent throughout the 1950s and 1960s, to 48.7 percent in 1969 when CCK became vice-premier, down to 43.8 percent in 1972 when he assumed the premiership, 37.1 percent in 1976 when he was elected the party chairman and 37.1 percent in 1978 when he took over the presidency.47 For years, critics of the KMT government had attacked the high percentage of military spending as coming at the expense of Taiwan’s social and economic development. The progressive reduction of government spending on defense under CCK’s

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42 Lin, 113.
46 Taylor, 314.
leadership suggests a major priority shift from recovering the mainland militarily to addressing the needs of the people in Taiwan.

**US De-Recognition of Taiwan and China under Deng Xiaoping’s Reforms**

CCK’s political reforms during the 1970s were best described by Edwin Winckler, who characterized them as a gradual transition from hard to soft authoritarianism. Two major forces, the US de-recognition of Taiwan in 1978, and Deng Xiaoping’s reforms in China, would serve as the catalysts for hardening CCK’s view on Taiwan’s democratic future.

**The Normalization of US-PRC Relations**

On December 15, 1978, President Carter announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC, effective January 1, 1979, and the termination of the US-ROC mutual defense treaty one year after. In his announcement, President Carter made it clear that in recognizing the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, “we are recognizing simple reality.” The United States also stated that it would be withdrawing its remaining military personnel from Taiwan within four months, and would maintain future commercial, cultural and other relations with Taiwan “without official government representation and without diplomatic relations.” In addition, the United States reaffirmed its continuing interest in the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue voiced its expectation “that the Taiwan issue will be settled peacefully by the Chinese themselves.” Meanwhile, the PRC in its statement reiterated its one-China position and stated firmly that the return of Taiwan to its motherland was “entirely China’s internal affair.”

The normalization terms reached between Washington and Beijing raised serious questions about the future of Taiwan. On the one hand, the PRC refused to make an explicit commitment not to use force, which they regarded as a matter of sovereignty. On the other hand, the United States had publicly expressed its intention to supply Taiwan with selected arms of a defensive character. As Senator Jesse Helms put it, “the PRC and the United States hold the ultimate levers: the PRC retains its right to use force, and the United States retains the right to supply [or withhold sales of] defensive weapons.”

Although Secretary of Defense Harold Brown assured the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) hearings that “for a variety of reasons PRC military action against Taiwan is extremely unlikely for the foreseeable future,” that probability could increase should China gain a decisive military advantage, or should Taiwan move toward independence. In terms of total military capabilities, Taiwan was vastly outnumbered in most crucial categories, frequently by a ratio of 10 to 1. Since Taiwan could not match the PRC in quantity, it had to maintain its military advantage by

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50 Ibid., 206, statement by the PRC.
51 Ibid., 216, comments by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to the Senate hearing on Taiwan, Feb 5-22, 1979.
52 Ibid., 219, Senator Jesse Helms: Comments on President Carter’s Taiwan Policy (excerpts).
53 Hu Yaobang during an interview with Pai Hsing director Lu Keng on May 10, 1985 on the Taiwan issue stated that once China has developed its national defense, “if the broad masses of the Taiwan people wish to return and a small number of people do not wish to return, it will be necessary to use some force”; full text of Hu’s interview in Gibert and Carpenter, 378; Deng Xiao-ping told Secretary of Defense Weinberger in September 1983 that “if some movement happens on Taiwan, we will have to react”; source: State Dept Bureau of Intelligence and Research Report 1173-AR, Sept. 19, 1985, included in China and the United States: From Hostility to Engagement, 1960-1998.
54 Lasater, 31.
modernizing its forces, particularly its fighter aircraft. CCK, in his interview with René Viénet of L’Express, stated: “We need better and faster planes and vessels to strengthen our air and sea defenses,” emphasizing Taiwan’s need to “continue obtaining the latest model weapons from the United States so as to increase our defense capability.” Therefore, Taiwan’s deterrent capability depended heavily on its ability to acquire advanced weapons from the United States.

In 1979, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to spell out in considerable detail the US security policy concerning Taiwan and instructions on its implementation. Section 2 of the TRA made it clear that the US decision to normalize relations with the PRC “rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means,” and that any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means would be “of grave concern to the United States.” The TRA further specified that the US would “provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character,” adding that “the President and the Congress shall determine the nature and quantity of such defense articles and services based solely upon their judgment of the needs of Taiwan.” Furthermore, in TRA Section 2c, an assertion stated the United States maintained an active interest in “the human rights of all the people on Taiwan.” With Taiwan’s national security hinging on continued support from the United States, CCK stated plainly that “reality requires that this time-honored and extremely close relationship be perpetuated, so we must swallow the bitter and handle the situation with all the fortitude at our command.” The need to retain US congressional support provided an important impetus for CCK to continue his political reforms, promoting a favorable image of a freer and more modern Taiwan that contrasted with China.

CCK’s Political Reform

On December 20, 1978, less than a week after President Carter’s normalization announcement, CCK instructed the party’s CSC to establish a work committee to examine various areas for reform, including party affairs, politics and foreign relations, social affairs, culture and propaganda, finance and economics, and military affairs. One of the important decisions based on the recommendation from the politics and foreign relations subcommittee was to move the law courts from the executive branch (yuan) to the judicial branch, thus institutionally separating judges from prosecutors and facilitating the move towards judicial independence. CCK believed legal reform was “not only the foundation for realizing democracy, but also the primary task of political reform.” According to Huang Shao-ku, who chaired the Politics and Foreign Relation Subcommittee and was later appointed by CCK as the head of the judicial branch, CCK “had made up his mind with regard to political reform, at least at the time of the diplomatic break between Washington and Taipei.” Huang said CCK instructed the Politics and Foreign Relation Subcommittee

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56 Full text of the TRA in Gibert and Carpenter, ed., 223-229.
57 Ibid., 14.
60 CCK’s report as the Premiere to the Legislative Yuan in September 25, 1973, Selection of CCK speech, from 1/73 - 12/73, Central Daily Publishing, vol.2, 69; CCK was also quoted as saying “democracy equals rule of law (fa zhi); democracy and rule of law are the two sides of a coin; there will be no democracy without rule of law,” in Huang Shao-ku’s eulogy of CCK included in Jiang Zongtong Jingguao xian sheng ai si lu, 378.
61 Huang Shao-ku’s eulogy of CCK included in Jiang Zongtong Jingguao xian sheng ai si lu, 378.
to study many reform proposals. “Some of them, such as the separation of judges from prosecutors, the expansion of central legislative organs, were implemented right away while others were subject to appropriate circumstance before putting into effect,” according to Huang. CCK was convinced that “Democracy must be cultivated and not transplanted and that democracy must be adapted to our own national environment so it can strike root in our own soil.” In May 1980, a more liberal election law was promulgated, followed by an election in December that allowed an unprecedented number of seats in the legislative organs to be filled. The increase meant that the legislative bodies were at least coming closer to being truly representative.

**Taiwan’s Opposition Movement**

Meanwhile, non-party opposition led mainly by young, well-educated Taiwanese elites had gained strength as a result of CCK’s political liberalization in the 1970s. Taiwan’s diplomatic setbacks had mobilized the island’s young intellectual elites to reconsider their role in determining Taiwan’s future. They became increasingly dissatisfied with CCK’s slow pace of political reform, particularly with regard to the martial law that had been in effect on the island since 1949, and the legislative organs that had not faced reelection since 1947. The Chungli riot during the 1977 local election marked the beginning of violent confrontation between Taiwanese opposition and the KMT. The more radical opposition leaders called the Formosa Group (FG) began to mobilize support and took their demands to the streets, leading to a violent clash with the police at Kaohsiung in 1979, known as the Formosa Incident. Under pressure from the party’s conservatives, CCK ordered the arrest of most leaders of the radical Formosa Group and banned the magazine. To mitigate the adverse impact of the Kaohsiung incident on Taiwan’s public image, particularly amidst the US Congress’s debate on the Taiwan Relation Act, CCK decided to make public the military trial of the jailed Formosa leaders in 1979. Taiwan’s opposition forces would soon link up with overseas Taiwanese organizations, such as the Formosa Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), who were actively involved in lobbying congressional support for Taiwan’s independence movement. By joining forces, Taiwan’s opposition found an arena (the US Congress) through which the KMT regime could be indirectly influenced. In 1984, the opposition in Taiwan formally established an organization called the Association for Public Policy (APP) to coordinate a political agenda for democratic reform among the various opposition factions. The APP advocated the principle of self-determination, meaning that the future of Taiwan could only be determined by the people in Taiwan without any outside pressure or threats. While publicly threatening to ban the group, the regime encouraged bargaining and dialogue through unofficial channels, namely a small independent group of liberal professors. By the early 1980s, Taiwan’s opposition movement had emerged as a formidable political force, and CCK made it known that.

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62 Address to the Constitution Day Rally of the National Assembly, December 25, 1979, Ibid. Perspectives, 28.
64 The definition of “self-determination” was taken from the FAPA website.
65 Tun-jen Cheng, 488-489.
he was “personally pushing for a policy of dialogue.”

The new non-governmental relationship between the United States and Taiwan implied that both Beijing and Taipei had accepted a *de facto* one China, one Taiwan arrangement. Faced with the new political reality, CCK now perceived political reform as the only viable means of strengthening Taiwan’s position against the PRC and retaining US support, especially in light of growing congressional support for Taiwan’s opposition movement.

*De facto* One China, One Taiwan Arrangement

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Deng Xiaoping’s Reform and Reunification Campaign

Meanwhile in China, Deng Xiaoping reemerged as the paramount leader of the CCP. His economic reforms and open door policy would soon capture the world’s attention. Abroad, Deng was elected “Man of the Year” by *Time* magazine in January 1979, and his six-day whirlwind tour of the United States captivated the American public. At home, Deng’s pragmatic reform policy would soon lift millions of Chinese out of poverty and put China on the path to modernization.

Meanwhile, the PRC stepped up its reunification campaign soon after it normalized relations with the United States. On January 1, 1979, the PRC announced the cessation of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) bombardment of offshore islands, and asked for contacts and exchanges to begin. It promised to respect the status quo on Taiwan so as not to cause any injury to the people of Taiwan. During the same year, Deng Xiaoping on various occasions suggested that Taiwan could maintain autonomy and its own armed forces as well as its present capitalist social and economic system.

In September 1981, National People’s Congress (NPC) Chairman Ye Jianying gave a formal nine-point proposal for peace talks between the CCP and the KMT (rather than between the two governments) on a reciprocal basis, preceded by informal discussions and exchanges. A month later, at a rally on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the 1911 revolution led by the KMT, CCP chief Hu Yaobang personally offered to meet with CCK to discuss reunification. In July 1982, Liao Chengzhi, a prominent official with family ties to the Chiang family, wrote a letter to CCK offering special treatment for the KMT involving coexistence and mutual supervision between the two parties as they cooperated in building China. In December 1982, the NPC adopted a new State Constitution to “establish special administrative regions (SAR),” the legal framework for Deng’s one country, two systems formula of reunification with Taiwan and Hong Kong. The SARs were guaranteed a high degree of autonomy, including control over their existing economic, political, social and judicial systems.

The PRC’s peaceful reunification campaign had serious implications for US arms sales to Taiwan. As stated by John H. Holdridge, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “China’s peaceful policy bore directly on the defense needs of Taiwan. So long as that policy continued, the threat to Taiwan would be greatly diminished.”

In January 1982, the Reagan administration decided not to sell the advanced FX fighter jet to Taiwan for fear of jeopardizing Sino-American relations; the PRC had threatened to downgrade relations if the arms sales issue was not resolved satisfactorily. In its
explanation of the decision, the State Department concluded that “...no sale of advanced fighter aircraft to Taiwan is required because no military need for such aircraft exists.”

In his letter to Deng in May 1982, President Reagan stated: “we fully recognize the significance of the nine-point proposal of September 30, 1981.” In a separate letter, Reagan told the PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang, “we expect that in the context of progress toward a peaceful solution [of the Taiwan-mainland issue], there would naturally be a decrease in the need for arms by Taiwan.”

In the joint communiqué signed by Washington and Beijing on August 17, 1982, the Chinese government reiterated its fundamental policy of pursuing peaceful means to resolve the Taiwan issue; the United States, having in mind China’s peaceful policy and the consequent reduction in the military threat to Taiwan, stated that the US arms sales to Taiwan “will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution.”

Reassured by President Reagan’s personal commitment, however, CCK continued his policy of patience and restraint toward the United States while instructing Hao Pei-ts’un to step up Taiwan’s weapons development programs. When asked by foreign media whether Taiwan had considered the option of developing nuclear weapons, CCK stated that Taiwan had the capability to produce nuclear bombs, but would never use it against Chinese on the mainland. With regard to negotiating with the PRC, CCK continued to reject China’s call for peace talks, which he insisted was simply “a united front conspiracy for swallowing up Taiwan.”

To combat Deng’s increasingly aggressive reunification campaign, CCK called for Beijing to begin by “learning from Taipei in politics.” In 1981, CCK relayed his four-point program to James R. Lilley, the new AIT director, through a private envoy: democratization, including comprehensive elections; Taiwanization – the days of mainlander control were coming to an end, and Taiwanese must take an increasingly prominent role; continued economic prosperity, which was key to achieving democratization and Taiwanization; and finally, the development of working relations with China.

Premier Y. S. Sun stated publicly in February 1983 that “... If the political, economic, social and cultural gaps between the Chinese mainland and free China continue to narrow, the conditions for peaceful reunification can gradually mature.” In May, CCK told Wulf Küster of Der Spiegel that Taiwan’s success “in implementing democracy and in pursuing economic development has enabled the people as a whole to enjoy the blessings of freedom, progress and prosperity in Taiwan. All Chinese have therefore pinned their...
hopes on Free China.” The development in the mainland had convinced CCK that “China would have a great future” if Taiwan and the mainland could reunite under a democratic political framework.

On September 26, 1984, the PRC and Britain reached a settlement on Hong Kong under Deng’s one country, two systems formula. During their meeting, Deng asked British Prime Minister Thatcher to pass a message to President Reagan asking that the Americans “do something” to promote contact between Taiwan and the mainland. On January 19, 1985, Deng stated that now that agreement had been reached on Hong Kong, “our next step is to solve the Taiwan problem. Our terms are more than generous: Taiwan can retain its army.”

CCK was now racing against time to complete his political reform, knowing fully that Taiwan could not compete with China for economic power in the long run.

The Final Push for Democracy
Domestic Scandals and Setbacks

Meanwhile, the regime suffered a series of scandals that seriously tarnished the KMT’s image abroad as well as at home. In February 1980, the family of Lin Yi-hsiung, one of the eight Kaohsiung defendants, was brutally murdered. The case was never solved. In July 1981, Ch’en Wen-cheng, a Chinese scholar at the Carnegie-Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh, was found dead in Taipei after a lengthy interrogation by security police. The US House of Representatives Subcommittee for East Asia and Pacific Affairs held hearings on this matter that revealed details of extensive surveillance of Chinese in the United States by KMT agents. The committee warned the Taiwan authorities that intimidation of people from Taiwan in the United States by the KMT agents could result in restriction of arms sales to Taiwan. In October 1984, Henry Liu, a mainland-born, Taiwan-educated US citizen who had written a rather unflattering biography of CCK, was shot to death in his garage in Daly City, near San Francisco. It was later revealed that Taiwan’s Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (IBMND) was involved in arranging Liu’s murder without CCK’s knowledge. With strong evidence from the FBI implicating Wang Hsi-ling, the head of IBMND, as personally directing the murder, CCK ordered the dismissal of Wang and his two associates and their trial by military court for Liu’s murder. CCK was clearly disturbed by the IBMND’s involvement in the case. CCK was primarily concerned about the potential impact of Liu’s case on US arms sales to Taiwan, especially on the sale of the much desired advanced fighter plane promised by President Reagan. During the FBI’s investigation of Liu’s case, the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs held a hearing to determine whether this act of terrorism in America warranted the suspension of arms sales to Taiwan. The Washington Post described the Taiwan government as “a favored friend acting like a thug.” CCK was compelled to permit FBI agents to come to Taipei to interview the accused gang members, and eventually approve their request to interview Admiral

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80 Taylor, 384, interview with Yu Chi-chung on March 9, 1998.
82 State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research Report, 5.
84 Hao Pei-ts’un Diary, 214; also Jay Taylor, 389.
85 Taylor, 388.
86 Taylor, 389.
Wang Hsi-ling, to whom they administered a polygraph test. While the scandals of the early 1980s did not seriously damage Taiwan-US relations, they had a profound impact on the dynamics of domestic politics. The revelation of government involvement in the Liu case, and most likely the Lin and Ch’en cases as well, caused many people to question the integrity of the KMT as a ruling party. How could people trust a regime that relied on criminal gangs to terrorize their enemies? The regime’s image was further tarnished by the collapse of the Tenth Credit Cooperative, Taiwan’s largest savings and loan institution, and its sister investment outfit, Cathay Investment & Trust Co. in 1985. The case involved almost US $200 million in illegal loans, and a number of high ranking government officials were implicated in the case. While the scandals prompted CCK to take measures to revamp the intelligence and financial systems, they also severely undermined public confidence in the regime.

China in 1985

Spurred by Deng’s pro-market reforms, China’s economy was overheating and inflationary pressures were mounting; corruption among party officials and bureaucrats, particularly by children of high-ranking party leaders, was rampant. A rising tide of resentment over economic abuses had led to mass protests and demonstrations by students and workers in the cities. For the first time, one could hear Chinese openly criticize Deng’s reform policies. As China began to transform itself economically and politically under Deng’s reform policies, CCK realized it was time to act decisively to achieve a political breakthrough.

CCK’s Political Breakthrough

In February 1985, CCK appointed Ma Shu-li Secretary General of the party, and told Ma that he was determined to implement a full range of democratic reforms over the next year or two.87 In an interview with Time magazine published in September 1985, CCK stated that the Republic of China was a constitutional democracy, and as president, he intended to safeguard the constitution and to maintain democracy and the rule of law. As to the succession to the presidency by a member of the Chiang family, CCK said “I had never given any consideration to it.”88 In his address to the National Assembly on the Constitution Day the same year (December 25, 1985), CCK stated unambiguously that a successor to the President would be produced according to the constitution, and members of the Chiang family “could not and would not” (pu-neng ye pu-hui) run for president. Furthermore, CCK declared that the ROC “could not and would not” have military rule.89 At the KMT’s third plenum in March 1986, CCK announced that a new political reform committee of 24 people, divided into two task forces of 12 each, would study three major issues: the ending of martial law; parliamentary reform; and the legalization of opposition parties. According to James Soong, CCK seemed determined to achieve political breakthrough after the party’s third plenum. “He (CCK) seemed rather anxious and precise,” said Soong.90 Moreover, Ma Ying-jeou, CCK’s English-language secretary, suggested that the Henry Liu scandal and the collapse of the Tenth Credit Cooperative contributed directly to CCK’s decision to hold the party’s third plenum in March 1986. “While ‘reform’ was not

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87 Taylor, 396, interview with Ma Shu-li.
88 Time, Sept 16, 1985, 46.
89 Taylor, 399; Hao Pei-ts’u’an Diary, 285.
90 Interview with James Soong, Hsin hsin-wen (HHW), January 2-8, 1989, 17.
explicitly declared, it was the substance of the third plenum, and everyone in the party knew that,” said Ma. On September 28, 1986, the opposition members formally announced the establishment of its own party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). When informed of the news, CCK called a meeting of the core group of senior officials and told them “times are changing; the environment is changing and the tide is also changing.”91 In October, CCK announced his intention to lift the martial law during an interview with Katherine Graham of the Washington Post. CCK said that a longstanding desire to democratize as well as improve economic conditions on Taiwan had led to the decision to end the decrees.92 CCK also told Graham that the KMT was studying the question of legalizing new political parties “very vigorously” and expected to come to a conclusion “very soon.”93 When asked whether CCK’s decision to lift the martial law was the result of pressure from international public opinion, Ma Ying-jeou said CCK felt “the conditions at home had ripe[ned], and the strengthening of democracy was an important part to improve Taiwan’s international image and to entice Chinese on the mainland.”94 Ma said “we talked about learning from Taipei in politics, and yet what did we expect the mainland to learn from us? If our democracy remained on a shaky ground, we certainly did not mean to suggest that they learn from our martial law experience, and CCK understood this very well.”

In July 1987, CCK appointed his old confidant Lee Huan as the new party’s secretary. CCK told Lee Huan he had three goals he would like him to fulfil:95 96 to reform the party; to move towards democracy; and to move towards reunification. Taiwan had been separated from the mainland for more than forty years; CCK felt that Taiwan now had the ability and strength to effect China’s reunification.97 CCK told Lee “We have to take initiatives to put us on the road to reunification,” adding that “Taiwan and the mainland must eventually unify. If they do not, Taiwan will find it harder and harder to exist independently.”98 In September, Lee Huan addressed the KMT’s Kaohsiung headquarters, and declared that the party’s goal of retaking the mainland was no longer to replace the communist party, but to push for “democracy, freedom of press, and an open economy in the mainland so as to rid China of Communism and to move it toward a democratic modern state.”99 Lee argued that democracy meant people should be allowed to choose which government they want, and “the KMT would be violating the principle of democracy and would not have the support from Chinese if it simply insisted on replacing the Communist Party.” While Lee Huan’s speech was criticized by the party’s right wing as betraying the party’s historic commitment to destroy the communists, it had the support of

91 Taylor, 406; interview with Ma Ying-jeou, HHW, January 2-8, 1989, 17.
93 Ibid.
94 Interview with Ma Ying-jeou, 28.
95 Lin Yin-ting, 247.
96 Ibid., 247.
97 Ibid., 247.
98 Taylor, 414, based on his interview with Lee Huan.
99 Lin Yin-ting, 251.
the CCK who instructed Lee to have his speech published in its entirety in the party’s official journal. Lee Huan’s democratic view of China’s future clearly reflected CCK’s political thinking during the time the reform decisions were made.

On July 15, 1987, martial law was formally lifted. On November 2, the government opened up legal travel, mainly family visits, to the mainland; on January 1, 1988, bans related to the organization of political parties and the freedom of the press were lifted. Taiwan was on its way to a true democracy. Twelve days later, on January 13, CCK passed away.

Conclusion

From enforcer of the White Terror to benevolent political reformer, CCK had demonstrated extraordinary adaptability to political reality. The first political realization for CCK came during the 1958 Battle of Quemoy when he realized return to China could only be achieved through political means, namely the implementation of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s “Three People’s Principles” as stated by his father, Chiang Kai-shek in the October 24, 1958 joint communiqué. However, so long as the United States remained a strong ally and the KMT leadership was confident in Taiwan’s security, CCK showed no sign of loosening up its control over the island’s dissidents. CCK’s tough position against Lei Chen in 1960 was a strong indicator of his attitude toward a democratic system at the time.

The second turning point for CCK’s political learning came when the ROC was expelled from the United Nations, forcing CCK to confront the regime’s legitimacy crisis head on. The 1972 supplementary election to add another 119 new seats to the legislative bodies was another symbolic step CCK took “to liberalize the pattern of representative government.” It was, in CCK’s own words, “a major step toward realizing our goal of constitutional democracy.” CCK’s tolerance for unprecedented criticism during the election was a good indicator of his changing views. CCK felt strongly that in Taiwan’s difficult diplomatic circumstances, his regime “must begin with political reform in order to bring about the overall reform necessary to build a strong and incorruptible government.” CCK’s effort to Taiwanize the regime became more evident after Taiwan lost its seat in the United Nations, suggesting that the GRC’s dwindling foreign relations may have impressed upon CCK the urgency of making political concessions. As CCK stated in June 1972 during the inaugural ceremony of Taiwan’s first Taiwanese governor, “To make greater strides in developing Taiwan today, we must strengthen our democratic political system to ensure that everyone in Taiwan enjoys a freer and more prosperous life in marked contrast to the miserable life under the Communist regime.” CCK now perceived a more democratic system as not only beneficial to his party, but necessary to secure his regime’s long-term survival.

The final push for CCK’s break from the KMT’s authoritarian past came when the United States announced the normalization of relations with the PRC, and severed its relations with Taiwan in 1978. With Taiwan’s security hinged upon continued support from the US Congress, CCK stated plainly that “reality requires that . . . we swallow the bitter and handle the situation with all the fortitude at our command.” CCK wasted no
time in laying the groundwork for his democratic reform agenda. Less than a week after President Carter’s normalization announcement, CCK instructed the party’s CSC to establish a work committee to study various areas for reform. His pragmatic reform program during this time, including legal reform, a more liberal election law, and allowing unprecedented number of new seats in the legislative organs to be filled by election in 1980, suggested that CCK had made up his mind toward a democratic system based on rule of law and a true representative legislative body. CCK was convinced then that Taiwan must pursue a democratic path in order to remain viable as an independent political entity. The final settlement reached between the PRC and Britain on Hong Kong’s return to China, compounded by a stream of domestic scandals that seriously tarnished the KMT’s image abroad and at home, would compel CCK to achieve political breakthrough in order to rejuvenate his party and to strengthen Taiwan’s bargaining position with the PRC. As CCK confided to Lee Huan in 1987 “we have to take initiatives to put us on the road to reunification.” Otherwise, Taiwan would find it “harder and harder to exist independently.”

CCK’s sense of urgency during and after the party’s third plenum in March 1986 was a clear indication that he was determined to move forward with democratization. CCK’s political thinking during the time his democratic reform decision was made was best captured by his philosophical remarks on September 28, 1986 when he told his senior staff that “times are changing; the environment is changing and the tide is also changing,” after learning that Taiwan’s opposition had formally announced the establishment of its own party, the DPP. Clearly, Taiwan’s changing geopolitics had shaped CCK’s view on Taiwan’s democratic future.

While CCK revealed very little of his political thinking in public or to his close associates during his nineteen years reign since he assumed the vice-premiership in 1969, evidence presented here suggests a strong linkage between Taiwan’s geopolitics and CCK’s changing attitude from hard to soft authoritarian and eventually leading to Taiwan’s democratization. Confronted with the task of his regime’s survival, CCK took additional steps to liberalize the political system each time Taiwan suffered a major diplomatic setback. Taiwan’s changing geopolitical circumstance had forced CCK to time and again to adapt to harsh political reality by broadening political participation by Taiwanese. His strategy of developing a freer and more prosperous Taiwan was the only viable means to secure Taiwan’s foreign relations in light of China’s aggressive effort to isolate Taiwan internationally. Knowing fully that Taiwan could not hope to compete with China for power under Deng’s reform and open door policy, CCK opted for a democratic alternative to entice Chinese on the mainland to overthrow the communist regime. As CCK often said, “Small nations have to adjust to international geopolitical circumstances and protect themselves the best they can.”

103 See note 93.
104 Cline, 124.
China’s Paradox Passage into Modernity: A Study on the Portrayal of Sexual Harassment in Chinese Media

Diana Fu

Introduction

In October of 1949, Mao Zedong led the Red Army into Beijing, founded the All-China Women’s Federation, established a constitution that promised to protect the rights and interests of women, unbound women’s feet, and trained them to become party cadres so they could “hold up half the sky.” Almost half a century later, the muddy, cloudless sky that domes Beijing is still in place, but the women who struggle to hold up their share of it need to hurdle an additional bar: eating tofu, a Chinese colloquial term which refers to sexual harassment. Having passed the 1992 Law of the PRC on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women, launched the 1995 to 2000 Program for the Development of Chinese Women, and held the 1995 UN Convention on Women’s Rights in Beijing, the Chinese government seems determined to project an all-new image of China as not only a burgeoning global economic power, but also as a modern socialist nation that is undergoing tidal periods of rights-based social reform, the most exceptional of which is women’s rights. Within this broad umbrella, the government has most recently turned its attention to cracking down on sexual harassment. Beginning in the 1990s, Chinese mass media including newspapers, films, magazine, journal articles, and television, began inundating the Chinese public with stories of sexual harassment. Daily, national newspapers publicized the status of the Capital’s first sexual harassment lawsuit, law experts’ debates, and the possibility of a counter-sexual harassment law. This deluge of reporting is interesting for several reasons. First, the Chinese term for sexual harassment, xing sao rao, is a foreign notion that was transported into China only in the early 1990s, contemporaneous with the flourishing of Deng Xiaoping’s open reforms and China’s emergence onto the world stage. Second, the Chinese government and media devotes overwhelming attention to sexual harassment while the country is plagued with other atrocious social ills such as the trafficking of women, infanticide, widespread poverty, enormous income disparity, and terrorism in the northern provinces. Third, it is perplexing that the Chinese media often frames sexual harassment with rights-based rhetoric despite China’s firm dodging and explicit rejection of what is regarded as a Western-imposed human rights watch.
Finally, news coverage of sexual harassment almost exclusively revolves around urban, professional women, thereby marginalizing an entire section of the working population: migrant female workers who are arguably the most defenseless and disadvantaged sexual harassment victims. In other words, it is ironic that the Chinese government should choose to focus on combating sexual harassment. This irony, in turn, makes it worthy to question exactly which social, economic, and political factors push the Chinese government to address sexual harassment, as well as its implications for the Communist party. Through analyzing numerous Chinese newspaper sources, academic journal articles, and magazines articles, I argue that the Chinese government is launching a serious, wide-scale campaign against sexual harassment to secure international recognition for its modern rights reforms, trumpet women’s rights as a socialist achievement, and strike at a pervasive social ill which not only threatens the national economy but also permits transnational companies operating in China to take advantage of a gap in Chinese law.

Methodology

In conducting this research, I have translated and analyzed over eighty Chinese language newspaper articles from a wide variety of sources including The People's Daily, Xinhua News, the Beijing Youth Daily, China Economic Times, The Southern Daily, Xing Xi Shi Bao, Business Times, Youth Reference (Qing Nian Can Kao), New Fast News (Xing Quai Bao), The China Youth Daily, The China Morning Post, Life Times (Shen Hao Shi Bao), Xingming Evening News, Sichuan Huaxi Du Shi Bao, and the Zhengzhou Evening News, in addition to numerous Chinese language academic and magazine journal articles from journals such as the Women's Research Periodicals, the China Women's Movement, and Society. In analyzing Chinese news and journal articles, I was primarily interested in the origin of the term, xing sao rao, the legal standing of sexual harassment, recent cases, statistics on its prevalence, government measures, the official attitude, references to sexual harassment abroad, linkages to rhetoric of modernity/development, and both expert and public opinions.

One limitation to this methodology is that its reliance on the written media in combination with some published statistics on sexual harassment in China in order to draw the factors and implications of the Chinese government’s crackdown on sexual harassment. The most direct method would be to conduct statistical analysis on the prevalence of sexual harassment before and after the government implemented its counter-sexual harassment measures, and to compare it with the Chinese government's published results in order to see if there is a gap between what is actually happening and what the government reports is happening. However, my primary goal in this paper is not to study the effectiveness of the government’s counter-sexual harassment measures (partly because the People’s Congress is still in the process of drafting a counter-sexual harassment bill), but to deduce some possible motivations behind the Chinese government’s actions through analyzing the factors that push it to pay overwhelming attention to sexual harassment. In looking for these factors in newspaper articles, a clear link between the Chinese media and the Chinese government needs to be established.

The Chinese Media: From Propaganda Machine to a State-Market Complex

In any transitioning state, the media plays an important role because it is both a mirror reflecting society and a channel guiding the flow of society in a certain direction. Since
1949, the Chinese media has served as the voice of the Communist Party until recently, when the government’s withdrawal of state subsidies has forced the press to commercialize. Although this commercialization unleashed a relatively decentralized forum for entertaining, educating, and informing the masses, the state still maintains a strong censorship of any news that affects the party’s image. For instance, in 1996, the government launched a Legal Awareness Campaign in which it used various media, such as radio, television, and newspapers, to publicize the Ten Basic Laws of the People’s Republic of China, which included the 1992 Law Safeguarding Women’s Rights and Interests. In 1994, the Informational Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China explicitly stated that mass media and research institutes “play an important role in safeguarding the rights and interests and promoting the advancement of women.” Thus, the Chinese media is still obligated to be in tune with the Chinese government’s agenda. The dual role of the media as both an ideological apparatus and a commodity has been termed the “state-market complex,” which “works in and through the media to form a contingent and shifting alliance for winning popular support.” In the end, semi-commercialization does not amount to freedom of the press but a transference of the media into the hands of the wealthy and powerful, which, in China, are the same party members, journalists, and businessmen who are supposed to regulate the media. In short, the Chinese media is hardly free from the government’s entanglement.

Mass media coverage of sexual harassment began in the early 1990s but did not provoke a nationwide sensation until China’s first sexual harassment lawsuit in July of 2001, in which a female worker, Ms. Tong, lost her case against her boss on grounds of insufficient evidence. According to a 2002 newspaper article in Xinhua News, “The Internet, television stations reported this incident in the most prominent sections, declaring that ‘China’s first case of sexual harassment has surfaced’. . . All of a sudden, the sexual harassment lawsuit became a street topic. . .” Since then, sexual harassment stories have deluged the nation’s newspapers, with at least four or five new articles daily appearing on the Xinhua News Agency website. Although it is not known exactly how these stories get into the Chinese media, a common trend emerged in numerous articles: the news agency receives phone calls or reader letters and then dispatches journalists to investigate scenes where the alleged sexual harassment took place and also interview the victims. Although these types of reporting demonstrate that the government does not directly handpick particular sexual harassment incidents that the media covers, the very fact that the government allows so many sexual harassment articles to appear in print implies a form of media guidance. In other words, because the Chinese press is semi-market controlled, the Chinese government still has power (as demonstrated in the
media campaigns mentioned above) to steer media coverage in a certain direction by making sexual harassment trials public, releasing state-directed television series about sexual harassment, funding social scientists who then publicly discuss sexual harassment, and allowing state officials to talk about the drafting of a counter-sexual harassment bill. All of these activities provoke mass media’s attention and coverage. Here, I am not suggesting a vast conspiracy on the part of the Chinese government, but only that these are some of the ways through which any government can influence media coverage. In a one party system like China’s, the effects of this influence or steering are greatly magnified because there is no opposition party vying for media control. Thus, in this paper, I make the assumption that the Chinese media is an adequate, although not perfect, medium through which one can construe government attitudes, public opinion, official actions, legal issues, and various other factors surrounding sexual harassment. With this understanding, one can now look at how the term xing sao rao penetrated China.

The Origin and Evolution of Xing Sao Rao in China: Tofu Turned Sour

“Beautiful women really are like tofu in many respects: white skin, shining smooth yet also elastic, delicate souls, gentle as jade…and now, one Beijing Tofu is angry…” writes a man in a June 2003 column for Xinhua News, one of China’s largest news portals. This “Beijing Tofu” is Ms. Lei Man, a twenty-five year old college graduate who recently filed Beijing’s first sexual harassment lawsuit, for 200,000 yuan, against her employer, Mr. Jiao, at a computer technology company called Fang Zhen Ao De. Ms. Lei Man was not China’s first tofu to turn sour. Two years ago, Ms. Tong of Xi’an, located in Hebei province, lit the spark on a nationwide debate about sexual harassment when she filed China’s first sexual harassment lawsuit against her manager. On October 24th, 2001, the Xian City Lian Hu District Court ruled against Ms. Tong on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Of the four other publicized sexual harassment lawsuits since Ms. Tong, only two were successful, and in both cases, the plaintiffs had provided overwhelming physical evidence such as cassette tapes and documents of reprimand. In all five cases, female plaintiffs suffered enormous social pressure, as embodied by the popular saying, “The fly never lands on the un-cracked egg.”

Xing sao rao, the Chinese term for sexual harassment, was transplanted from the West in the early 1990s. It is not clear how or why the term transferred to China, and most Chinese academics credit the radical American feminist, Catherine MacKinnon, with coining the English term in the 1970s. However, despite the entry of this Western term, China lacks a legal definition of sexual harassment. Because of this, a myriad of definitions has emerged, almost all of them borrowing the ideas of gender discrimination and unequal power relations. In the meantime, sexual harassment runs rampant in China, with numbers matching those from the United States, France, Belgium, and Eastern Europe. A 2002 article in the Information Times (Xing Xi Shi Bao) reports that 50 percent of China’s sexual harassment occurs in the workplace, with 36 percent coming from superior and 14 percent from co-workers (Expert 1). A study

9 Mao Haifeng and Li Liang, 1.
done by sexual harassment expert Tang Can revealed that 84 percent of 186 women reported having been sexually harassed, and 90 percent have known of a woman who was sexually harassed.12 Although these figures appear atrocious enough to draw any government’s attention, I am interested in the underlying dynamics that push these figures to the surface, allowing sexual harassment to be widely publicized in Chinese media, discussed in televised debates, and written about in academic journals. In the following sections, I expound on the three central factors that lie behind the Chinese government’s crackdown on sexual harassment in conjunction with their implications for the Communist Party.

Casting An Image of the Modern China to the International Audience

One of the primary underlying motivations propelling the government’s recent crackdown is that sexual harassment is a global problem which, if handled appropriately, can serve as the perfect leverage for the government to cast an image of China as a socially developed and essentially modern country. This is evident through the media’s juxtaposition of sexual harassment with China’s socioeconomic development, the citing of other industrial nations’ efforts, and depicting the modern, professional woman as primary victims.

First, an overwhelming number of sources suggest that sexual harassment emerged as a prevalent social problem only after China’s open reforms, which began in the early 1980s under Deng Xiaoping. In a Chinese academic article titled, “Workplace Sexual Harassment and Precautions,” researcher Guo Huiming argues, “In our country, due to economic reforms, conceptual openings, and the sudden, multi-faceted change in workplace organizational structure in combination with the flood of unmarried women into the work force, sexual harassment has been on the rise. . .”13 In a 2002 newspaper article titled, “Unable to Tolerate her Superior’s Sexual Harassment, Hubei Teacher Goes to Court in Anger,” a journalist writes, “They [Chinese law experts] believe that as society develops, men and women will interact more and more, and the term xing sao rao will appear more frequently.”14 Researcher Tang Can also writes, “Since china’s open reforms are contingent with economic, structural changes, these types of behaviors [sexual harassment] have risen dramatically.”15 While correlating sexual harassment with China’s socioeconomic development may seem perfectly rational, the piece missing from the written media is that sexual harassment was rampant during the Mao era, before the term xing sao rao was even coined. In fact, it is widely known that many Communist cadres sexually harassed their female counterparts, threatening dismissal if they did not comply. By leaving out sexual harassment during the Mao era, the Chinese media effectively implies that sexual harassment is an appendage to socioeconomic development.

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15 Tang, 51.
and depicts it as a common social problem in all industrial countries, including China. This latter part of the claim is even more evident when one analyzes how often sexual harassment is discussed in the context of an international problem that China shares with many other advanced nations such as the United States, France, Belgium, Japan, Spain, Denmark, Great Britain, and Canada. For example, researcher Yang Aiping, in her paper, “Counter-Sexual Harassment Measures in China and Abroad,” states, “Anyhow, sexual harassment isn’t restricted to China; it is also a prominent problem in the international community. Although many countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Belgium, and Spain have sexual harassment laws, it still has not been stopped.”16 In a transcript of an interview with Chinese law experts, the journalist begins by asking, “Will Professor Zhang and Professor Tan please discuss the situation of sexual harassment in other industrial nations and also in China?”17 In a publicized interview with several law experts, sexual harassment expert Tang Can said, “The problem of obtaining evidence for sexual harassment is not solely a Chinese problem; it is an international problem.”18 These references clearly show that the Chinese government sees its efforts as a part of an international movement spearheaded by industrial nations. Implicit in this framework is that China must be on-par (at least socially) with the United States or other advanced nations if it is also cracking down on the modern problem of sexual harassment.

The Chinese government’s efforts to link sexual harassment to modernity is further highlighted by mass media’s overwhelming depiction of the harassed victim as the “modern Chinese woman” rather than the migrant female worker. Although there is no set definition of what it means to be a modern or civilized woman, it can be inferred from Chinese magazine and newspaper articles that the modern Chinese woman or mo dun nu lang is an urban professional who, above all, is confident, courageous, and defiant of the “three obediences” (namely, to one’s father before marriage, to one’s husband after marriage, and to one’s son during widowhood). Chinese scholar Hai Guanzen suggests that the changing image of the women can be detected in slang terms. For instance, qun cha, feng dai, e-mei are olden day terms for women that all describe women’s physical appearance, whereas modern terms such as “half the sky,” “Miss Public Relations,” and “Airlines Lady” emphasize women’s active roles in society.19 In newspaper articles, an overwhelming number of female victims are described as working women-secretaries, academics, teachers, technocrats, recent university graduates- who are often called zhi ye nu xing, and who are sexually harassed by their male superiors. All of these examples paint a very particular image of the sexual harassment victim that is in line with China’s emerging modernity. Specifically, in the eighty-some newspaper articles reviewed from 2002 to 2003, none mentioned the plight of female workers who flock to the cities for scrub work in restaurants and other service sectors, only to be taken advantage of by their bosses and co-workers. Instead, xing sao rao is almost exclusively an urban affair. For

instance, one 2002 article titled, “Definitions of Sexual Harassment and Other Preventive Measures” states, “recently, a female Ph.D student reported to the court after being sexually harassed by her advisor.”20 In another article in the Beijing Youth Daily, titled, “The Pressure and Dignity of Survival: Professional Women Discuss Sexual Harassment,” the journalist interviews three victims: a secretary in a Guangzhou Company, a real estate agent for a private company, and a marketing representative for a pharmaceutical company.21 Ms. He, China’s first victorious sexual harassment lawsuit plaintiff, was a schoolteacher in Wuhan; Ms. Lei Man, the plaintiff in Beijing’s first sexual harassment lawsuit, worked at a computer technology firm; Ms. Tong, who filed China’s first harassment lawsuit, was an office worker at a state-owned company in Xian.

Given the Chinese government proposal to improve the conditions of all Chinese women, it seems perplexing that stories on sexual harassment of migrant workers are absent from Chinese mainstream media. Of course, one could argue that the absence of female migrant workers in the Chinese media may stem from the fact that they are often too uneducated to file sexual harassment lawsuits, too illiterate to write into the newspapers, and too afraid to call hotlines. While this argument is plausible, it is widely known in China that these migrant workers are the most vulnerable and defenseless victims of sexual harassment and other rights abuses. In his article titled, “Migrant Women Workers and The Emerging Civil Society in China,” author Zhang Ye states that migrant women workers are uniquely disadvantaged due to the hukou system, which denies the floating population permanent residency, so that they become a transient source of capital for local economies.22 Indeed, if these migrant workers do not write to the press, there are other ways to publicize their situation, such as through academic research. Yet most Chinese academic articles addressing sexual harassment hardly mention migrant women workers as a target population. The Zhu Jiang San Jiao Zhou investigation of female migrant workers in the service industry is an exception. According to this report, numerous female migrant workers have reported being sexually harassed by liumang on the streets near their workplace, and they see it as workplace sexual harassment. Locals report that these liumang are afraid to harass city girls, so they take advantage of female migrant workers. If it is hard to secure hard-fact stories about the plight of migrant workers and sexual harassment, their situations can be illuminated through films or television series regarding sexual harassment. Yet China’s most popular state-produced television series, “Women Must Not Remain Silent Any Longer,” only reinforces the image of the sexual harassment victim as a young, urban professional. Film and television are only a few of the ways in which Chinese media can effectively publicize the plight of Chinese female migrant workers.23

The fact that there has been little effort on the part of media to publicize sexual harassment of female migrant workers sheds

substantial light onto the Chinese government’s casting of a modern image to the international community. According to the State Council Information Office of the PRC, “The press, radio, and television publicize state laws and regulations upholding women’s rights and interests and civilized and progressive views on women” (emphasis added). From this statement, one can see that not only does the Chinese government steer the media into “promoting the advancement of women” but more importantly, that it seeks to propagate “civilized and progressive views on women.” The latter is significant because migrant women workers represent a part of the enormous floating population whose very existence reflects a layer of social turmoil, economic backwardness, and political instability that can hardly be considered progressive. Thus, it follows that media coverage depicting sexual harassment as an integral problem to the migrant working population would be a direct blow to casting China as a socially developed, industrial nation bent on combating a global social ill. On the other hand, urban professional women working in office buildings, schools, computer firms, and other businesses and suffering sexual harassment reinforce China’s socioeconomic development, thereby thrusting it onto the same platform as other advanced nations, such as the United States. Here, I am not suggesting that the primary objective of the Chinese government’s crackdown on sexual harassment is to propagate an image of China’s modernity but rather that it is one of many underlying factors that may motivate the Chinese government to strike especially hard at sexual harassment while many other related problems such as trafficking women, infanticide, sex selection, the floating population, and domestic abuse prevail. By linking sexual harassment to other advanced nations, rights reform rhetoric, and the urban professional woman, the Chinese government establishes China as a modern nation that champions women’s rights, values international standards, and imposes a strong legal system.

A Message to the West: Trumpeting Women’s Rights as a Socialist Achievement

If one of the underlying goals of the Chinese government is to establish China as being in the midst of a modern rights reform, then the implication for the Communist Party involves sending a message to the international community that a socialist system is not inferior to Western democracies in the realm of women’s rights. Through the examination of Chinese government laws that address issues relating to women, as well as the literature on the 1995 UN Convention on Women’s Rights, it can be inferred that sexual harassment is being portrayed in a serious manner by the state, which is using the Chinese media as a tool to trumpet women’s rights as a socialist system’s achievement. By doing so, the state is sending a message to Western powers that China can be a developed, rights-based country while maintaining a communist leadership. In 1995, the Chinese government launched the Program for the Development of Chinese Women, stating,

The development level of women is an important yardstick to measure social progress. Over the forty-six years since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, great achievement has been made in the cause of Chinese women that

24 State Council Information Office.
attract world attention... the broad masses of women have actively plunged themselves into open-and-reform efforts and the modernization drive and made tremendous contributions to economic growth and social progress. All of these have shown the superiority of the socialist system... Women’s Rights are an indispensable part of China’s development and women’s issues have become the focus of international attention.25

The language of this document sheds light on several aspects of the Chinese government’s motivations. First, the connection of women’s rights to social progress, modernization, and open-and-reform efforts reveal how the Chinese government may see sexual harassment as a sub-issue to the advancement of women’s rights, which are crucial to projecting China as a progressive and modern nation. Second, the connection of women’s rights to international attention further reinforces the fact that the Chinese government is concerned about securing international prestige and world recognition for its social reforms, the most recent of which is the crackdown on sexual harassment. Third, by juxtaposing women’s rights with “the superiority of the socialist government,” the Chinese government is, in effect, trumpeting women’s rights (particularly in dealing with the problem of sexual harassment) as the ultimate achievement of the Communist Party. Essentially, it is sending a message to the international community that Western democracies do not have a monopoly on human rights. This rhetoric of associating human rights with the socialist system is pronounced in the speeches of government officials. For example, Chen Muhua, Vice-Chairwoman of Standing Committee of the NPC, President of All-China Women’s Federation and NPC Deputy representing the Liaoning Province, declared, “The approval of the Women’s Law shows that China has once again made a stride forward in the perfection of a socialist democracy, and its legal systems, and in paying attention to the protection of human rights...”26

This rights-based discourse is also reflected in newspaper articles addressing sexual harassment, such as when one Chinese law expert commented, “Sexual harassment violates four basic rights: the right of one’s physical well-being, the right of one’s psychological well-being, the right to good health, and the right of personal freedom. It also violates a citizen’s basic human rights.” Here, one may question, if the Chinese government is so concerned about projecting itself as an advanced rights-based country, why does it choose to champion women’s rights in particular, while neglecting the right of free press, the right to religion, or the right to free assembly? I propose that it is because women’s rights are essentially a Chinese issue because its birth is simultaneous to the birth of the Communist Party in 1949. It was the socialist system that emancipated Chinese women from feudal society more than five decades ago, and the same socialist system will liberate them from sexual harassment in

26 “Comments,” 1.
2003. In effect, by dealing with sexual harassment (or at least giving the impression of doing so through the media) and women’s rights as part of a larger agenda of human rights as defined by a socialist system, the Chinese government is directly challenging the constant bantering of Western democracies on China’s poor human rights record. Still, one may further ask, isn’t the very concept of sexual harassment a Western notion? If so, how can it be rendered a Chinese socialist achievement? I argue that, while the notion of sexual harassment may be borrowed from the West, evidence clearly shows that the Chinese government does not intend to mirror the approaches of Western countries. Instead, it uses the media to reveal the failures of US systems in dealing with sexual harassment, thereby recreating space for the eventual socialist triumph on this issue. For instance, one article in the China Economic Times discussed the United States definition of sexual harassment, while following it up with a recent case at New York State University that the government failed to act upon. As a result, the victim was forced to drop out of school. In another academic article titled, “Present Situation of Sexual Harassment and Countermeasure Law,” the author suggests that although the United States has a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment, sexual harassment still runs rampant, especially as Internet usage increases. This pattern of coverage that points out the failures of the US system in dealing with sexual harassment further reinforces the argument that the Chinese government does not intend to model after the West but instead is seeking to frame the sexual harassment crackdown as a twenty-first century socialist triumph of women’s rights.

Sewing Up Loopholes for Sly Transnational Companies

Finally, a third and perhaps most immediate factor pushing the Chinese government to address sexual harassment is China’s position as an emerging trade capital of the world. Currently, loopholes in the Chinese legal system effectively permit foreign bosses of transnational companies operating in China to sexually harass Chinese workers without penalty. Both China’s entry into the World Trade Organization and its emergence as a prominent international player press the Chinese government to reform its lax legal system to meet world standards. As author Zhong Chun, in her journal article, “Present Situation of Sexual Harassment and Countermeasure Law,” writes, “a lack of regulations regarding sexual harassment after our country’s entry into the WTO is inconsistent with the effort to depict China’s image as a socialist country with a strong legal system to the international community.”

China’s legal blind spots regarding sexual harassment became apparent ever since China’s open reforms unleashed a flourishing of small, privatized companies, as well as a host of transnational companies that finally wedged themselves into the rusted, forbidden doors. In 1999, the International Labor Organization did a study on fourteen

27 Zhong, 93.
28 Ibid., 94.
transnational companies and reported that 100 percent of them had sexual harassment policies in place, with 70 percent outlining specific instructions for paying indemnities to victims. The problem is that once these companies set foot in China, they abandon these regulations, much to the dismay of many Chinese workers. As one journalist in the *Beijing Youth Daily* writes, “At first, we thought these transnational companies were discriminating against us. Why don’t Chinese workers enjoy the same rights as the other workers in your company? But after hearing their explanation, we could say nothing.”

The reason is simple-management codes of foreign companies operating in China have to be set under the framework of the Chinese Labor Law, which currently does not contain any regulations prohibiting sexual harassment. Sexual harassment expert Tang Can suggests that there are three holes in the current codes for transnational companies operating in China: an enforceable counter-sexual harassment system, an independent monitoring department, and a societal monitoring system. According to Tang, state-owned enterprises are not breeding grounds for sexual harassment because corporations must abide by the 1989 and the 1997 “*Ji Lu Chu Fa Tiao Lie*” or “Disciplinary Punishment Clause,” which strictly prohibits insulting women and other such actions. In these companies, cadres being considered for a promotion are evaluated not only in terms of their job competency but also for their *sheng huo zue feng* or life’s moral attitudes, especially in terms of sexual relations. As a management person in a state-owned enterprise commented, “mistakes at one’s work can be corrected, but one’s moral attitudes are hard to rectify once gone astray.” In this system, a cadre accused of sexual harassment may not be legally persecuted, but he or she is definitely penalized in terms of job promotion and other benefits.

In contrast, newer privatized industries as well as transnational companies rely on a merit-based system in job competency, and management skills take priority over one’s moral characteristics. Thus, Tang argues that sexual harassment runs rampant mostly in poorly organized, privatized industries that value profit above moral characters and the wellbeing of their employees. If this is true, then it follows that sexual harassment will only become a more deeply entrenched social ill as the Chinese economy becomes more privatized and an increasing number of transnational, joint-venture companies are ushered into the country. In effect, the Chinese government is forced to enact a counter-sexual harassment law if it wants to hold transnational companies accountable for sexually harassing Chinese workers. Not only would the Communist Party lose face internationally if its legal system fails to penalize sexual harassment, the national economy as well as social stability would also be jeopardized. For example, author Wang Xingjuan states, “Most sexual harassers provide scholarly, promotional,
financial incentives or threaten removal in order to force compliance. This causes many women to lose their jobs, suffering financial losses.” Although Wang is primarily concerned with personal losses, the financial incentives that are embroiled in the messy business of sexual harassment become a national economic concern when nearly 70 percent of Chinese women have been sexually harassed.33 Another magazine article relates several anecdotes which reveals how sexual harassment has become an integral part of doing business in China. In one case, twenty-year-old businesswoman Ah Feng seduced a successful fashion merchandiser, Mr. Li Cheng Ye, who sold her 500 articles of clothing rather than his old customer. In another case, Ms. Lee, the owner of an home appliances company, could not get her shipment of colored television sets until she permitted the seller, Mr. Wang, to touch her in inappropriate places. The author concludes that sexual harassment both “pollutes societal morals, disturbs normal business proceedings” and also “results in inestimable economic losses.”34 In this way, sexual harassment not only impacts the psychological health of Chinese women, but it is also a vice intertwined with corrupt business practices, which the Chinese government must prevent by enforcing its labor laws to meet the criteria of other industrial nations.

Concluding Remarks

This paper began by questioning the recent inundation of sexual harassment coverage in the Chinese media and sought to analyze which social, political, and economic factors pushed the Chinese government to launch a campaign to crackdown on sexual harassment. In the first section, I established the relationship between the Chinese government and the media as a state-market complex in which market forces compete with government censorship to influence the media. Although the Chinese government no longer dictates the media, it still maintains a fair amount of indirect control through bureaucracies such as the Information Council, journalist training sessions, and the All-China Women’s Federation, all of which serve as unofficial mouthpieces for the government. Next, I briefly outlined the background of sexual harassment, addressing its Western origins, China’s first case of sexual harassment, current laws on women’s rights, and the changing Chinese public opinion on this once taboo subject. The following three sections extensively discussed and provided evidence for the three main components of the thesis that the Chinese government’s crackdown on sexual harassment is part of a broader effort to 1) secure international recognition for its modern rights reforms, 2) trumpet women’s rights as a socialist achievement, and 3) strike at a pervasive social ill which not only threatens the national economy but also permits transnational companies operating in China to take advantage of a gap in Chinese law.

As previously mentioned in the methodology section, the major limitation to this study is its reliance solely on written media, in combination with some published statistics on sexual harassment in China. Although newspaper articles are considered primary materials, they are not the most direct sources. Ideally, I would conduct public opinion polls in China before and after the government implemented its counter-sexual

34 Xia, 1-2.
harassment measures, compare it with the Chinese government’s published results, and see if there is a gap between what is actually happening and what the government reports is happening. Furthermore, I would establish the extent to which the Chinese media has an impact on the Chinese public. However, as previously mentioned, the main purpose of this paper is not to examine the effectiveness of the government’s counter-sexual harassment measures but rather to deduce some possible motivations behind the Chinese governments actions through analyzing the factors that push it to pay overwhelming attention to sexual harassment. Thus, this paper provides the theoretical foundation for future empirical research in China, which may include interviewing migrant women and female victims of sexual harassment, visiting local women service centers, and collaborating with sexual harassment expert Tang Can.
Japanese Fascism Revisited

Marcus Willensky

Impact of the IMTFE

On June 4, 1946, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, IMTFE, convened in the former Imperial Japanese Army Ministry Building in Tokyo. In the course of his opening address, Chief Prosecutor Joseph B. Keenan pronounced the following:

The evidence will show that [Japan’s] militaristic cliques and ultra-nationalistic secret societies resorted to rule by assassination and thereby exercised great influence in favor of military aggression. Assassinations and threats of revolt enabled the military branch more and more to dominate the civil government and to appoint new persons favorable to them and their policies. This tendency became stronger and more entrenched until on 18 October 1941 the military assumed complete and full control of all branches of the government, both civilian and military.

Keenan’s indictment continues to fuel debate within academic circles over prewar Japan and the nature of its imperial government. The prosecution’s contention that the Japanese government participated in a “conspiracy to wage declared or undeclared war or wars of aggression . . . in violation of international law . . . with the object of securing military, naval, political and economic domination of East Asia . . . and ultimately the domination of the world” implicates all Japanese in the prewar era as accomplices in a sinister plot.

This analysis, while not without an element of truth, hopelessly obfuscates the actual train of events and their broader global and historical context, impeding deeper understanding of what happened in Japan. Western historians, journalists and authors of all types, whether consciously aware of the specifics of the IMTFE’s indictment or not, have been responding to it in one form or another for nearly 60 years. For these people, the IMTFE has had a lasting impact completely disproportional to its effect on the rest of the world.

In 1946, the idea that Imperial Japan, like Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, was a criminal nation that had engaged in a conspiracy to take over the world was, in the wake of the dropping of two atomic bombs, a reassuring contention to the victorious Allies. In 2005, however, the IMTFE’s indictment

1 The IMTFE, otherwise known as the “Tokyo Trials,” May 1946 to November 1948.
2 Keenan made a name for himself in the 1930s as the man who prosecuted “Machine Gun” Kelly. His appointment, some have contended, signaled that the United States felt the IMTFE was dealing with nothing more than hardened criminals. Indeed, Keenan himself stated: “It is the contention of the prosecution that the positions held by these accused is no bar to their being considered as ordinary criminals and felons . . .” International Military Tribunal for the Far East, Tokyo, 1946-1948, “Record of Proceedings, Exhibits, Judgement, Dissenting Judgements, Preliminary Interrogations, Miscellaneous Documents,” Proceedings, 434.
3 Ibid., 442 and 443.
4 Ibid., 435.
5 Keenan explained that under the usual law of conspiracy, “… it is always held that every member of the conspiracy is equally liable for every act committed by every other member of the conspiracy in furtherance of the common plan . . . All are liable who incited, ordered, procured or counseled the commission of such acts or have taken a consenting part therein.” Ibid., 434.
need not dominate discussions of Imperial Japan. The current accessibility of documents at the National Archives in the US and the National Diet Library and National Institute for Defense Studies’ Military Archival Library in Japan give the modern scholar a vast array of information from which to draw, all of it free from the taint of victor’s justice and the need to find Japan’s wartime leaders guilty of crimes against humanity.

One critical aspect of the IMTFE’s legacy that has never been satisfactorily dealt with is the issue of fascism in prewar Japan. A fresh analysis of the issues and the establishment of a dialogue by which the topic can be approached anew, without the biases of either the IMTFE or the Cold War, is sorely needed by the closed and insular world of scholars writing in English on the topic of Imperial Japan.

**Imperial Japan, Fascism and the Right Wing**

In the late 1920s, 30s and 40s the Japanese press was filled with discussions of fascism and hundreds of books written both before and after World War II discussed its applicability, either pro or con, to Imperial Japan. For the IMTFE and the victorious Allies there was never any question that Imperial Japan was a “fascist” nation cast from the same mold as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. It was only in the immediate post-trial era that Japanese authors, like Maruyama Masao, began to discuss seriously the implications for historians of labeling the prewar era fascist. In the intervening 50 years, consensus has seesawed on the issue and today there are as many scholars who use the term as reject it, both in Japan and the west."

Fascism was an important and controversial topic in the early Showa period. The reformist right wing, *kakushin uyoku*, exhibited more than a passing fascination with the concept and many of its members, notably Nakano Seigo, made no secret of their admiration for Mussolini and the successes of his Fascist Party, the *Fascio di Combattimento*. The idealist right wing, *kannen uyoku*, on the other hand, rejected fascism as they rejected all things of obvious western origin. Broad gray areas existed, for example the Great Japan Production Party, *Dai Nippon Seisan To*, Imperial Japan’s preeminent self-declared fascist party, was founded with the help of Toyama Mitsuru—without question the most powerful member of the idealist right wing. Modern scholars are often left with the unenviable task of merely concluding that the Japanese right wing was aware of, and influenced by, the existence of Fascism in Italy. This paper will largely avoid the debate over the meaning of fascism—a debate that has raged since Benito Mussolini coined the term in 1919—and instead focus on whether or not elements of Imperial Japan were consistent with the theory of Fascism as envisioned by Mussolini.

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5 Nakano Seigo: 1886 to 1943; leader of the Eastern Society, *Toho Kai*, and onetime secretary-general of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, *Taisei Yokukan Kai*. Following the 1942 elections Nakano came into conflict with Prime Minister (General) Tojo Hideki and in 1943 he was forced to commit suicide by the *Kempeitai*.

6 Toyama Mitsuru: 1855 to 1944; undisputed doyen of the prewar Japanese right wing.
What is Fascism?

Any cursory perusal of prewar Japanese newspapers, political tracts, diaries, and periodicals of all types confirms the common use of the term *fashizumu*. One important aspect of this phenomenon was the lively debate over the meaning of fascism in Europe, and the implications for its rise in Japan, that raged in the prewar Japanese media. Beginning in the early 1930s Japanese writers increasingly gave vent to a gnawing fear that fascism might have already arrived in Japan. One example is a 1932 *Trans-Pacific* article titled “Conflict of Fascism and Parliamentarism,” which said:

Japan is inordinately afraid of what is implied by the term Fascism, but in reality much of it has arrived. The Saito Cabinet itself may be said to be one such instance in so far as it has suspended many of the functions of the Diet as a machine for the discussion of national plans.

Postwar Japanese discussion of Imperial Japan embraces the basis for these fears and generally acknowledges the applicability of the term fascist to the period. This is not the case with western scholars, and perhaps no single topic—with the possible exception of the Nanjing Incident—so squarely divides research of current historians and social scientists in Japan and the west. In general, western scholars reject the use of the term, while their Japanese counterparts largely embrace it.

In the prewar era, the situation was almost the exact reverse; western writers overwhelmingly condemned Imperial Japan as a fascist nation and Japanese writers often denied it, choosing to describe events in terms of Japanism or *Nipponshugi*. Members of the right wing were routinely accused of being fascists, even in the Japanese press, but for reasons that remain unclear they often denied any connection. Why do modern scholars neglect this interesting phenomenon?

One trend in research, especially in the west, is to dilute the issue and talk of isolated examples of fascism having existed, hence avoiding the bigger question of whether the prewar Japanese system of government was itself fascist. Acknowledging fascism’s existence in prewar Japan, however, is different, and much easier, than saying that the Imperial Japanese Government itself was fascist. On this question, there exists at least reasonable doubt, and this doubt justifies a more careful analysis of the government of Imperial Japan. It also requires a working definition of the term fascism.

In any attempt to explain fascism, care must be taken to differentiate between definitions of fascism as theory, as political movement and as a form of government. It is one thing to say that prewar Japanese institutions, groups or even the bureaucracy were preaching a form of fascism and quite a different thing to say that they were practicing fascism as we understand it to have been applied in Italy and Germany. There exist great discrepancies between what Mussolini and Hitler preached before they...

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* Miles Fletcher “Intellectuals and Fascism in Early Showa Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, (November 1979), 41. [Fletcher, however, argues that Fascism never existed as a system in Imperial Japan.]
* McCormack, 32.
* Nishi, 159-160.
came to power and what are generally recognized to have been the policies their Fascist and National-Socialist governments put into practice. Therefore, at the very outset I wish to postulate that fascism as theory and fascism in application may be so glaringly different as to render them unrelated for all practical purposes.

When Ivan Morris writes, “‘Fascism’ has lost much of its semantic value since it came to be bandied about as a pejorative to describe unpopular people or ideas,” he unwittingly outlines the overwhelming problem with many postwar discussions of the term. In 2005 “fascist” is often an epithet for any group perceived as reactionary or authoritarian. Hence, we see left-wing groups referring to the United States Government as fascist at the same time that we find members of the government referring to hate groups such as the Aryan Nation and the Ku Klux Klan as fascist. This tendency has rendered many postwar discussions of fascism inapplicable, bringing to mind Hannah Arendt’s assessment of the earliest attempts to articulate fascism:

It is one of the oddities of the literature of totalitarianism that very early attempts by contemporaries at writing its “history,” which according to all academic rules were bound to founder on the lack of impeccable source material and emotional over commitment, have stood the test of time remarkably well.

This situation has prompted the current intellectual revisiting of fascism through primary source material, specifically Benito Mussolini’s 1932 article “The Doctrine of Fascism” and the Fascist Minister of Justice Alfredo Rocco’s 1925 work The Political Doctrine of Fascism. Both are oblivious to concepts of fascism as a pejorative and both purport to be blueprints for fascism in theory. Since neither attempts to draw parallels between their discussion and the actual infrastructure of the Italian government, they also neatly avoid the problem of how fascism in application and theory may differ. It is important to bear in mind, however, that by 1932 the Italian Fascist Party, Fascio di Combattimento, had existed for more than 13 years, and Mussolini had been in power for nearly ten years, three as prime minister and seven as dictator. One would assume then that it is possible to connect fascist theory with fascism as a form of government, and Mussolini appears to do just that when he writes,

Fascism is today clearly defined not only as a regime but as a doctrine. And I mean by this that Fascism today, self-critical as well as critical of other movements, has an unequivocal point of view of its own, a criterion, and hence an aim, in [the] face of all the material and intellectual problems which oppress the people of the world.

Nevertheless, this article may have been a source of later confusion since Mussolini keeps the discussion on a theoretical level and never links Fascist doctrine with his own regime. Instead the article limits itself to bombastic and high-sounding guidelines for Fascism in theory.

Despite this shortfall, the use of Mussolini’s work—as the founder of the Fascist movement and the originator of the term Fascismo—is without question valid.

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15 Carl Cohen, Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations (New York: Random House, Inc., 1972), 333. (Hereafter quotes from Mussolini’s “The Doctrine of Fascism” will be marked with M:DF)
16 Derived from the Italian word fasciare which means to bind or envelop. The intent being that Fascism would bind Italy into an organic entity. The symbol of the Fascisti being the fasces: a bundle of rods bound about an ax with projecting blade, carried before ancient Roman magistrates as a symbol of authority.
Rocco’s *The Political Doctrine of Fascism* is cited because it is one of the earliest published attempts to codify what was meant by the term and because Mussolini wholeheartedly approved of the content as presenting “in a masterful way the doctrine of Fascism.” Fascism, in its original form, was a movement of action not formulae—the Italian Fascist regime’s earliest slogan was: “No dogma! Discipline suffices!” As a result, confusion over the meaning of fascism has existed from the very start. Angelo Tasca, a prewar Italian Marxist, in attempting to define Fascism acknowledged the impossibility of the task and finally concluded that, “Fascism is a dictatorship; such is the starting point of all definitions that have so far been attempted. Beyond that there is no agreement . . . Our way of defining fascism is to write its history.”

Writing at the beginning of Fascism’s history, Mussolini and Rocco had no need to monitor consistency between theory and practice whether in Italy or in any other society. They were therefore able to avoid one of the more vexing questions now facing modern scholars—how to define Fascism so that it can be used as a comparative term. Rocco begins by identifying the salient points found in the political doctrines against which Fascism would position itself and then contrasts them with his vision of the movement:

Fascism never raises the question of methods, using in its political praxis now liberal ways, now democratic means and at times even socialistic devices. This indifference to method often exposes Fascism to the charge of incoherence on the part of superficial observers, who do not see that what counts with us is the end and that therefore even when we employ the same means we act with a radically different spirit and strive for entirely different results.

It is clear from this passage that Rocco embraces the idea that Fascism was multi-faceted and at times contradictory and this has far-reaching implications for the current debate.

If we accept Rocco’s admission that for fascism the goal and not the means is the key to any understanding of the term, then we accept the idea that fascism might assume many forms in different countries and situations. The end toward which Rocco and Mussolini were striving was the creation of an all-powerful State that would play the central role in organizing the lives and livelihood of all its citizens. How this was achieved was less important for them than its realization. This dispels many of the most ubiquitous complaints about the application of the term fascism to Imperial Japan, that the political realities of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan defy a common definition. The position of many Japanese scholars that “sometimes incidental differences add up to an essential difference” is a failure to come to grips with

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17 Introduction by Mussolini to Rocco’s *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*. In Cohen, 315.
18 Ibid., 314.
20 Both men were admirers of Niccolo de Bernardo Machiavelli, 1469-1527, and perhaps this can explain Fascism’s expediency, craftiness, and duplicity of thought between theory and application.
21 Cohen, 521. (Hereafter quotes from Rocco’s *The Political Doctrine of Fascism* will be marked with R:PDF)
22 Peter Duus and Daniel Okimoto, writing in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, comment that, “Definitions of fascism come in all shapes and sizes, some precise and some diffuse, some mutually contradictory.” This is stating the obvious and—given Rocco’s comments—falls far short of justifying their argument that the term fascism doesn’t apply to Imperial Japan. Peter Duus and Daniel I. Okimoto. “Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. XXXIX, no. 1 (November 1979), 65.
23 Ibid., 66.
the intentions of fascism’s creators.

Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini’s Minister of Education and a prominent Fascist theoretician, commented that Fascism, “by virtue of its repugnance for ‘intellectualism,’ prefers not to waste time constructing abstract theories about itself.”

Given this reticence, modern scholars are misguided when they attempt a definition that depends on specificity of political methods and structures. It seems clear that the government of Fascist Italy exhibited a preference for pragmatic political action unfettered by political principles. François Furet, noted French historian, writes in The Passing of an Illusion about the Machiavellian nature of fascism and even goes so far as to draw tentative comparisons to Soviet Communism—its political and intellectual opposite—when he says that both embraced the “concept that anything that served the cause was good.”

If Fascists saw their movement as one that was free to draw from myriad political resources and apply them to fit specific situations, then there seems no reason why fascism could not take very different forms in European and Asian countries. Although Gentile insisted that Fascism, “... is not a political theory which may be stated in a series of formulae,” modern analysts generally understand fascism in application to be “... the totalitarian organization of government and society by a single-party dictatorship, intensely nationalist, racialist, militarist and imperialist.”

Obviously this is oversimplified, but this definition certainly applies to Fascist Italy; similarly, Japanese writers in the 1930s seem to have understood fascism in this light. Writing in 1932, the same year that Mussolini’s article was published, Yoshino Sakuzo wrote,

To define Fascism is an extremely difficult task. We can, however, say in general terms that it implies the rule of the disciplined and resolute few as against that of the undisciplined and irresolute many. It is anti-democratic, and particularly anti-parliamentarian; it is national rather than international; and it tends to dignify the State as against the individual, or any group of individuals, except of course the resolute group in whose hands power is concentrated. These are the ideas which animate the various groups in Japan [. . .] and therefore, in spite of their occasional repudiation of the title, they can reasonably be called Fascists.

Yoshino’s comment poses an interesting question: why was it necessary for prewar Japanese, not only members of the ayoku but members of the military, the bureaucracy and the even the political parties—most notably the Seiyukai—to deny that they were fascist? And if these groups and individuals weren’t fascist, why did so many writers describe them as such? What motivated the prewar media to discuss Japan’s political dynamics

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24 Cohen, 341.
26 Cohen, 340.
28 Yoshino Sakuzo: 1878 to 1933; Yoshino is considered to have been the foremost democratic theorist in the Taisho and early Showa Eras.

Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs
in terms of fascism? In 1936, The Trans-Pacific ran an interview with Colonel Hashimoto Kingoro under the title “Head of New Party Denies He’s Fascist.”

Some people say that I am a Fascist or a semi-Hitler made in Japan, they do not understand my intentions. I am no ordinary retired soldier . . . Look at our party flag. It is a white sun against a red ground. In the white heat of the sun, we are to serve the Emperor with blood-red patriotism. Just watch me! Hashimoto is no man to sit still and just talk!31

Hashimoto’s flowery denial aside, contemporaries often described him as a National-Socialist and a Fascist. His Great Japan Young Men’s Party, Dai Nippon Seinen To, affected the imagery of Mussolini’s black-shirted Fascists with black versions of the Imperial Japanese Army’s uniforms and a flag that was little more than a copy of Hitler’s Nazi flag minus the swastika. Moreover, Hashimoto’s politics focused on a strong centralized government at home and an aggressive policy of conquest overseas. Should Hashimoto’s denials be believed? What quality other than the fact that he was Japanese, and not Italian or German, distinguished his agenda from fascism?

**Was Imperial Japan Fascist?**

Prewar Japan exhibited many of the traits that modern scholars ascribe to fascism. Japan in the early Showa Era was intensely nationalistic, racialist (including the pervasive belief on the part of the Japanese that they were racially superior both to westerners and other Asians), militaristic and also imperialistic.32 What seems to be missing is, in Ebenstein’s words, a “totalitarian organization of government and society by a single party dictatorship.”33

If, however, we accept that by 1940, following the disbanding of the Minseito, the Seiyukai and prewar Japan’s other political parties,34 the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) or Taisei Yokusan Kai, was the only political party in existence,35 and if we acknowledge that the Meiji Constitution accorded the Emperor broad discretionary powers36 and granted him de facto commander-in-chief status over both the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, in addition to awarding him the power to initiate and institute legislation, then the basic framework for fascism appears to have been firmly in place in Imperial Japan in the immediate prewar period.37

Some writers, notably John Holiday in his Marxist study of Japanese capitalism,
have even argued that we need not focus on the period immediately prior to the start of World War II concluding that, “If Japan was ‘fascist’ in 1941, it should perhaps be called ‘fascist’ in 1915.”

And yet, the consensus that Imperial Japan was not fascist includes virtually every western writer on the topic of Imperial Japan, including Gorden Berger, James Crowley, Peter Duus, Richard Mitchell, Daniel Okimoto, Mark Peattie, Ben-Ami Shillony, Richard Smethurst, George Wilson and even the writers of general histories of Japan.

What quality of fascism as practiced in other countries was so glaringly different that western scholars reject it so universally when applied to Imperial Japan? Could it merely be that there has been a failure to understand the spirit of fascism; a failure to understand that fascism in theory and practice might be quite different; a failure to understand the Machiavellian nature of fascism? Abe Horozumi states in the conclusion to his *Nihon Fashizumu Kenkyu Josetsu* (Introduction to Japanese Fascism Research),

One cannot escape the impression that research on Japanese fascism is very divided and confused on the theoretical level. Confusion in fascism theory is not confined to Japan but … since the late 1960s is a worldwide phenomenon. This needn’t be the case. If we return to primary sources, it becomes clear that Mussolini’s vision existed in Imperial Japan on many levels.

The Imperial Japanese military and bureaucracy placed great emphasis on collective belonging and a shared past. Starting in the Meiji, Taisho and certainly in the early Showa Era there was no lack of government-sponsored propaganda designed to help the average Japanese citizen to see his place in terms of the “family,” the “household,” the “nation,” and their relationship to the Emperor in an unbroken line through history. This process stressed the sacred importance of Japanese language, culture and history. Part of this indoctrination was an emphasis on the importance of the *kokutai*, literally the “body of the State,” in which the concept of the individual must be subsumed. This is an important element of Fascism as Mussolini saw it:

> For the Fascist, everything is the State, and nothing human or spiritual exists, much less has value, outside the State. In this sense Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State, the synthesis and unity of all values, interprets, develops and gives strength to the whole life of the people.  

The leaders of the Imperial Japanese bureaucracy, notably Hiranuma Kiichiro, saw the relationship of Japanese citizens to the *kokutai* in very similar terms, and it can be argued that this is what Prime Minister

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39 McCormack, 28.

40 It has been suggested that these writers reject the term fascism because it limits their ability to recast Imperial Japan as an emerging democracy that was sidetracked by the rise of militarism in the 1930s.

41 McCormack, 32. Abe, 5.


43 For a more in-depth discussion, see: Drea, 3. Drea in turn is working from Ishii Kinichiro’s “*Nihon Faushizumu to Chido Seido*” (Japanese Fascism and the Regional System) *Rekishigaku Kenkyu*, no. 307, (December 1965), 2.

44 Cohen (M:DF), 330-331.

45 Baron Hiranuma Kiichiro: 1867 to 1952; founder of the National Foundation Society, *Kokuhonsha*; president of the Privy Council from 1936 to 1939 (and again in 1945); prime minister January to August 1939; home minister and minister of state in both the second and third Konoye Cabinets 1940-1941; convicted as a Class “A” war criminal by the IMTFE in 1948.

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Konoye Fumimaro was attempting, at the instigation of the Imperial Japanese military, with the passage of the National General Mobilization Law, Kokka Sodoin Ho. This law aimed not merely to create an all-encompassing war economy but also to coalesce the Japanese citizenry into obedient and awe-inspired subjects of the State. For what was the kokutai supposed to represent if it wasn’t the sum total of all that existed in Japan—a State that included every subject of the Empire under the divine rule of the Emperor. Not merely an absolute ruler, the Emperor was a divine ruler, and in his will was found the raison d'être of the Japanese nation. This is fascism as Mussolini envisioned it:

Individuals form classes according to the similarity of their interests, they form syndicates according to differentiated economic activities within these interests; but they form first, and above all, the State . . . Not a race, nor a geographically determined region, but a community historically perpetuating itself, a multitude unified by a single idea, which is the will to existence and to power.

The Doctrine of Fascism” in the 19th century, the Meiji oligarchs might well have used it as a blueprint for their vision of Imperial Japan, since it so closely parallels what they attempted. As Carol Gluck writes, “It was not enough that the polity [kokutai] be centralized, the economy developed, social classes rearranged, international recognition striven for—the people must also be ‘influenced,’ their minds and hearts made one.”

Fascism may not have existed in 1868, but the ideals that form the core of Mussolini’s vision are concepts and values that the nation-building Meiji oligarchs shared. They saw Imperial Japan not in the light of democratic European nations, not in the light of a nation of individuals like the United States, but as a nation of one heart and mind. As Hiranuma Kiichirō outlined in a speech in 1932:

Our nation is constituted of one ruler, in an unbroken line of Imperial descent, and his subjects. It is a nation based upon the centralization of the Imperial Family, with the entire people assisting the ruler in the realization of national ideals. In other words, it is the duty of the people, under the Emperor, to exert their best efforts towards the accomplishment of the tasks allotted to them.

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* Konoye Fumimaro: 1891 to 1945; Konoye was prime minister three times during the critical period leading up to the start of World War II (1937-1941). In late 1945, following the end of the war, the Occupation Headquarters of SCAP (Supreme Command of the Allied Powers) issued an order for Konoye’s arrest as a possible war criminal. On the last day for his voluntary appearance before the authorities, he committed suicide.

* Yanaga Chitoshi describes the National General Mobilization Law, Kokka Sodoin Ho, by saying that it “. . . was a carte blanche delegation of wartime legislative powers to the Cabinet, empowering the government to legislate by ordinance even in those areas of individual rights and freedom that were provided by the Constitution. It constituted a statutory suspension, if not virtual death sentence, of parliamentary government. In effect, the legislative body was superseded by the bureaucracy, which achieved a position of supremacy in the wartime structure created by the National General Mobilization Law.” Yanaga Chitoshi, Japan Since Perry (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1949), 534.

* Cohen (M:DF), 331.


* Tetsuo Najita says of Ito Hirobumi’s search for a model for the Meiji Constitution that British, American, Italian and French models were rejected for various reasons and that finally the constitution of newly unified Germany was chosen as a model specifically because Germany, “had written a constitution explicitly to accord with the realization of national unification.” Clearly, unification of the nation-state, not the establishment of popular-rights, was the goal of the Meiji oligarchs in adopting the constitutional form that they chose. Tetsuo Najita, The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 83.

* Staff, “Hiranuma Outlines Nationalist Ideals,” The Trans-Pacific, April 28, 1932, 12.
It didn’t matter that, like puppet masters, the Meiji oligarchs told the Emperor what his vision would be; what mattered was that they created a particular cornucopia of modern myths and values that with the passage of time created the foundation for a “fascist” nation. Imperial Japan was fascist not because it successfully copied what was happening in Italy and Germany but because that is what the Meiji oligarchs intended it to be, though at the time they lacked the particular word to describe it as such.

Kodo as Fascism

It is generally taken for granted that following General Araki Sadao’s ousting from the position of Army Minister in 1934, and certainly following his forced retirement in the wake of the February 26th Incident, that Araki had not only fallen from favor, but had also been expelled from the halls of power. Nothing could be further from the truth. Araki never ceased to influence developments, and he used his frequent calls for Kodo as a way to stay in the public eye. Certainly by the late 1930s, with his ascent to the position of Minister of Education in the first Konoye and then Hiranuma cabinets, Araki was assured a vocal role in the government, and he used his position aggressively to shape the minds of Japanese youth as he saw fit.

Much as Mussolini established an educational system that glorified the military and was designed to place Fascism uppermost in the minds of Italian youth, Araki promoted Kodo through a highly centralized educational system. Mussolini’s schools, with four-year-olds in Fascist uniform and eight-year-olds drilling with scale models of army rifles, certainly would not have seemed out of place in Imperial Japan in the 1930s. For Alfredo Rocco and the Italian Fascist State he described, education was part of the process by which the government ensured the guided development of the masses:

For Fascism, society is the end, individuals the means, and its whole life consists in using individuals as instruments for its social ends. The State therefore guards and protects the welfare and development of individuals not for their exclusive interest, but because of the identity of the needs of individuals with those of society as a whole.

Araki echoes these sentiments when he explains that the Emperor’s will is the will of the nation: Here in Japan the Emperor represents the highest welfare of the nation. We regard him much as Christians regard Christ and God. We are only doing his will; there is no room in any subject for his own selfish activities!

Clearly both Kodo and fascism sought to

52 Baron Araki Sadao: 1877 to 1966; chief ideological exponent of the Imperial Way, Kodo; Army Minister in the Inukai, 1931-1932, and Saito Cabinets, 1932-1934; Minister of Education in the first Konoye, June 1937-January 1939, and Hiranuma cabinets, January-August 1939; tried and convicted as a Class “A” war criminal by the IMTFE in 1948.
53 Kodo, literally the “Way of the Emperor,” or Imperial Way, was a popular movement in Japan during the Showa Era that loosely traced its origins to the Chinese philosophy of Wun Tao, the Kingly Way, which preached the benefits of emulating the—theoretically—pure and enlightened way of the King.
55 Cohen (R:PDF), 323.
56 Charles Hodges, “In Japan—The Imperial Way: An Authorized Interview with War Minister Araki,” Asia, vol. XXXIV, no. 2, (February 1934), 86.
In his attempt to explain the difference between fascism and Kodo, Araki reveals that he doesn’t clearly understand the way Fascist Italy operated, and at the same time he attributes to the Showa Emperor political power out of all proportion to his actual role. Araki does succeed, however, in showing that in many respects the role of the Army in Fascist Italy and its relationship to Mussolini were synonymous with Kodo ‘s view of the Imperial Japanese Army’s role and relationship to the Emperor:

Here is the fundamental difference [between Fascism and Kodo]! In Italy the Black Shirts go to their King with certain demands; then they put them into execution and carry them out. In Japan the initiative is taken by the Emperor. The Emperor gets his inspiration divinely. Unless you have studied the principles known to the Chinese as wun tao—the kingly way—you can never understand the spirit of Japan’s government and defense institutions . . . The position of the defense institution is historical. Japan’s soldiers at present are inspired by the same spirit that moved them two thousand years ago . . . But we in the army wish to correct the errors which have crept into the actual operation of the government . . . If there is any obstacle in the way of its realization, it is the duty of soldiers to remove it. But the Emperor has always commanded. Accordingly, the soldiers belong directly to the Emperor; none is responsible to any but the Emperor. This is a direct relationship of profound importance to our country; it expresses the true spirit of the Japanese Army. The spirit of Araki’s statements is reflected in the Ten Commandments of the Italian Soldier, which states, “One thing must be dear to you above all: the life of the Duce.” Much as the Imperial Japanese Army owed its allegiance directly to the Emperor, the Italian military was to owe its allegiance directly to Mussolini, bypassing any aspect of the legislature. In return the State, in the person of Mussolini, was understood to embody the spirit of the nation. Allegiance to Mussolini was allegiance to the State. And in duty to the State, the Fascist found the highest goal possible for the individual. As Mussolini said, Fascism is a religious conception in which man is seen in his immanent relationship with a superior law and with an objective Will that transcends the particular individual and raises him to conscious membership in a spiritual society. Whoever has seen in the religious politics of the Fascist regime nothing but mere opportunism has not understood that Fascism besides being a system of government is also, and above all, a system of thought.

Kodo, as explained by Araki, ascribed this same quasi-religious status to concepts of duty to the State, in this case the Japanese state and Emperor. The loftiest goal for the individual was the sublimation of their will to that of the Emperor. This was an ideal to which all Japanese, and eventually all people,
were supposed to subscribe. This is entirely consistent with Fascism as Mussolini describes it:

Fascism faces squarely the problem of the right of the State and of the duty of individuals. Individual rights are only recognized in so far as they are implied in the rights of the State. In this preeminence of duty we find the highest ethical value of Fascism.

In 1932, the same year that Mussolini made this statement, Hiranuma Kiichiro, a vocal proponent of Kodo, made a speech explaining the position of the National Foundation Society, Kokuhonsha. The speech contained the following:

The Japanese race loves life, and its national life is the greatest of all that it loves. The individual Japanese never hesitates to sacrifice his life for the maintenance of that great national life... In our country, militarism from time immemorial has been considered one of the most important national practices, because it is necessary for the realization of that morality which is the highest object of this nation. It is apparent that we must use militarism as a means of self-defense against any force obstructing the attainment of our highest ideal.

Hiranuma ends his speech by specifically mentioning fascism and offers the following odd disclaimer:

Fascism, which has become popular of late, is the product of a foreign country resulting from national circumstances in that country. Our country has its [own] independent object and its [own] independent mission.

Hiranuma doesn’t seem to be denying any similarities between Kodo and fascism, nor does he seem to reject fascism; rather he merely suggests that Kodo is indigenous and fascism is foreign. What then was Kodo if not fascism for the Japanese? Mussolini said.

Life as conceived by the Fascist, is serious, austere, religious: the whole of it is poised in a world supported by the moral and responsible forces of the spirit. The Fascist disdains the “comfortable” life.

Couldn’t Araki or Hiranuma have said the same thing? One need only substitute “practitioner of Kodo” for Fascist and the quote could have come from any number of patriotic Japanese in the prewar era. Speaking in his capacity as Foreign Minister in the second Konoye Government (July 1940 to July 1941), Matusoka Yosuke said:

... the mission of Japan is to proclaim and demonstrate Kodo throughout the world. Viewed from the standpoint of international relations, this amounts, I think, to enabling all nations and races to

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62 On August 1, 1940 the Imperial Japanese Government released the following official announcement, “The world stands at a great historic turning point, and it is about to witness the creation of new forms of government, economy, and culture, based upon the growth and development of sundry groups of states... The basic aim of Japan’s national policy lies in the firm establishment of world peace in accordance with the lofty spirit of Hakko Ichiu [The Eight Corners of the World Under One Roof], in which the country was founded, and in the construction, as the first step, of a new order in Greater East Asia, having for its foundation the solidarity of Japan, Manchoukuo and China.” When this announcement speaks of “the firm establishment of world peace in accordance with the lofty spirit of Hakko Ichiu” it is referring to an eventual peace that will come to the world after the establishment of a new world order that recognizes Imperial Japanese hegemony in Asia and ultimately over the entire world. Documentary Material. “Japanese Government Announcement, August 1, 1940 (Tentative Translation),” Contemporary Japan, vol. IX, no. 9 (September 1940), 1223.

63 Cohen (R:PDF), 324.

64 The Trans-Pacific (April 28, 1932), 12. Quote by Hiranuma)

65 Ibid., 12. Quote by Hiranuma.

66 Cohen (M:DF), 330.

67 Matsuoka Yosuke: 1880 to 1946; in addition to being the director of the South Manchurian Railway, Matsuoka had a long and successful affiliation with the Foreign Ministry culminating in his appointment as Foreign Minister in the second Konoye Cabinet. The IMTFE charged Matsuoka as a Class “A” war criminal but he fell ill and died soon after the trial began in 1946. See Matsuoka Yosuke, “Dissolve the Political Parties,” Contemporary Japan, vol. II, no. 4 (March 1934), 661-667.
find each its proper place in the world. . . The immediate aim of our foreign policy at present is to establish in accordance with the lofty spirit of Kodo, a great East Asian chain of common prosperity with the Japanese-Manchukuo-China group as one of the links. We shall thus be able to demonstrate Kodo in the most effective manner, and pave the way toward the establishment of an equitable world peace. 68

When Matsuoka spoke of the need to “proclaim and demonstrate Kodo,” he meant invasion. When he spoke of “enabling all nations and races to find each its proper place in the world,” he refers to the imposition on these nations of a subordinate status to that of Imperial Japan. 69 Kodo on the international level was a colorful euphemism for Japanese imperialism. When Araki, Matsuoka, Hashimoto, Nakano, and others spoke of Kodo enlightening the Japanese people and eventually all of Asia, were they not speaking of a commitment to a racist and imperialistic concept predicated on the belief that it was Imperial Japan’s duty to militarize and eventually dominate all of Asia? 70 Isn’t this consistent with Mussolini’s view of the Fascist State?

The Fascist State is a will to power and to government . . . In the doctrine of Fascism Empire is not only a territorial, military or mercantile expression, but spiritual or moral . . . For Fascism the tendency to Empire, that is to say, to the expansion of nations, is a manifestation of vitality. 71

Why debate the form that fascism took in different nations when it is clear that Imperial Japan subscribed to a theory and policy largely consistent with Mussolini’s vision? Indeed, when Hiranuma Kiichiro became Prime Minister in January 1939, many feared that it signaled Japan’s abandonment of constitutional monarchy. 72 So serious was this fear that Seiyukai Diet members required Hiranuma to explain why Kodo was not synonymous with totalitarianism during a session of the Diet on January 24. 73 The Trans-Pacific’s January 12, 1939 editorial commented,

Leaders in the principal Tokyo journals stressed that installation of Baron Hiranuma as Premier only means [an] extension of the Konoye Cabinet, not the opening of a new stringent period of Fascism, and attempted to assuage public misgivings by loud-pedalling [the] belief that the baron has forsaken much of his former reformist ideals. 74

Kodo may never have been the official policy of the Imperial Japanese Government, but it was cited so often by officials that it is unclear at what point it deviated from official policy. Following the beginning of the war in China in 1937, Kodo suddenly joined “holy war” 75 in the average Japanese vocabulary.

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68 Documentary material, “Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke’s Statement, August 1, 1940,” Contemporary Japan, vol. IX, no. 9 (September 1940), 1225.
70 As Chief Prosecutor Keenan said in his opening address: “By the military alliance with Germany and Italy it was sought to create a new world order in which Japan was recognized as the leader in Greater East Asia, and Germany and Italy as the leaders in Europe.” IMTFE, 448.
71 Cohen (M:DF), 339.
72 The Trans-Pacific reprinted an article from the Asahi Shimbun, which attempted to allay these fears. See: “Shift to Right Unlikely,” The Trans-Pacific, January 12th 1939, 1.
73 Yanaga, 536.
75 See: “Hiranuma Seeks Greater Strength for Nation; Pledges to Surmount Crisis Confronting Orient,” The Trans-Pacific, January 12, 1939, 8.
Newspapers and official statements from the Cabinet Information Board became inundated with both terms and by 1941, no official statement of foreign policy was possible without some reference to *Kodo*. When officials like Hiranuma denied that Imperial Japan was fascist they often said that Japan’s motives and theories were wholly Japanese in origin and in so doing they cited *Kodo* as the guiding light of Imperial Japanese foreign and domestic policy; but what was *Kodo*? Many attempted definitions, notably Araki Sadao, but the sum total of these explanations is such that no meaning of any substance results.

I would suggest that *Kodo*, like fascism, was a doctrine of action; a movement that freely drew from many different political, cultural, religious and social sources; that it largely defied definition and, as an anti-intellectual force, resisted codification. Nevertheless, certain characteristics may be ascribed to *Kodo*: it believed in the subordination of the individual to the will of the *kokutai*; it spoke of the superiority of the Japanese race; it stressed Japan’s ancient origins and spoke of a historical mission that harked back to traditional Japanese concepts of militarism and expansion abroad. *Kodo* taught that duty and discipline came before freedom of thought and action; and perhaps most importantly, *Kodo* supported the trend toward Japanese totalitarianism in its glorification of Emperor worship. *Kodo* was in fact a form of fascism. The only thing stopping prewar Japanese from saying this directly was a stubborn sense of pride and a glaring case of ethnocentrism that didn’t allow them to admit to any similarities between Imperial Japan and a foreign country like Fascist Italy.

**The Question of Democracy**

William Ebenstein, a noted political scientist and expert on totalitarianism, argues that “Fascism is *postdemocratic* and *postindustrial*: Fascism is impossible in countries with no democratic experience at all.” If we accept Ebenstein’s view it raises important questions about the validity of holding up the democratic character of the prewar Japanese constitutional monarchy as proof that fascism could not, or did not, exist. When George M. Wilson argues that the concept of “Japanese Fascism” is mistaken because Japanese constitutional authority remained nominally intact, he seems to be following an intellectual dead end. Ebenstein does not hesitate to disagree; he states quite clearly that “[Imperial] Japan became Fascist in the 1930s, gradually evolving totalitarian institutions out of its own native heritage.”

Maruyama Masao agrees with Ebenstein when he argues that, … there is no *a priori* reason for thinking that the existence of legal provisions for a constitution and for a parliamentary system is of itself proof of the absence of fascist forms of control. The political forms of single-party dictatorship or the corporate state are only the clothes in which fascism has chosen to dress itself in particular circumstances—the most effective organizational means it can find for the forcible suppression of revolutionary forces.

Ebenstein expands on his discussion of the

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76 Ebenstein, 106.
78 Ebenstein, 105.
prerequisites to fascism and raises further questions about how scholars should portray Imperial Japan’s democratic experience. He writes,

. . . no fascist system can arise in a country without some democratic experience (as in Germany and Japan), [however] there is not much likelihood of fascist success in countries that have experienced democracy over a long period. . .80

From Ebenstein’s point of view the rise and fall of Taisho democracy, or what Andrew Gordon calls “the movement for imperial democracy,” was a prerequisite to the establishment of fascism in Japan. Democracy in Japan was not necessarily an emergent movement that was interrupted by the rise of militarism and World War II, but rather the movement for imperial democracy was a necessary but transitory stage in the evolution of Imperial Japan toward fascism.81

Fascism, as a popular movement, whether initiated from above by the government, or below by the masses, requires that the subjects of the nation-state be mobilized and engaged in order for the movement to be maintained. The establishment of a literate society, access to a lively pluralistic mass media and the awakening in the masses of a desire for more tangible benefits of citizenship—in return for their active participation in the State—are critical factors for the creation and maintenance of a fascist state. Andrew Gordon’s argument that the movement for imperial democracy was typified by contradictions that explain the existence of a large and vocal body of subjects supporting the rise of ultra-nationalism and sympathetic to overseas expansion—at the same time that they were committed to a more active role in political decision-making—is consistent with Ebenstein’s argument concerning the prerequisites for the rise of fascism. Without the existence of a mobilized and engaged population, one that has experienced the benefits of democratic representation, there is little chance that fascism will arise.

The general consensus that in the period after 1931 the movement for imperial democracy was crushed by the rise of militarism and ultra-nationalism82 describes a scenario that, from the point of view of the political scientist, is a ripe breeding ground for the growth of fascism. Tetsuo Najita, in The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics, explains the backlash against democracy by pointing out that although the existence of party politics gave hope to many elements of society, it also . . . created great confusion and bitterness among bureaucrats, the military, and intellectual leadership. For a nation whose security had barely been achieved and whose cultural autonomy was still at issue, partisan politics appeared an indefensible luxury, reflective of a crass insensitivity to the wishes and needs of the people.83

Japan’s power elite had no desire to see the movement for imperial democracy proceed unchecked and wished to channel this dynamic toward something else. Ebenstein concludes that in this type of environment the military, which is particularly vulnerable to

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80 Ebenstein, 106.
81 Tetsuo Najita, in discussing Minobe Tatsukichi and his impact on how Imperial Japan interpreted and contextualized the Meiji Constitution, reminds us that Minobe’s writings, “pointed the Japanese constitution in a liberal direction quite unintended by Ito [Hirobumi] and the other [Meiji] oligarchs who built the Meiji order.” Najita, 109.
83 Najita, 114.
fascist propaganda due to its belief in the virtues of discipline and unity, becomes a “political menace.” In the case of Imperial Japan, he writes, “fascism developed with the active and enthusiastic support of the army, which had every reason to be the main pillar of a regime committed to imperialist expansion.”

Ebenstein sees fascism as a movement that is typified by adherence to the following tenets: distrust of reason, denial of basic human equality, a code of behavior based on lies and violence, government by the elite, totalitarianism, racism, imperialism, and opposition to international law and order. In the case of prewar Japan, much as it was a constitutional monarchy with, at the very least, the potential for a democratic political culture, Ebenstein’s list of fascist characteristics largely applies.

**Fascism by Any Other Name**

Many historians, who have chosen to use the term fascism in their discussions of Imperial Japan, have sought to avoid criticism by calling it something else. Hence we see O. Tanin and E. Yohan’s “military fascism,” Herbert P. Bix’s “emperor-system fascism,” Andrew Gordon’s “imperial fascism” and any number of “other fascisms.” Those who deny the existence of fascism in Imperial Japan often point to the fact that unlike Fascism in Italy and National-Socialism in Germany, no mass movement thrust a fascist party into power in Japan, hence the need to refer to what happened in Imperial Japan by terminology specific to the situation. But must fascism come to power in only one manner?

Japan has a historical precedent of change coming through the agency of a dedicated few. This political ethic fueled the multi-faceted Japanese right wing for much of the early Showa Era, as small groups of visionaries sought change through bold action. This is termed “fascism from below” by Maruyama Masao, who wrote that “…the Japanese fascist movement from below remained to the last a movement of a small number of patriots—visionary, fanatic, and lacking in plan.”

In order for us to use the term fascism, need we be describing violent change at the hands of a mass movement such as Mussolini’s March on Rome? Many Japanese scholars fully acknowledge that this never happened in interwar Japan and yet they hold on to the notion that Imperial Japan was fascist in the 1930s and 40s. Western scholars reject this notion for various reasons; however, Maruyama Masao argues persuasively that there are at least two types of fascism and that we must differentiate … between fascism that comes mainly as a result of the seizure of power by a fascist party with some kind of mass organization, and fascism that succeeds largely by permeating the existing power structure from inside. Germany, Italy and Spain are obvious pre-war examples of the former type, and Japan of the latter type.

The popular Western contention that we cannot apply the term fascism to Imperial Japan because there was no mass movement in support of it, nor was there a radical disjuncture between the Meiji and the Showa Eras, may rest on a superficial understanding.

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84 Ebenstein, 108.
85 Ebenstein, 109.
86 Ebenstein, 115.
87 Maruyama, 57.
89 McCormack, 31.
of the degree of change that took place during this period. While the façade of the Imperial Japanese Government remained largely unchanged from the Meiji through the early Showa era, the growth in power and prestige of party politics during the late Meiji and Taisho eras was largely eradicated by changes to the composition of the Justice and Home Ministries, the death of the genro, and the gradual alteration in the relative roles of the bureaucracy and the Diet during the early Showa Era. The result was a return to a power structure more in keeping with the authoritarian and bureaucratic inclinations of the statesmen in the early Meiji period.

The passing of the National General Mobilization Law, in 1938, gave the government power out of all proportion to what it had exercised during the Meiji and Taisho eras. And while Yamagata Aritomo was a powerful champion of the Army, by the 1930s the Army no longer needed a single champion as it exerted great control over every aspect of both the Imperial Japanese Government and the daily lives of its citizens. How great were these changes? At the time of Hiranuma Kiichiro’s ascent to the premiership in 1939, Itagaki Seishiro, the Army Minister, made the following official statement,

The new Cabinet will adopt the policy of the previous Cabinet in order that it may deal effectively with the new stage of the China Incident, and it will carry it out with a fresh vigor. The basic policy regarding disposal of the China Incident has been established with Imperial approval. It is immutable and will not be affected by the Cabinet change. It is the intention of the Army to pursue its fixed course and concentrate on attainment of the objectives in the holy war.

This is not the kind of statement that subordinate ministers made. This statement clearly shows that the Army considered itself, as a result of its right of direct access to the throne, iaku joso, free to influence not only domestic government policy but also to institute and initiate foreign policy outside of the jurisdiction of the constitutional government. This is not indicative of a democratic constitutional monarchy but rather of totalitarianism and a fascist State.

Itagaki’s statement is evocative of one of two things: either a systematic breakdown in the legislative process as developed and practiced from the late Meiji through the Taisho and into the early Showa era, or a return to the type of authoritarian bureaucracy that existed at the beginning of the Meiji era. In either case, Itagaki’s statement highlights the fact that by the late 1930s and early 1940s Imperial Japan’s façade of constitutional monarchy actually concealed a government controlled by the military and a sympathetic civilian bureaucracy. Imperial Japan in this period was a state committed to its own preservation and aggrandizement, operating without any need for accountability to the masses, an elitist authoritarian and imperialistic government committed to a denial of basic human equality and a code of behavior based on lies; in other words, a fascist State.

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90 Prince Yamagata Aritomo: 1838 to 1922; powerful member of the Genro; founder of the Imperial Japanese Army; twice prime minister 1889 to 1891 and 1898 to 1900; president of the Privy Council until his death.
91 Itagaki Seishiro: 1885 to 1948; vice-chief of staff to the Kwangtung Army, Kantogun; Army minister in the first Konoye, 1937 to 1939 and Hiranuma Cabinets, January to August 1939; tried and convicted by the IMTFE as a Class “A” war criminal and sentenced to death.
92 The Trans-Pacific, January 12, 1939, 8.
93 An important aspect of the military’s independence of supreme command.
94 As The Japan Year Book: 1934 states, “Up to the first half of the Taisho era the political parties could not make much progress as independent bodies, and were almost always made use of by the clan statesmen or military leaders, not having enough power of their own to form a party cabinet, but allowing themselves to become tools of [the] bureaucracy.” JYB:34, 159.
Scholarship and the Meaning and Origins of Fascism

For Marxist scholars such as Karl Radek, there has never been a question about the fascist credentials of Imperial Japan. Marxist theory, unlike any other, defines fascism concisely as the final stage in the decay of monopoly capitalism. As such it was possible for Marxist writers to point to certain objective facts and conclude that they proved the existence of Japanese fascism. Radek explains fascism by saying,

Fascist dictatorship is not simply a reactionary dictatorship, like the regimes of Horthy or Tsankov.95 It is a dictatorship of finance capital, which has been able, by employing a number of new methods, to secure for itself the support of the petty-bourgeoisie by means of a demagogic policy and mass organizations. Do these two features of fascism—(1) the domination of a monopoly capitalism, which has already been shaken, which fears a proletarian revolution, which is seeking an escape from it by way of a fascist state organization within the country, and a new war with the object of a redivision of the world, and (2) a striving to create, as a bulwark for capitalism, a mass petty-bourgeoisie movement, hoodwinked by Social-Democratic slogans—exist in Japan? Undoubtedly these two features do exist.96

George Wilson jokingly points out that since Kita Ikki’s97 Plan For The Reconstruction of Japan or Nippon Kaizo Hoan Taiko was first published in 1919 one might suggest that Kita, not Mussolini, first articulated a theory of fascism.98 Mussolini, after all, convened the Fascio di Combattimento on March 23, 1919 and, as previously cited in “The Doctrine of Fascism,” freely admitted that at that time Fascism was a movement without formulae. Kita, on the other hand, had been writing and developing his ideas for years. I don’t mean to endorse this theory, nor does Wilson; however it does raise interesting questions about fascism’s origins.

Japanese writers, unlike their western counterparts, have long seriously entertained the possibility that the Japanese case may represent a truer model of the fascist State than either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany. They argue that the mass mobilization of the population to serve the needs of the state, at the hands of the military and the bureaucracy—what Hasegawa called “cool fascism,” that Imperial Japan experienced in the 1930s may be the yardstick against which we must measure the meaning of fascism.99

Why do the majority of US scholars on Japan generally ignore this issue? Why doesn’t anyone ever seriously entertain the idea that Imperial Japan might have invented fascism, and merely called it Kodo? When Peter Duus and Daniel Okimoto ask the rhetorical question, “Was the fascist strain in Japanese thought during the 1930s anything more than a manifestation of cultural continuity?,”100 aren’t they unwittingly confirming this suspicion? As Ebenstein points out,

In countries like Germany and Japan, the clue to the understanding of fascist tendencies lies in broad social forces and

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95 In Hungry and Bulgaria.
96 Tanin/Yohan, 14.
97 Kita Ikki: 1883 to 1937; author and right-wing ideologue. Kita had ties to the Young Officer’s Movement, Seinen Shoko Undo; executed in 1937, ostensibly for his role in the February 26th Incident.
100 Duus/Okimoto, 68.
traditions. In those countries, the authoritarian tradition has been predominant and democracy is still a very frail plant. As a result, a German or Japanese with fascist tendencies is no outcast and may be considered perfectly well adjusted to his society.101 Fascists don’t have to wear black or brown shirts. Maruyama Masao reminds us that, “Just as God created man in his own image, so fascism often disguises itself in the image of its enemies.”102 Ebenstein confirms this: A politician with fascist leanings who denies that he is a fascist and who emphasizes his patriotism can do much more harm than the admitted fascist who is not permitted to work within the institutional framework of public life. The danger of not recognizing this prefascist attitude is that, should it become full-fledged fascism (as it well might in an economic depression or in some other disaster of the sort that periodically shakes men’s faith in democracy), recognition of it as a threat may come too late for those whose earlier judgment was too lenient.

Parallels certainly exist between Ebenstein’s warning and what actually happened in Imperial Japan. As the media backlash against fascism—and fascists in government—gained momentum, most if not all Japanese accused of being fascist, or having fascist tendencies, went to great lengths to deny any connection. Even as Japanese society took on more and more obvious fascist overtones, even as the Home Ministry and the Cabinet Information Bureau seriously curtailed freedom of the press, newspapers continued to give vent to the public’s fear of a collapse of the constitutional monarchy and the declaration of a full-blown fascist state. By the time that prewar western writers were announcing the fait accompli existence of just such a fascist Japanese State—one allied to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany103—it was too late for anything to be done.

By the late 1930s the basic structure of the Imperial Japanese Government had already developed beyond its democratic phase into one defined by its reliance on authoritarian and bureaucratically instituted legislation that often originated with the Army. Indeed, Imperial Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor only served to confirm what certain writers in Contemporary Japan, Asia and other periodicals had been predicting for years. It wasn’t until the Cold War Era rehabilitation of Japan required that historians recast their interpretations of prewar events to explain Japan’s development into one of the mainstays of the capitalist block in Asia that suddenly a new generation of western writers began to challenge Imperial Japan’s brand of fascism, which until then had been assumed to be an immutable fact.

Conclusion

The IMTFE’s casual grouping of Imperial Japan with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was a position based on convenience and not a scholarly analysis of events. Today we can look back at early

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101 Ebenstein, 111.
102 Maruyama, 166.
103 1936, Anti-Comintern Pact; 1940, Tripartite Pact.
Showa Japan and conclude that this indictment was correct regardless of the taint of victor’s justice and despite the intervening 60 years during which Cold War scholarship led academics to misinterpret and recast events to fit the geopolitical realities of the world. In 2005, with the Cold War long over, it is time for this backlash to be questioned anew. It is clearly based on an overly narrow interpretation of political theory, an overly narrow interpretation of events, and it was fueled by a generation of scholars whose research and interpretations were shaped by the dynamics of the Cold War Era, all of which made it difficult for them to admit what the Japanese had known all along—that Imperial Japan was fascist.

In fact, the steps in Imperial Japan’s evolution into a fascist state are clear: Imperial Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933; the controversy over the Emperor Organ Theory, *Tenno Kikan Setsu*, in 1935; the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Nazi Germany in 1936; the promulgation of the National General Mobilization Law, *Kokka Sodoin Ho*, in 1938; the New Structure Movement, *Shin Taisei Undo*, and the dissolution of the political parties in May 1940; the signing of the Tripartite Pact with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in September of the same year; and then the inauguration of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, *Taisei Yokusan Kai*, in October. During this entire period the Imperial Japanese Government used ubiquitous calls for service to the state and allegiance to the ideal of *Kodo* to shape and mold the population into just the sort of motivated yet servile populace that Mussolini and his *Fascio di Combattimento* were working toward in Fascist Italy. Members of the Japanese right wing, the military and the government may have vehemently denied that they were fascists but this doesn’t in any way change the political realities of what prewar Japan had become by the early 1940s—a fascist state.

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104 Maruyama, 72.
Tokdo or Takeshima?

The International Law of Territorial Acquisition in the Japan-Korea Island Dispute

Sean Fern

Disputes over offshore territory in East Asia are commonplace and have proven difficult to resolve. The region’s seas are relatively small in comparison to the size of the 11 bordering states, and complicating this fact is the existence of a number of small rocky islets that are the subject of competing claims to offshore sovereignty. For example, Japan’s territorial disputes with the Soviet Union over the Kurile Islands and with China over the Senkaku Islands, are well known. Japan, however, has an equally long-standing, and perhaps even more entrenched, dispute with South Korea over two tiny rock islets in the Sea of Japan. To the Japanese, these rocks are known as Takeshima. To Koreans, they are Tokdo.

Since the end of World War II, Korea and Japan have contested ownership of these islets, given the name Liancourt Rocks by French whalers in the mid-1800s and called that by neutral observers to this day. The area is currently occupied by South Korea, which maintains that it has always belonged to the Republic of Korea. “Tokdo is our territory, historically and under international law,” noted the South Korean Foreign Ministry in a press release dated February 9, 1996. In response to that assertion, in June 1997 the Japanese countered that Liancourt belonged to Japan. “Takeshima Island is an integral part of Japanese territory and this has been our long-standing position on Takeshima Island. There is no question about this,” said Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nobuaki Tanaka.

Japan’s claims to Liancourt are based mainly on historical documentation and international law as evidenced by twentieth century agreements with Korea, formal declarations of ownership and protests against Korean activities on the islands. Conversely, South Korea claims that it originally discovered Liancourt and continues to administer and maintain a presence on the islands. Moreover, the South Korean government argues that following its liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Japan returned Liancourt as a result of bilateral and multilateral treaties, including the two states’ normalization agreements.

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1 For objectivity, in this paper Tokdo/Takeshima Island will be referred to as the Liancourt Rocks.
Concomitant with these historical claims, economic interests also dominate any discussion of the Liancourt Rocks. With the introduction of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), sovereignty over offshore territory has become increasingly important and complicated. Parties to UNCLOS are entitled to as much as 200 nautical miles of maritime and jurisdictional exclusivity. States that have established sovereignty over offshore territory are granted an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around the area, giving the state exclusive fishing rights and mining access to the seabed. Both sides, therefore, serve to gain economically from formal ownership of the islands.

This dispute recently came to a head when South Korea began printing postage stamps showing pictures of flowers and seagulls. On January 16, 2004, South Koreans arrived en masse at post offices around the country to purchase the stamps. The series, “Nature of Tokdo,” included a painting of a lonely gray island, topped with vegetation like a green toupee. After three hours, 2.2 million stamps were sold, setting off a diplomatic row in which Japanese and South Korean leaders showed renewed hostility toward one another. Japanese officials said the issue violates the cooperative spirit of the Universal Postal Union and proposed that Japan counterattack with a “Takeshima” stamp. The dispute set off a rash of nationalist sentiment in both countries, demonstrating the continued sensitivity of the issue.

Considering the evidence presented by both sides, South Korea establishes a stronger claim to the Liancourt Rocks because it has manifested greater affirmative acts of sovereignty – as necessitated by principles of international law – on and around the disputed area. Given the islands’ ambiguous past, the dispute turns on which country has demonstrated affirmative ownership as set out by historical precedents. Nevertheless, the two sides are considered unlikely to bring this dispute before an arbitrator as such direct involvement would risk renewed hostilities and further divisions.

This paper sets out to demonstrate why South Korea has a stronger claim to the Liancourt Rocks. First, it provides a brief history of the islands in the context of Japan-Korea relations. Second, the paper sets out the international legal standards required for formal territorial acquisition and sovereignty over an island. Then, the paper analyzes each state’s claims and sets out why Korea has a stronger title claim. Lastly, it concludes by assessing the security implications of Korea’s possession of Liancourt.

**Historical Perspectives on the Islands**

Contemporary Japanese-Korean relations reflect the past to a large degree. Koreans feel an emotional need to anchor their modern day policies to recollections of former Japanese occupation and conduct. This view is manifested in the idea of han, which represents a combination of resentment, regret and renewed suffering. Han influences how Koreans reflect on the past and often stimulates the desire to revive past events as

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5 Article 55 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea defines the exclusive economic zone as “an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea,” which provides coastal states with various sovereign rights over living and non-living resources.


7 Ibid.
bargaining chips when dealing with Japanese businesses and government officials. Japan, on the other hand, prefers to concentrate on the present and replace the past with a new, fruitful relationship.

The dispute over Liancourt serves to illustrate these antithetical approaches. Japan and Korea are similar geographically and culturally yet their pasts cast a dark shadow on the present. Michael Lev, a renowned international correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, attributes the Liancourt dispute to historical differences rather than a desire for money or territory. While the disagreement at first glance appears to be economic, in a deeper sense, Lev writes, it is “about history, a previous war, and what Koreans emotionally consider to be unfinished business with Japan.” In this sense, Korea’s status as a former Japanese colony has complicated efforts to resolve the dispute.

Aftermath of Japan’s Occupation of Korea

Following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan annexed Korea in a series of forced agreements made between 1905 and 1910. During this period, Japan laid claim to the islands by officially incorporating them into Shimane Prefecture. A notice issued on February 22, 1905 declared, “The island should be designated as ‘Takeshima’ and placed under the jurisdiction of Oki Islands.”

The end of World War II and the Japanese occupation of Korea did little to resolve the issue. The status of the Liancourt Rocks was not addressed in Article 2(a) of the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, which forced Japan to recognize Korea’s independence. Instead, the treaty provided that “Japan, recognizing the independence of Korea, renounces all right, title, and claim to Korea, including the islands of Qualpart, Port Hamilton, and Dagelet.” The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers then removed the Liancourt Rocks from Japanese jurisdiction and put them under US armed forces control for use as a bombing range.

Shortly thereafter, on January 18, 1952, South Korean President Syngman Rhee issued the Korean Presidential Proclamation over the Adjacent Sea. The proclamation declared Korean sovereignty over a portion of the Sea of Japan, including the Liancourt Rocks, by creating the so-called Rhee Line. The text of the proclamation asserts “Korean jurisdiction over waters within a line running 60 nautical miles from the Korean coast,” thereby staking a direct claim to the disputed territory.

Despite disagreement over the ownership of the Liancourt Rocks, in June 1965 the two claimants signed the Treaty on Basic Relations, which normalized their diplomatic relations. No mention was made of the status of Liancourt Rocks within the treaty’s text. Instead, both sides agreed to disagree and deleted all direct mention of the islands from the final document. The two sides did, however, pledge to seek a peaceful settlement of any future disputes through diplomatic channels.
The International Law of Territorial Acquisition

The sea has always been a source of food, travel, communication links and trade. With modern technological innovations in offshore drilling and shipbuilding, the natural resources of the sea have become increasingly important. International law has thus focused on creating mechanisms for the equitable exploitation of marine resources. Subsequent international agreements, such as the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organization and the International Seabed Authority, aim to govern the international use of the seas in order to prevent overexploitation and to set rules for the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of states.

As of 2004, UNCLOS boasted 157 signatories, including Japan and the Republic of Korea. The convention entitles coastal states to 200 nautical miles of sovereign access to living and mineral resources within an exclusive economic zone. In addition, any islands and in some instances rocks that are capable of sustaining human life, over which states establish sovereignty, are also accorded individual maritime zones. Within the EEZ, the coastal state has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the fish stocks of the zone. Concurrent with the convention entering into force in February 1996, Japan and South Korea created economic exclusion zones around their respective territories, and each of these zones included the Liancourt Rocks. Among its other benefits, sovereign title to Liancourt would offer unilateral access to lucrative fishing areas in the Sea of Japan.

Economic Value of the EEZ

There is little information on fish catch and the status of stocks in the area surrounding the Liancourt Rocks. In 1985, before the Korea-Japan fisheries agreement of 1998 in which both states agreed to regard the waters around Liancourt as neutral territory, total fish production was about 12 million tons. Under the 2002 Korea-Japan Fishery Agreement, South Korea was allowed to catch 149,200 tons of fish while Japan was limited to 94,000 tons. In January 2002, the actual fishing industry output by Koreans was 149,218 tons, while the Japanese caught 93,773 tons. The East-West Center projects that the total catch could be increased to about 13 million tons if the quotas were eliminated. Furthermore, the species composition of the catch from Liancourt’s waters has changed over time. This may be due in part to the use of different fishing gear but it also implies changes in the ecosystem. Coastal fisheries stocks are in reasonable shape but there is specific concern about the stocks of flying fish, Pacific herring, sandfish, halibut, Alaska pollack, and Japanese sardine.

Rightful Claims to Territory

International legal scholars do not have a consensual standard for determining...

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15 Article 121(3) of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) states: “Rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.”
19 Ibid.
legitimate territorial acquisition. “Once granted, however, sovereignty, in relation to a portion of the surface of the globe, gives a state a legal right to include such a portion into its territory,” writes Douglas Shaw in *International Law*. 20 Customary international law provides the following five principles by which international tribunals can resolve sovereignty disputes.

Cession of state territory is the peaceful transfer of territory by the owner to another state. According to R.Y. Jennings in *The Acquisition of Territory in International Law*, “The cession of a territory means the renunciation made by one State in favor of another of the rights and title which the former may have to the territory in question. This is affected by a treaty of cession expressing agreement to the transfer.” 21 International treaties or bilateral agreements in which the ceding state must intend to relinquish and pass sovereignty to the other state conclude these transfers. Furthermore, the receiving state must willfully accept the territory. Agreements imposed by force are void because Article 52 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties nullifies treaties procured by the threat or use of force. 22

Related to this standard is the principle of subjugation, which refers to title by conquest. It is the act by which one state acquires territory by annexation following military victory. Acquisition of territory following armed conflict, however, requires further action of an international nature in addition to domestic legislation to annex, including a treaty of cession or international recognition. 23

Prescription is the process of acquiring territory through a “continuous and undisturbed exercise of sovereignty lasting long enough to create a widely held conviction that the possession conforms to the standards of the international community.” 24 No general rules govern the length of time required to create this conviction, but if many other states protest the claim, the prescription standard is generally questioned.

Occupation is a state’s intentional claim of sovereignty over territory treated by the international community as *terra nullius*, or territory that does not belong to any other state. It is, Jennings write, “the appropriation by a state of a territory, which is not at the time subject to the sovereignty of any other state.” 25 Acquiring states substantiate their claim by establishing administration over the territory. In the Eastern Greenland case, the International Court of Justice stated that claims to sovereignty “based not upon some particular act or title such as a treaty of cession but merely upon continued display of authority, involve two elements, each of which must be shown to exist: the intention and will to act as sovereign, and some actual exercise or display of such authority.” 26

**Empirical Examples and Case Law**

In addition to the prescribed rules for establishing justified and legal claims to territory, a number of similar disputes shed light on the South Korea-Japan dispute. Resolving the Liancourt claims necessitates a comparison of the existing facts with relevant legal precedent, and several decisions by

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22 Article 52 states: “A treaty is void if its conclusion has been procured by the threat or use of force in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.”
23 Shaw, 288.
24 Jennings, 21.
25 Ibid., 20.

Volume 5  |  Number 1  |  Winter 2005
international adjudicatory bodies provide a framework for this analysis.

The Island of Palmas dispute between the United States and the Netherlands involved a case similar to Liancourt. The issue concerned ownership of the island of Palmas, located off the Philippine coast. The United States based its title to Palmas on discovery and Spain’s subsequent cession of the Philippines to the US pursuant to the Treaty of Paris, which concluded the Spanish-American War. Spain had sovereign rights over the Philippines until the war, thus enabling the cession. The Netherlands, on the other hand, based its claim on the colonization of Palmas by the Dutch East India Company and on its subsequent uninterrupted and peaceful exercise of sovereignty over Palmas. The Netherlands claim that this sovereignty arose out of conventions entered into with the island’s native princes.27

In the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s decision, rendered by Justice Max Huber, the court stressed the importance of continuous and peaceful displays of sovereignty. Rejecting the United States’ claims of discovery, the court awarded Palmas to the Netherlands, concluding that discovery is insufficient to establish sovereignty over an island. The court decided:

If a dispute arises as to the sovereignty over a portion of territory, it is customary to examine which of the States claiming sovereignty possesses a title – cession, conquest, occupation, etc. – superior to that which the other state might possibly bring forward against it. However, if the contestation is based on the fact that the other party has actually displayed sovereignty, it cannot be sufficient to establish the title by which territorial sovereignty was validly acquired at a certain moment; it must also be show that the territorial sovereignty has continued to exist and did exist at the moment which for the decision of the dispute must be considered as critical. This demonstration consists in the actual display of State activities, such as belongs only to the territorial sovereign.28

Thus the court held that effective occupation completed title of the territory claimed to have been part of the Netherlands. Mere discovery of land cannot compete against the continuous and peaceful display of sovereignty by another state.

In another case, the Clipperton Island dispute between France and Mexico, the court applied the Palmas rules to Clipperton, an unpopulated island in the Pacific Ocean. In the dispute, Mexico claimed that Spain originally discovered the island and as the successor of the Spanish state, Mexico should be awarded full title to the land. France, for its part, argued that it obtained Clipperton in November 1858 as a result of a French Navy lieutenant’s discovery of the island and the subsequent proclamation, declaration, and notification of the French consulate.29

The arbitrator found no decisive proof that Spain discovered Clipperton. It concluded that even if one assumes that Spain discovered Clipperton, Mexico did not support its claims with the requisite manifestations of sovereignty. Consequently, Clipperton Island was terra nullius when France staked its original claim. Therefore, the question posed to the court was whether either claimant had completed its ownership claims by actual manifestations of

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27 Sibbett, 1625.
28 Jennings, 92.
29 Shaw, 296.
Japan sovereignty as determined by the Palmas case.

According to Shaw’s International Law, “The arbiter concluded that the actual, and not the nominal taking of possession was a necessary condition of occupation.”30 Since Mexico engaged only in the symbolic act of hoisting its flag, it did not display the requisite peaceful and continuous acts of sovereignty. In granting Clipperton to France, the arbiter found that France manifested its sovereignty over the island by a formal proclamation of sovereignty, a formal protest to Mexico’s assertions of title, a formal naval landing on the island and the creation of a guano procurement station. As such, Shaw writes, both the Palmas and Clipperton decisions demonstrate that “in the case of uninhabited areas, little is required by way of displaying actual physical authority over the territory to effectuate possession.”31 These acts, however, are necessary to complete a state’s title to any territory.

International Legal Claims to the Liancourt Rocks

As noted above, Japan’s claims to Takeshima are based on historical documentation and international law. The Japanese government points to agreements with the Korean government, formal declarations of ownership, and formal protests against Korea’s activities on the island. In response, Korea argues that it originally discovered Liancourt and continues to administer and maintain a presence on the island. It contends that Japan only acquired title to the island during its illegal occupation of the Korean peninsula and that Korea’s subsequent liberation gives it a legal claim to the land.

Japan’s Claims to Takeshima

The earliest Japanese records documenting the existence and ownership of Takeshima date to 1650 and indicate the granting of the territory to what is known today as Tottori Prefecture. Japan also asserts that numerous pre-nineteenth century documents provide a sound basis for its historical claim. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, points to a 1779 map by Sekisui Nagakubo, which represents the location of Takeshima as part of Japan. Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry points to historical documents dating to 1618, which purport to provide evidence of Japanese fishermen’s use of the Liancourt Rocks. Japan also contends that it occupied Takeshima during the Seven Years’ War and the Russo-Japanese War.

Most important for Japan’s case, however, was its annexation of Korea between 1905 and 1910. The Japanese claim to have incorporated Liancourt – land they considered to be terra nullius – into Shimane Prefecture on February 22, 1905. After having declared Takeshima as a part of Imperial Japan in February 1905, Japanese officials registered the island in the State Land Register for Okinokuni, District 4.32

Japan contends that as part of its annexation of Korea, all Korean territory became Japanese. It asserts, “the measures to incorporate Takeshima reaffirmed the
intention of the Japanese government to claim territorial rights as a modern nation over Takeshima. In addition, the incorporation of Takeshima was reported in the newspapers and was not undertaken secretly, hence it was implemented validly.\(^{33}\) Accordingly, in Japan’s view the annexation of Korea consisted of a peaceful, voluntary, and negotiated merging of both countries.

Following Japan’s defeat in World War II, the Allied Powers invalidated Japan’s title to Takeshima. The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) issued SCAPIN 677, which outlined Japanese territory and specifically instructed that the disputed islets were to be excluded from Japanese administrative authority. The directive included a caveat, however, stating that the document would not represent a final decision regarding the attribution of Japanese sovereign territory.\(^{34}\) Japan therefore maintains that Takeshima rightfully belongs to it and ought to be returned.

During negotiations over the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan tried to regain administrative ownership of Takeshima. These efforts were unsuccessful, however, and the issue remained off the table largely because of Syngman Rhee’s announcement of the “Rhee Line” just months before the San Francisco talks. Japan’s confidence in its position resurfaced in September 1954 when it threatened to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice. Since then, Japan dispatches an annual notice to Seoul to remind the Korean government of Japan’s claims to the island. It also regularly sends Maritime Safety Agency vessels to the area in order to hoist the Japanese flag.

South Korea’s Claims to Tokdo

The South Korean claim to Tokdo is based on earlier, more numerous precedents than that of Japan. Korean experts claim that numerous eighth-century historical records prove that the area was first incorporated into the Korean Shilla Dynasty in 512 A.D. In addition, Korea asserts that numerous maps, including one by Japanese cartographer Dabuchi Tomohiko, verify its title to Tokdo.\(^{35}\) "The Japanese government cites the Onshu Shicho Goki (Records on Observation in Oki Province) edited by Saito Hosen in 1667 as the first record on Tokdo,” writes Yong-Ha Shin in *A Historical Study of Korea’s Title to Tokdo.* “Saito was a retainer of the daimyo of Izumo and at his lord’s behest made an observation trip to Oki Island. In Saito’s report, Tokdo and Ullungdo were both ascribed to Korea and Oki to Japan as its westernmost border. This first Japanese record on the islands clearly places Oki within Japan’s territory and Tokdo within Korea’s.”\(^{36}\)

Korea also maintains that it was in a weakened position vis-à-vis Japan in 1905, when Tokdo was incorporated into Shimane Prefecture. The South Korean government argues that Korea was unable to protest the Japanese move at the time because Japan had forcibly taken control of Korea’s foreign affairs under the Protectorate Treaty. Furthermore, South Korea claims that after World War II, Japan returned Tokdo as part of the 1943 Cairo Declaration and the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation, which ended Japanese control of Korea. The Cairo Declaration pledged that Korea would be free and independent after declaring, “Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Lovmo.


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which she has seized or occupied . . . Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed.”

In 1946 SCAP issued Directives No. 677 and No. 1033, in which Japan is defined as including the four main islands and approximately a thousand smaller adjacent islands. The directive, however, specifically excluded Ullungdo, Chejudo and Tokdo. Given that the directive was made without the participation of Korean diplomats, Tokdo was clearly recognized as Korean territory by the international community. Furthermore, the Treaty of Peace with Japan stated in its territory clause that Japan, “recognizing the independence of Korea, renounces all right, title and claim to Korea, including Chejudo, Komundo and Ullungdo.” The names of the islands were cited as illustrations but obviously not as an exhaustive enumeration. Therefore, all other small islands around the Korean Peninsula, including Tokdo, were not mentioned but should not be considered as excluded.

Subsequent to the end of the Japanese occupation, Tokdo saw its first Korean inhabitants. Since then, there has been a continual Korean presence of at least one or two fishing families and a permanent coast guard. The South Korean government has also taken steps to develop the area. In 1995 for example, the government began building harbor facilities and announced plans to install a desalinization plant to provide drinking water for Tokdo’s inhabitants. Beginning in March 1996, tourists were allowed to visit the island and upgraded navigational facilities made access to Tokdo easier. Such measures are part of a larger campaign to make the South Korean government’s claims to territory clear and to establish a permanent presence on Tokdo.

Superior Claims Under International Law

In order for either state to gain the exclusive economic zone afforded by Liancourt, it must first establish internationally recognized sovereignty over the island. Considering the claims of both sides to the Liancourt Rocks, Korea has established the stronger claim because it has manifested greater acts of sovereignty in the area. While Korea offers limited arguments that it acquired Liancourt as a result of a particular method of territorial acquisition, it has demonstrated ownership by manifesting relevant, affirmative acts of sovereignty as necessitated by the Palmas and Clipperton decisions.

Despite Japan’s reliance on the 1905 and 1910 annexation treaties by which it argues that all Korean territory became Japanese, it is questionable whether Korea intended to give up its title and pass sovereignty to the Japanese, as is required for a valid cession. Indeed, Korea resisted the annexation period with uprisings, protests, and a continual struggle to gain independence. Additionally, when news of Japan’s incorporation of Tokdo reached Korea, the Minister of Home Affairs rejected the Japanese claim, stating, “it is totally groundless for the Japanese to lay claim to Tokdo and I am shocked at the report.” The Korean State Council responded by issuing Directive No. III on April 29, 1906, wherein the council denounced the Japanese claim as groundless.

Japan points to the absence of any action

37 “Cairo Declaration of 1943,” from the National Diet Library of Japan <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c03.html>.
39 Ibid.
on the part of the Korean government when the area was annexed but does not acknowledge that the Japanese Resident-General in Korea was responsible for foreign affairs, leaving the Korean government no diplomatic channel for disputing the Japanese claim. Protestations of a peaceful transfer reflect more on the harsh control of the Japanese over Korea during the occupation period than on actual events. Finally, any argument that Korea voluntarily merged into Japan as a result of peaceful negotiations has been refuted repeatedly by a variety of documentary sources. As such, Japanese claims to title based on cession fail.

Japan and South Korea would have difficulty propounding any claims under the prescription standard. South Korea continually protests Japan’s annexation rule and occupation over time. Japan continuously protests South Korea’s presence on Takeshima. These protests undermine prescription’s requirement of an undisturbed exercise of sovereignty and a general conviction that the claim conforms to the international order. While Japan could argue that the international community did not protest its occupation of Tokdo or the entire peninsula between 1905 and 1945, Japan cannot demonstrate that its sovereignty remained undisturbed after granting Korea independence.42

Japan has a strong claim to acquiring Liancourt by subjugation. By issuing a formal annexation order following its conquest of Korea, Japan established sovereignty over the peninsula and its holdings. An international adjudication body might consider this a handover of title to Japan. If, however, South Korea can prove that Japan forced Korea to cede Liancourt to Japan, such an act would be cession rather than subjugation. As noted earlier, since Korea did not intentionally relinquish title to Japan, Japanese claims based on cession are likely to fail.

Japanese claims to sovereignty based on occupation are also weak. Occupation presumes that the occupied territory did not already belong to a state. Liancourt’s history, however, appears to show that the island initially belonged to Korea. Furthermore, Japanese claims to sovereignty based on the annexation treaties negate any claim to have discovered Takeshima because the treaties concede a lack of initial ownership. If, on the other hand, South Korea can prove that it had original title based on discovery, then it has a good chance of establishing complete title by effective occupation as set out by the Palmas decision. Under the Palmas and Clipperton standards, Korea’s manifestations of sovereignty, including permanent Korean inhabitants and the construction of infrastructure, should prove sufficient to demonstrate effective occupation.43 Japan’s occupation, by contrast, was not continual and only occurred during times of unrest. There is no indication of a Japanese presence on the island since World War II ended.

South Korea has an enormous advantage over Japan because it has de facto possession of the islands and has undertaken a variety of infrastructure projects and improvements. As the Palmas decision shows, international judicial bodies highlight establishing sovereignty through positive acts, especially when occupying a territory. Effective possession of the Liancourt Rocks generally entitles Korea to the claim.

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42 Sibbett, 1641.
43 Ibid.

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Japan may claim that formal protests such as hoisting the Japanese flag on the island and sending ships to the area are sufficient signs of sovereignty, but a judicial body might find otherwise. In the Clipperton case, Mexico tried to substantiate its claim by raising a Mexican flag on the island and by sending a warship to defend the island from takeover. Nonetheless, the court in the case found these acts insufficient to substantiate Mexico’s claim.

Ultimately, South Korea has a stronger claim to Liancourt than does Japan. Japan’s claims rest largely on numerous agreements with the Korean government, implying that the islands originally belonged to Korea. Accordingly, assuming Korea originally possessed Liancourt and can prove that it completed its original claim by subsequent affirmative manifestations of sovereignty, a judicial body should find in its favor.

An Atmosphere of Compromise

Throughout the post-World War II history of Korea and Japan, the two governments have been embroiled in disputes over Tokdo/Takeshima. Central to this dispute are the economic implications of access to the island’s exclusive economic zone. Both states believe that the area is one of their most important fishing fields given the size of fish stocks in its waters. For this reason, the longstanding issue will likely feature in bilateral discussions and cause frictions in the years to come, although neither country seems willing to break off relations over a minor territorial dispute. Despite a history of tensions related to the island, none has risen to the level of extreme discord. Instead, both states appear willing to compromise and cooperate. Negotiations, including agreements granting the Japanese access to Tokdo’s fishing areas, are one way in which the South Korean government is trying to mend relations with its former colonizer.

Flare-ups do occur periodically, however, as in the 1999 example in which Tokyo and Seoul tried to register permanent addresses on the islands. Seoul reacted by sending a letter to Tokyo calling for “immediate cancellations of the registrations.” Tokyo responded by stating it “cannot bar its residents from shifting census registrations, as the island is part of its territory.” Despite this exchange of letters, neither country was willing to escalate tensions and each dropped the issue within days.

Additionally, after South Korea announced plans to construct a lighthouse and permanent coast guard stations on the Liancourt Rocks, Japan protested by sending a formal letter to Seoul but quickly dropped the issue. The postage stamp dispute mentioned above, while initially a matter of contention, has subsided; both sides have essentially agreed to disagree. Thus, while both states maintain their claims to the islands and are angered by measures to assert title by the other side, they are willing to compromise.

In November 1998, South Korea and Japan agreed to renew a 1965 treaty that set a provisional fishing zone around the islands. Under the agreement, fishing boats from Japan and South Korea were allowed to operate in each other’s 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zones if they obtained permits, while fishing quotas and conditions for such operations were to be decided by the two countries every year. This agreement

45 “South Korea, Japan Agree Fisheries Treaty,” BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 28 1998.
laid the foundation for a subsequent 2002 fisheries accord in which each state agreed to lower its catch quota in order to preserve depleting fish stocks around the islands.

Despite this paper’s conclusion that South Korea has a better legal claim to Tokdo, the two states are unlikely to bring the issue before an international arbitrator. Instead, Japan will likely remain adamant in its claim but not push the issue formally as long as other, more important territorial disputes exist. Given the need for a close bilateral relationship between Japan and South Korea, the two sides will likely resolve any remaining disputes related to Tokdo by compromise and agreement. Korea will likely maintain possession of the islands in order to protect its historical claims. Since Japan is mainly concerned with its economic interests, however, it will continue to pursue fishery agreements similar to the 2002 pact to ensure its continued access to the lucrative waters of the Sea of Japan.
The Sources of Regime Stability in North Korea: Insights from Democratization Theory

Yun-Jo Cho

The continued presence of authoritarian rule in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) represents an outlier in the post-Cold War political histories of former Soviet bloc countries. Despite undergoing major socioeconomic distress caused by close to a decade of economic stagnation following the end of the Cold War, the death of the country’s personality cult Kim Il-Sung in 1993, and heavy international pressures, the Kim Jong-II regime has nonetheless demonstrated a capacity to sustain itself politically. Yet a systematic account of the sources of regime stability in the DPRK that engages the broader literature on democratization is at present lacking.

A comprehensive theoretical explanation is critical for several reasons. The issue of regime change has occupied one of the central themes in the policy-debate towards North Korea. On one end of the policy spectrum, hardliners argue for a policy of containment or isolation, whereas others propound a more conciliatory approach based on variants of an engagement policy. Both approaches, however, demand vital assumptions regarding domestic political stability for assessing their viability and impact. Moreover, this issue has taken on tremendous importance as a result of the DPRK’s economic reforms since July 2002, which have set the country on a path of slow but unprecedented change. In order to evaluate the potential political ramifications of the reforms, a systematic understanding of the sources of the current regime’s stability is crucial.

This study will therefore focus on identifying the key variables to which the DPRK regime’s survivability in the post-Cold War period can be attributed. It concludes that factors relating to North Korea’s social structure, leadership strategies, regime type, and external environment have effectively obstructed the impact of some key causal forces for democratization.

The DPRK Case as an Anomaly in Democratization Theory?

At first glance, the North Korean case appears to represent an anomaly in the democratization literature of the past decade because it has successfully maintained its totalitarian polity despite undergoing many of the causal factors often associated with democratic transitions. In particular, two outstanding variables form the basis of expecting a regime collapse in the DPRK.

The first of these is economic crisis. The 1990s represented a decade of severe economic decline for North Korea. National output was reduced roughly to half over the period, coupled with food shortages that afflicted over a quarter of the population in mid-decade. The single-most important proximate cause was the massive trade shock.
resulting from the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern bloc in the early 1990s. As Marcus Noland points out, “the fall in imports from Russia in 1991 was equivalent to 40% of all imports, and by 1993 imports from Russia were only 10% of their 1987-90 average.” This meant that North Korea lost access to most of the subsidized oil and coal (in addition to a third of its steel imports) for which it had come to rely almost exclusively on the USSR since the 1960s. What followed was a plummeting of the DPRK economy, which in turn led to a drastic fall in its agricultural output. Combined with such exogenous shocks, unsustainable agricultural practices implemented since the late 1980s resulted in heavy soil erosion and ultimately famine.

The mainstream literature on democratization posits that poor economic performance raises the probability of regime collapse. There are two main causal chains through which this relationship is expected to hold. The first is through the possibility that negative economic shocks can induce a mass mobilization of protest (e.g. strikes, demonstrations, etc.) that effectively raises the cost of coercion precisely in a time when economic conditions severely limit a regime’s coercive capacity. In short, for an authoritarian regime that bases a significant portion of its legitimacy on economic performance, an economic crisis is equivalent to a loss of legitimacy. An example is the transition case of Indonesia, in which the country’s dramatic economic downturn during the Asian financial crisis was a major cause of the end of Suharto’s dictatorship.

On the other hand, economic predicaments can create tensions within the ruling elite that may increase the likelihood of reforms, coups, and other stimulants of regime change. In the particular case of highly personalistic dictatorships such as North Korea, economic crises can inhibit the distribution of benefits to supporters and allies of the dictator, whose loyalties are largely a function of personal patronage. As Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman note, “economic downturns affect the loyalty of the political-military elite by reducing the ability of the government to deliver material benefits.” Such tensions have the potential to drastically alter the political landscape. Splits generated within the elite may interact with developments from below—i.e., regime softliners can seek and find support among the masses. Moreover, new coalitions can emerge within the domain of civil-military relations, as the military may either find new allies within the government, stage a coup of its own making, or simply withdraw support of the present regime.

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2 Ibid., 5.
3 Ibid., 4.
8 Ibid., 267.
The Sources of Regime Stability in North Korea

The second variable associated with the DPRK’s collapse is the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994. As the founding father of the nation, Kim Il-Sung’s near-deification had rendered him virtually immune to any opposition to his legitimacy. Over 40 years of continued autocratic rule had made his cult of personality permeate throughout the entire North Korean polity and society. In short, the late Kim’s personality cult had been what defined the DPRK as a highly personalistic, neopatrimonial variant of authoritarianism, in which “the chief executive’s maintenance of state authority [is] conducted through an extensive network of personal patronage rather than impersonal law.”\(^{10}\) The sudden death of the late Kim thus mounted to a major domestic political crisis, in addition to the economic crisis that had befallen the nation.

One of the most fundamental factors that affect regime longevity for authoritarian systems is the type of non-democratic governance employed by the regime.\(^{11}\) Although there is no universal classification scheme, most studies distinguish broadly among personalist (or sultanistic, neopatrimonial, etc.), military, and single-party forms of authoritarianism. Regime-type is distinguished in terms of the control over access to power and influence in the polity, and the relative roles that formal institutional structures and personal authority play in exercising that control.\(^{12}\) In practice, differing regime types entail varying incentive structures facing key actors within the governing elite, and thereby bear critically on a given regime’s capacity to sustain domestic political and economic crises.\(^{13}\)

In the case of personalist authoritarian regimes, the autocrat’s heavy reliance on informal (and often unstable) networks of personal patronage for political capital means that the loss of such a figure can—in the absence of a stable succession of the personality cult—lead to a political vacuum in which previously latent forms of political opposition and factionalism may emerge. Empirical evidence in the democratization literature suggests that the death of the dictator is a major cause of regime collapse in such political settings. Geddes, for example, finds that only four of the 51 personalist regimes included in her data set survived for more than a short time following the leader’s death.\(^{14}\)

Accounting for the Anomaly

In order to provide a systematic account for the DPRK regime’s resilience to pressures for change, it is worthwhile to approach the issue from the structural and transactional (i.e. actor-oriented) variants of democratization theory. The task is thus to identify the presence or absence of any mediating variables—on both the societal and leadership levels—that condition the causal effects of the aforementioned factors on the likelihood of regime transition.

On the leadership level, the sources of regime durability in the DPRK can be found in the very nature of the regime itself as a highly personalist variant of authoritarian dictatorship. As noted above, economic downturns may adversely affect the distribution of material benefits; at the same time, however, the incentive structure facing...
supporters of personalistic regimes renders the leadership highly resistant to internal splits. As Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle point out:

"Insiders in a patrimonial ruling coalition are unlikely to promote reform... recruited and sustained with material inducements, lacking an independent political base, and thoroughly compromised in the regime’s corruption, they are dependent on the survival of the incumbent. Insiders typically have risen through the ranks of political service and, apart from top leaders who may have invested in private capital holdings, derive livelihood principally from state or party offices. Because they face the prospect of losing all visible means of support in a political transition, they have little option but to cling to the regime, to sink or swim with it."15

These dynamics are best illustrated using a game-theoretic approach.16 Suppose the status quo is characterized by two factions surrounding the autocrat: a majority (including Kim Jong-Il, the military and other influential members of the Kim clique) and a minority faction (e.g. discontented bureaucrats, some military generals, etc.). Then, the incentive structure facing both factions is given by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority Faction</th>
<th>in power</th>
<th>out of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Faction</td>
<td>10(^2), 8</td>
<td>12, 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of power</td>
<td>0, 4</td>
<td>0, 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the minority faction, the payoff is highest (8) when both factions are in power. The payoff in the upper-left cell is higher than the lower-left cell because the minority (assuming that it desires a transition to democracy) has fewer opportunities to line their pockets and exercise influence when the majority faction is out of power. Psychological factors heavily influence the perceived payoffs of the minority faction. That is, the high degree of uncertainty involved in such plotting (the probability of success and getting caught, the eventual outcome of a regime transition, etc.) and the lack of trust inherent in such political settings may inhibit the occurrence of effective cooperation even within a minority clique. As for the majority faction, its payoffs are higher when the minority is out of power, since the material benefits emanating from the autocrat are not as widely shared and also because it has eliminated potential internal sources of instability from the ranks of government. In the normal state of affairs, then, the DPRK regime is expected to exhibit a high degree of regime unity (as indicated by cooperation between the majority and minority factions).

With respect to the possible dynamics triggered by an economic crisis on regime stability, therefore, the causal effect of crisis on triggering splits within the regime is mediated by the condition that the crisis is bad enough to the extent that the minority faction’s payoff in the upper-left hand cell is equal to or lower than the expected payoff of an attempt at overthrow. In North Korea, it is presumable that this has not yet occurred.

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16 The game below is an application of the payoff structure facing personalist regimes that appeared in Geddes (1999).
17 This first number represents the payoffs to the majority faction.
Besides legitimate economic channels, it is well known that the country is engaged in a host of illicit economic activities such as drug trafficking, arms sales, and private remittances from Japan.19 The international aid North Korea receives can also serve to cushion the adverse impact of poor economic performance on maintaining regime unity. Moreover, for the discontented elite, there always exists the more appealing option of defecting to another country should the status quo become unbearable. In fact, the number of defections from the country in the 1990s increased by more than three-fold compared to the previous decade.20

In addition to the underlying incentive structure, Kim Jong-II’s regime has exhibited durability by virtue of various leadership tactics employed following (and perhaps even before) the death of Kim Il-Sung. The most important aspect to Kim’s adept management of succession politics has undoubtedly been his successful cooptation of the military as a key supporting institution of his regime. Control over the military and holding its absolute loyalty has been one of the key sources of political power in the DPRK.21 In a time of major uncertainty following his father’s sudden death, therefore, Kim Jong-II’s strategy was to consolidate his political power primarily by means of securing the military’s absolute loyalty.22 In fact, when Kim formally assumed power in 1998, he was not inaugurated as the President (which was left vacant in reverence of his father as the “Eternal President”), but as the Chairman of the National Defense Commission (a group of 10 men that includes the heads of air force, army and navy), which was designated as the highest post of the state. Furthermore, during the transitional period of 1994-1997, Kim’s formal political capacity was based wholly on his standing as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a title that he had assumed in 1991.

Indeed, there appears to be sufficient evidence that Kim Jong-II has increasingly relied on the military to govern. Marcus Noland cites a study which observes that “more than half of Kim’s public appearances in 1996 and 1997 were military-related, and military figures have become increasingly prominent in the government hierarchy.”23 More recently in 2001, as Victor Cha and David Kang point out, ex-military officers have been assigned as directors of factories or enterprises in an attempt to convert them from military to economic elites.24 This suggests the heavy influence of the military in Kim’s support network.25

Another notable dimension of Kim Jong-II’s succession strategy has been to consolidate his legitimacy through ideology. His military-first policy, also known as the “Red Banner Spirit,” introduced around

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25 This may also be interpreted as a political move to gain support of the military for economic reforms.
1995, elevates the military—even above the Korean Workers Party (KWP)—as the most patriotic, creative, and effective institution in society most capable of realizing the juche ideology. Some excerpts from a 1996 speech by Kim Jong-Il upon the 50th anniversary of Kim Il-Sung University exemplify this philosophy:

“The revolutionary army has a very important role in the building of socialism and in manning the fatherland’s defence line. Therefore, our great leader… emphasized the great importance he attached to our armed defence forces… specifically there should be measures to guarantee rice for the military, to protect and complete the socialist structure… it is unjustifiable that we cannot supply food to our army that has been victorious for over sixty years since our great leader was an anti-Japanese freedom fighter… the responsibility for the trouble today can be blamed on the party workers… main reason for this is that party workers… are not doing their work in a revolutionary manner… All of the party workers and party organizations should learn the military revolutionary spirit and make changes in all their projects, there should be a fundamental change in their way of thinking…”

This type of ideology serves multiple functions for Kim. First, it reinforces his legitimacy as a dynastic successor by maintaining a core element of ideological continuity between the past and present. Second, it incites both a renewed sense of revolutionary fervor and nationalism among the masses, and thereby serves the function of a coping mechanism at times of hardship. The military-first policy also further reinforces the military’s loyalty to Kim, while at the same time consolidating his own cult of personality as both a chief national theoretician and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Finally, and most pragmatically, by elevating the Korean People’s Army as the supreme institution within the nation, Kim can find an adequate scapegoat for present-day ills. Another quotation from the aforementioned speech is illustrative:

“I cannot solve all the problems while I have the duty of being in charge of practical economic projects as well as the overall economy, as I have to control important sectors such as the military and the party as well… The great leader told me when he was alive never to be involved in economic projects, [to] just concentrate on the military and the party and leave economics to party functionaries. If I do delve into economics then I cannot run the party and the military effectively… The party workers should develop the correct solution to our food shortage… The anarchic situation that this shortage is now creating is to be blamed not only on the administrative and economic workers in government, but also the party workers”.}

On the societal level a combination of social, historical, and cultural factors has

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obstructed the emergence of demands for political change. Although there have reportedly been some sporadic incidents of food riots and uprisings, these were all limited to certain localities and nothing has occurred on the mass level to challenge the authority of the government. Why not?

First, North Korea’s level of socioeconomic development is so low that it lacks the structural conditions necessary for an economic crisis to translate into mass uprisings. Typically cited conditions include those such as a large middle-income class, civic networks of association or any other modes of civil society, high levels of education, and urbanization. In addition, a minimum income per capita level of at least $1000 is necessary for those conditions to take effect as incomes grow—in countries with income levels below that threshold, dictatorships are almost always stable.\(^{31}\)

Though the DPRK is a relatively well-educated and urbanized country, with the literacy and urbanization rates comparable to those of South Korea as of 1992, its GDP per capita in 2002 was estimated to be around $1000 (down from approximately $2284 in 1990).\(^{32}\) Thus, under conditions of low-income levels coupled with major shortages of food, it is difficult for citizens to concern themselves of anything beyond basic daily needs. As Victor Cha points out, “[the North Korean] masses are preoccupied with basic subsistence… [and thus] the overturning of systems like North Korea occur not when things are at their absolute worst, but when they begin to get better.”\(^{33}\)

In addition, as Marcus Noland points out, North Korean society neither possesses nor has ever experienced institutions capable of translating mass discontent into political action.\(^{34}\) Although limited networks of civic association exist in the country (primarily in the form of local “committees of public security,” around which much of everyday life is organized), society at large is heavily infiltrated by the state as both a means of social surveillance and indoctrination.\(^{35}\) To ease the government’s monitoring of society, since 1967 the government has imposed a three-tier classification system on the population based on their political loyalty: a ‘core’ class of about 28% of the population loyal to the KWP; an ‘unstable’ class of about 45% that include ordinary workers; and a ‘hostile’ class of about 27% that comprise of political dissidents and their families.\(^{36}\) Moreover, the Kim Jong Il regime maintains an effective political monitoring surveillance system through two primary institutions—the secret police and public security ministry—to monitor citizens’ political behavior.\(^{37}\)

The dire socioeconomic circumstances in the DPRK also shed light on the importance of cultural factors in reinforcing the weaknesses of ‘people power’ in bringing about political change in the country. The masses’ immediate concerns of economic and physical security renders matters relating to post-materialist values (such as quality of life and political liberty) as peripheral issues in their daily lives—and such an emphasis on ‘survival values’ over values of ‘self-

\(^{31}\) Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. “Modernization: Theories and Facts”, World Politics, Vol. 49, No. 2 (January 1997): 13. In other words, at very low levels of income, dictatorships tend to be highly stable.

\(^{32}\) For detailed data, see Noland (2000): 74-78.


\(^{34}\) Noland (2000): 334

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 333.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 73.

expression’ has been found to be significantly tolerant of authoritarian forms of government. Furthermore, over a quarter-century of indoctrination in the juche state ideology—with its emphasis on self-reliance, national pride, and perhaps most importantly, on the leadership of the “Suryong” (the leader)—has reinforced the traditional Confucian virtues of obedience to authority, social harmony and consensus over divergence, and the family, to produce a political-cultural norm of stable authoritarian governance. In light of such value systems, the political turmoil in the mid-1990s may have thus, paradoxically, served to enhance support for the succeeding regime.

In conjunction, North Koreans not only lack any historical experience with democracy, but they have experienced no other type of political rule but one that rests its legitimacy on dynastic continuation (with the exception of the Japanese occupation). At the same time, the almost total isolation of the DPRK masses from the rest of the world, combined with government propaganda’s emphasis on the threats posed by “foreign imperialists,” have reinforced cultural stability by maintaining high levels of fear among the populace and dependence on the current regime. As Sue Lautze notes, the very nature of the North Korean system in which one’s security is found only in trusting strong leadership supports the contention that Kim Jong-II will be able to endure periods of famine for several more years—as did Mao Zedong in China in the late 1950s.

The DPRK government’s total regulation of the flow of information—both within the country and between its borders—along with its broader mechanisms for social control, have prevented the dissemination of discontent. Marcus Noland asserts that “the state has near perfect monopoly of mass media and completely regiments everyday life.” The control over information within the country means that it is almost impossible for people of one locality to know of organized protest in areas beyond its immediate surroundings. Moreover, as a result of its national isolation, North Korean citizens lack a sense of collective ‘relative deprivation’: i.e., because they have nothing to compare their present situation other than their own history (and perhaps China), it is difficult for North Koreans to merely ‘imagine’ political change.

Thus, the government, with its control over information, may find it advantageous to isolate regions and localities from each other, akin to a ‘divide-and-rule’ strategy. Hence, “starvation may be relatively localized and falling disproportionately on certain socioeconomic groups, particularly rural non-farm workers, and could reflect conscious decision-making by the political elite.”

Finally, North Korea’s external environment is a key structural variable that applies to both the leadership and societal

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41 Based on a discussion with Dr. Dennis McNamara, Sociology Department, Georgetown University (April 13, 2004).
42 Noland (2000): 337

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levels of analysis. National security concerns are helping to sustain the current regime. Given the status of the Korean War as one that is held on hold through an armistice (as opposed to a peace treaty) and the presence of US troops in the South, the war is far from forgotten in the DPRK. As one prominent scholar on Korean security has pointed out, North Korea possesses legitimate security concerns. Such concerns lend an enormous amount of credibility to the radical government propaganda that preaches an “us vs. them” mentality. At the same time, for the military these concerns are translated into a heightened priority on domestic political stability, which may be a significant force driving their support for the regime.

Moreover, for varying reasons the interests of neighboring countries such as China and South Korea dictate an explicit priority of avoiding the collapse of the DPRK regime. Such interests stem from economic and geostrategic concerns regarding the tremendous costs incurred to both countries in the event of a regime breakdown. Given these interests, as well as international humanitarian concerns, aid flows numbering in the hundreds of millions (approximately 1/3 as large as the DPRK’s total exports) have entered the DPRK in the form of bilateral assistance, humanitarian assistance, UN aid (mainly the World Food Program), the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and other channels from at least 49 countries as of the late 1990s. In turn, as noted above, foreign aid can be diverted for military use, used to support Kim’s patronage networks and raise hard foreign currency by, for example, selling high quality food aid for lower quality foodstuffs on world markets.

Conclusion

Despite undergoing two powerful causal forces for democratization contemporaneously, the Kim Jong-Il regime has displayed a remarkable degree of stability in the post-Cold War era. Regime stability in the DPRK has been a function of various structural and transactional variables that have mediated the causal impact of those forces on three levels of analysis: the leadership, societal, and external dimensions.

On the leadership level, a tight personalist network of political elites, combined with a set of strategies employed by Kim Jong II—of which those relating to maintaining military loyalty to the status quo seem most important—have the overall degree of regime unity, thereby insulating the current regime from pressures for change. At the societal level, poor socioeconomic conditions, as well as the state’s full-blown penetration of society through political surveillance and control over the flow of information, have obstructed the emergence of demands for political change from below. The DPRK’s traditional Confucian cultural base and ideological indoctrination in the juche ideology have also heavily influenced the masses’ perception of Kim Jong II’s legitimacy as a dynastic successor to the nation’s original founder. Externally, the geostrategic calculations of neighboring countries have in effect raised the threshold of economic pain needed to induce tensions within the elite, while the security environment facing the DPRK has further reinforced the military’s support for the current regime.

See Noland (2000) for more detailed data on aid flows.

Volume 5  |  Number 1  |  Winter 2005
The conclusions reached in this study have significant academic as well as policy implications. For future studies on North Korea, it may be of particular interest to examine the relative importance of the variables pointed out in this paper by examining cases of both transitions and non-transitions from personalist variants of authoritarian rule. Democratization theory has yet to benefit from studies concerning negative cases (i.e. non-transition) of the independent variable, and an analysis of the DPRK case can thus help to shed more light on how authoritarian regimes are sustained. As for policy, a systematic understanding of regime stability in North Korea provides an adequate starting point from which to evaluate the potential political ramifications of the country’s July 2002 economic reforms.
Contested Narratives: Reclaiming National Identity through Historical Reappropriation among Korean Minorities in China

Min-Dong Paul Lee

During the last two decades, the concept of nationalism has been repeatedly put under spotlight by both the media and academics. This heightened attention has produced a plethora of theories and applications of the concept. However, there is little agreement among scholars on what “nationalism” means and how it came about. Gellner and Hobsbawn regard it as a political principle that reflects cultural and voluntary commitment of individuals within a national political boundary, where as Anderson describes it as an imagined collective identity. Breuilly offers yet a different definition by identifying nationalism with political movements seeking or exercising state power. Recently, even the long-held consensus on the relatively recent historical origin of the concept has been challenged. In spite of such wide range of disagreements on various aspects of nationalism, however, most scholars agree on its dynamic and fluid nature. Nationalism is not a fixed ideology or identity, but changes constantly through interactions among members within and outside of the nation. Yet, few studies explicate what the dynamism of nationalism entails. How is nationalism dynamic? Are the forces that shape nationalism endogenous or exogenous? What are the mechanisms of change? What is the locus of the dynamism? This paper attempts to address these questions by examining the contentious politics of symbolic boundary maintenance between the Chinese government and Korean minorities in China.

The dynamism of nationalism denotes that national identity is, in essence, fluid and changeable. Prasenjit Duara contends, “nationalism is rarely the nationalism of the nation, but rather represents the site where very different views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other.” Through the contestation and negotiations among various members of the group/nation, national identity constantly evolves. Therefore, no ethnic groups or nations have fixed identity.
or completely rigid membership boundaries. In fact, it is not uncommon for individuals and ethnic groups to change their membership or allegiance depending on their ever-fluctuating socio-political relations and surroundings. For instance, some minority nationalities in China have witnessed explosive population growth—the population of Manchus doubled between 1982 and 1990. While some of the cause can be attributed to the CCP’s more relaxed child birth control policy in minority areas, the more significant reason is the switching of national identity by many who were formerly registered as “Han” Chinese. The nationality switching occurred partly because individuals made rational choices based on new institutional privileges given to minorities, but also because the meaning of being a Manchu changed dramatically during the reform era. The fluidity of national identity also makes possible for politically powerful groups to manipulate and exploit individuals.

The question, then, is whether national identities change, but how they are constructed and manipulated, and whether we can conceptualize the process.

This paper argues that the main channel through which national identity is actively contended and negotiated is through historical narratives. There are two main reasons why historical narratives are emphasized in this study. First of all, as Anderson argued, if a nation is an imagined community, then the central force that maintains the imagination is shared memories embedded in historical narratives. Historical narratives not only sustain shared memories, but also make “a social identity explicit, not so much in the way it is ‘given’ or held as stable, as in the ways it is differentiated from a former period or another society,” as Michel de Certeau argued. Secondly, empirical evidence from China indicates that there have been a number of attempts by both central government and minority groups to re-evaluate the history of the ethnic minority.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary (1994) of the Yanbian Institute of Historical Research (Yanbian Lishi Yanjiusuo/Yonbyon Yoksa Yon’guso), Prof. Pak Munil, the president of Yanbian University, wrote a dedicatory article for this event. The article ardently calls for a complete renewal of historical research among Chaoxianzú historians in order to adapt to the rapidly

7 “Chaoxianzú” is the official title for the Korean minorities living in China. In this paper, the term is used interchangeably with “Koreans in China,” “Chinese Koreans,” or simply “Koreans.”
8 Yanbian is the officially designated autonomous prefecture for Korean minorities in China. It is located in southeast corner of Jilin province, one of the three northeastern provinces of China. To the south it faces North Korea, and to the east it conjoins the Russian border. It is a home of almost 1 million Koreans in China.
10 “Chaoxianzú” is the official nationality title for Koreans in China. In this article, I will use the two terms (Koreans and Chaoxianzú) interchangeably.
Korea

Although Koreans in China are relatively small in terms of population (1.9 million according to 1990 census, 13th largest in China), they publish more literatures and studies in their own language than any other minority nationalities. Many of their literatures and other publications deal specifically with history and identity. Especially, since the beginning of improved relations between China and South Korea, academic symposiums on “Korean immigrant societies” sponsored by Korean government or Korean academic institutions gave them more opportunities to reflect on their own identity and publish the results. Notably, the Hanguk Chongsin Munhwa Yonguso (The Academy of Korean Studies) has been sponsoring yearly symposium on overseas Korean culture. The Center for Korean Studies at University of Hawaii also sponsored an International Conference on Koreans in China in 1988. These symposiums and conferences contributed significantly in understanding Chaoxianzu nationalism and culture. Seoul National University has also established sisterhood relationship with Yanbian University since 1992, and has been sponsoring publications of many Chaoxianzu historical and social studies by Yanbian University professors.

11 Pak, 10-11.

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identity on the other hand.

Interestingly, the characteristics of this renewed effort of constructing new historical consciousness for Chaoxianzu share many similarities with the “colonial nationalism” of the early 20th century. Generally, “colonial nationalism” is taken to refer to the assertiveness of local autonomy and interest as well as the desire for self-rule and self-respect within a changing set of connections to the empire. In a likewise manner, Chaoxianzu historians are now re-excavating their historical roots in order to reappropriate their own history and to reassert their local autonomy within the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Having gone through what resembles a colonizing experience during the Cultural Revolution, Chaoxianzu historians attempt to de-colonize their cultural and intellectual realms and construct new national identity. They do so by reclaiming the right to articulate their own past and correcting some of the false images of their identity created by the Beijing government. Consequently, their historical narratives often display significant and sometimes even confrontational disparities from the official state narratives. This article will discuss how these contentions unravel in their interpretations on defining who the Chaoxianzu are and re-establishing Chaoxianzu’s place in the Chinese history, and argue that, during the last two decades, Chaoxianzu historical scholarship has been laying the foundation for building a strong and distinct historic culture-community among Chaoxianzu minority with deep sense of affinity with Koreans in the Korean peninsula.

Chinese Minority or Korean Émigrés? – The Origin and Cultural Boundary of Chaoxianzu

The Dictionary of the History of China’s Minorities (Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzushi Da cidian), published in 1995, introduces the history of Chaoxianzu nationality as the following:

They are one of China’s minority nationalities…. Their origin is closely related with the ancient kingdoms of Guchaoxian (Kochoson) and Gaojuli (Koguryo). Their ancestors originally resided in the Liaodong area and the northern part of Chaoxian (Choson) peninsula. After the fall of Gaoli (Koryo), many of those who were living in the Liaodong area either moved inward or remained in Liaodong, and gradually integrated (ronghe) into the Han nationality. Some of them went back to the Chaoxian (Choson) peninsula and joined (jiehe) the Xinluo (Silla) nationality to form a new Gaoli (Koryo) nationality, and renamed themselves as Chaoxian (Choson) around the beginning of Ming dynasty in China. There are two extremely significant points that the article posits. First, it argues that Manchuria (or Liaodong Area) is the birthplace of Chaoxianzu nation. According to the article, the ancient history of Chaoxianzu indicates that they are, in fact, descendents of the ancient kingdoms of Kochoson and Koguryo and are closely related to the ancient inhabitants in Manchuria, most of whom are now “integrated” into the Han nationality.

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Secondly, the article implies that there are several sub-national groups with different origins within the all-encompassing category “Korean” ethnic group, and the present Chaoxianzu nationality in China has closer and more ancient affinity to the original Kochoson and Koguryo nations of Liaodong area than the southern Silla nationality which it “joined” much later. By shrewd choice of words, the article attempts to link the Chaoxianzu nationality more closely to the “integrated (ronghe)” ancient nations and thus to the Han nationality than the southern nation of Silla which now stands as Korea. The intention of the article, which aims to locate the roots of Chaoxianzu national identity in China by manipulating its ancient history, is subtle but unmistakable.

Today, many Chaoxianzu historians vehemently reject this official version of historical narrative regarding Chaoxianzu’s origin. Rather, most of Chaoxianzu scholars particularly stress that the history of Chaoxianzu properly began in the mid-19th century. They try to distance themselves from earlier Korean settlers in China as much as they can, and emphasize this aspect of recent historical immigration in order to endow Chaoxianzu with a unique characteristic as migrant (Chonyip) or crossed-over (Wolkyong/Kwakyong) people. One of the reasons why they wish to dissociate with the ancient Korean inhabitants in Manchuria is clearly articulated by Prof. Han of Yanbian University in his article: “I do not deny the fact that there are descendents of Koguryo in the northeastern region of China. However, they have been already completely assimilated into Han or Manchurian nationalities, and have been converted into those nationalities.” What this statement purports is that Prof. Han’s understanding of Chaoxianzu national identity takes strong independent national and cultural distinctiveness as a prerequisite. In other words, if an originally ethnic Korean is culturally assimilated, he/she is no longer a Korean or Chaoxianzu, regardless of his/her genealogical roots.

In order to build their distinct national identity apart from that of Han identity, Chaoxianzu historians have also had to clarify the boundary-line for their national membership. It was important to make sure that the Chaoxianzu identity was unequivocally defined, not left arbitrary, so that any Chaoxianzu individual could identify himself/herself as a member of the

18 Han Chun’gwang, 92.
19 This added emphasis on cultural distinctiveness is a quite recent development. Even until 1984, Korean historians did not completely reject the idea of the historical association between Chaoxianzu nationality and the ancient kingdoms of Kochoson and Koguryo. It was only in 1988 that the academic consensus has been completely turned around. Since the Conference on the Migratory History of Chaoxianzu sponsored by the Chaoxianzu Historical Society of China (Zhongguo Chaoxian Minzu Shixuehui Qianrushi Xueshu Taolunhui) in 1988, hardly any Chaoxianzu historian makes the connection between Chaoxianzu and ancient kingdoms of Kochoson and Koguryo.
nation without perplexity. Contrary to the efforts of CCP to blur the national distinctions,20 Chaoxianzu leaders strove to ascertain Chaoxianzu membership boundaries. They understand ‘nation’ as a cultural and political community that retains common cultural characteristics and national consciousness.21 ‘National Consciousness’ is further defined as “realizing the dignity of one’s own nation and recognizing that the members have the supreme right to decide the destiny of their own nation; and thus it does not allow the members to succumb to oppression and humiliation caused by other nations and induces them to fight for the prosperity of their fatherland even to death.”22 It is apparent that their endeavor to define their cultural boundary carries a strong nationalistic agenda. This agenda is most clearly revealed in the so-called Pak clan controversy.

In 1982, approximately 350 members of Pak clan from Qinglong County in Hebei Province applied for change of their nationality registration from ‘Han’ to ‘Chaoxianzu.’ Following their example, more members of Pak clan who were previously registered as ‘Han’ applied for the change: 1,234 from Benjie county and 277 from Gai county in Liaoning Province, and 60 from Shunan County in Jilin Province. They all claimed that they are descendents of Korean immigrants from medieval period. Drawing on this claim to blood relations, these thoroughly assimilated members of Pak clan sought to re-convert to Chaoxian nationality. Although the applicants from Benjie County were denied the change by the government due to the lack of substantial genealogical evidence, all the others succeeded in changing their nationality registration. This incident caused enormous controversy among Chaoxianzu scholars. The reason why it became an issue is because these members of Pak clan became a prototype of what the members of Chaoxianzu are most afraid of—ethnic assimilation.

According to Chaoxianzu historians, the ancestors of the Pak clans came to China at least 600 years ago during the Koryo dynasty in Korea or even earlier. However, after several centuries of living within Chinese and Manchu communities, they had totally lost any Korean cultural traits. None of them are capable of speaking the Korean language, and there is no trace of traditional Korean customs in their lifestyle. The only sign of their Koreaness is that they have Korean last names and somehow remember themselves as descendents of Koreans. The Pak clan is a perfect example of an assimilated nationality, and according to the socialist ideals, this is where all the ethnic groups are supposed to be headed. The national “community” imagined by the Pak clan is wholly in line with the CCP minority policies. However, this is precisely what Korean intellectuals are striving to prevent at all costs. Consequently, many Korean scholars have become uneasy about the whole situation and thus began to strongly deny the validity of Pak clans’ claim to Chaoxianzu nationality. They not only

20 CCP’s dexterous practice of blurring national distinctions have most effectively carried out in the southwest. Especially, their work of mashing several ethnic groups into one nationality called Zhaung for political purpose is a case in point. See Katherine E. Palmer, Creating Zhaung: Ethnic Politics in the Peoples Republic of China, Ph. D. Dissertation, (University of Virginia, 1997). Even among the officially recognized ethnic groups, the government often focuses on the most salient division that is drawn between Han and minorities instead of giving each ethnic group comparable weights and attention.


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suspect the truth of their claim to Korean genealogical origin, but also reject their claim to membership in Chaoxianzu nationality even if their genealogical claim proved to be true.

An Bong, a Chaoxianzu historian, carefully argues that there is no guarantee that these Pak clans are really from the Korean peninsula. The mythological stories of Pak clan’s origin are not restricted to Korean peninsula. An Bong argues that similar stories can be found in China and Japan, so it is not academically plausible to limit Pak clan’s origin to only Korean peninsula. Furthermore, he contends that there were several clans with last name “Pak” in ancient China. Using Chinese historical sources, he proves that “Pak” was a rather common Chinese last name even before the Yuan dynasty. Just the fact that they have the last name “Pak” does not guarantee that they are descendents of Koreans.

Another Chaoxianzu scholar, Han Chun’gwang, presents a different argument against allowing Pak clans to obtain Chaoxianzu nationality: in spite of their claim to blood relations, none of the Pak clan really has Korean blood in them. All of them have only one side of their parentage related to Korean ancestors, or some of them have none at all. Among the 45 households that applied for change in nationality registration from the Qinglong county in Hebei, 12 household heads had both parents who were either Han or Manchu, and 33 household heads had one parent who were either Han or Manchu. Furthermore, those who applied for change were rather small in number in their communities. In the same county in Hebei, only some 350 have applied for change while more than 1,500 others with the same last name decided to remain ‘Han.’

Chaoxianzu scholars conclude that the only reason that some members of Pak clans changed their nationality registration is to benefit from the favorable nationality policies of the government toward minorities. As members of minority nationalities, they can have more than one child and gain a bit more political leverage. Even after the government approved their applications, none of them attempted to learn Korean language or culture, and still live in predominantly Han or Manchu communities.

This incident reawakened Chaoxianzu scholars to the reality of ethnic integration in Chaoxianzu communities. An Bong is particularly concerned about the status quo of Chaoxianzu culture and society. The population of Chaoxianzu is hardly growing, while the Han population in Yanbian is increasing rapidly. Moreover, young generation of Koreans in Yanbian feels no urgency to learn Korean language. In this socio-cultural environment of already degenerating national spirit, the presence of assimilated Pak clans among Chaoxianzu adds even more threat to Chaoxianzu national identity. The Chinese government, on the other hand, readily approved these applications. However, Chaoxianzu intellectuals even reject the validity of the government’s approval. Consequently, they

23 Pak clans in Korea claim that their original ancestor was born out of an egg. He became the first king of Silla kingdom.
24 An Bong, 39.
25 Ibid., 41.
26 Han Chun’gwang, 95.
27 Ibid., 95.
do not hesitate to express very strong feelings regarding this matter. For them, assimilated Korean is no Korean at all.

**Henchman or Equal Partner?: Reclaiming the National History of Chaoxianzu**

The official state narrative of Chaoxianzu history normally characterizes the Chaoxianzu as eager participants of CCP’s glorious struggle against the four “anti-”s: anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism, anti-Kuomintang and anti-America.28 Instead of writing the stories of Chaoxianzu’s own independent historic journey, the official account of Chaoxianzu history is always incorporated into the history of CCP revolution.29 All the official accounts invariably stress that most of the armed resistance against Japanese was led by CCP.30 Although Koreans were active participants of the anti-imperialist and anti-Japanese struggles, the ultimate victory was accomplished only through the guidance of the CCP.31 In order to justify their claim, CCP historians selectively chose historical events and narrated everything around the center represented by the party.32 They effectively eliminated any account of conflicts between Han Chinese and Koreans, and highlighted several instances when the two groups had worked together. Through these “model” narratives, they attempted to reconstruct Chaoxianzu history to fit within their own ideological and political framework. Such manipulative historical practice is no longer acceptable to Chaoxianzu historians. The dissatisfaction with the official narrative is most conspicuously expressed in their re-evaluation of the works of the CCP’s Manchurian Provincial Committee (1927.10-1936.6).

Because of Manchuria’s undeniable strategic significance in the CCP’s struggle against Japan and KMT during the first two decades of its history, the CCP called for the establishment of the Manchurian Provincial Committee (MPC - Zhonggong Manzhousheng Weiyuanhui) in 1927. In order to consolidate the position of the party in Manchuria and bring organization, the CCP sent one of its Central Committee members, Liu Shaoqi, as the first secretary of MPC in 1929; note that the work and role of the MPC were significant enough for the CCP to send the head of its Labor Department. The MPC’s influence over Koreans in Manchuria was particularly significant, because Korean communists all joined the CCP in complying with the Comintern’s directive calling for “one party for one country” in 1930, and thus came under the authority of the MPC. When the Manchurian incident broke out on Sept 18, 1931, the MPC played a critical role in organizing anti-Japanese guerilla armies.

In spite of the Committee’s historical importance, Chinese historical scholarship is astonishingly silent on the subject. Most of the historical dictionaries do not even contain

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29 Having examined many literatures on the official discourse of Chaoxianzu history, Heh-Rahn Park concludes that the state narratives characterize Chaoxianzu as the “liberated subjects” instead of common liberators. Park, 76.
32 Craig Calhoun contends that China has always engaged in a selective appropriation and reconstruction of China’s past, and used those exemplary narratives in educational practices to foster loyalty and other values in the mind the Chinese public. Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 33-34.
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an article with the title “Zhonggong Manzhousheng Weiyuanhui (or Manzhou Shengwei as a short form),” and the official history of CCP’s anti-Japanese struggle mostly ignores the MPC or simply makes perfunctory remarks. The silence is equally dominant among Chaoxianzu historical narratives at least until the 1980s, except for a few typical party-controlled propagandistic historical accounts that praise anything that the Communist Party did. Only in the new historic era has renewed historical investigation of the MPC been initiated, and a few research reports published by both CCP and Chaoxianzu scholars.

A few available CCP accounts of the MPC’s works unanimously elevate the MPC for providing crucial leadership in Yanbian’s struggles against feudalism and Japanese imperialism. They do mention the role of Koreans occasionally, but the entire narrative is focused around the heroic works of CCP. For instance, a study of the CCP’s anti-Japanese operations by the People’s Liberation Army highly acclaims the MPC’s leadership in guiding the independent anti-Japanese military operations and organizing party structures in Manchuria. It stresses that the military operations in the northeast after the 9.18 (or Manchurian) incident was heroically led by the MPC. Another study on Liu Shaoqi’s works in the MPC also praises the its achievement: “Under extremely difficult conditions, MPC restored the organization of the party and allowed the workers’ movement, peasants’ movement, soldiers’ movement, and all the other mass patriotic anti-imperialist movements to rapidly develop under the leadership of the party.”

These superb achievements of the MPC, presented in party literatures, are not how most of the Chaoxianzu people remember the Committee. Despite the universal familiarity of the MPC and its historic significance, its story is often not talked about in Yanbian. The sensitivity of the subject is uncanny, a puzzle whose centerpiece resides in what is known as the Minsaengdan (or Minshengtuan) incident which resulted in the massacre of more than one thousand Korean Communists. Recently, Chaoxianzu scholars revisited the works of the MPC and the Minsaengdan incident with much caution. In these studies, the MPC is no longer an object of encomium; its policies and works are analyzed with moderate objectivity, and some of its mistakes are brought out to the surface. Most importantly, the role of Koreans in the anti-Japanese struggles in Manchuria is radically re-evaluated, and their relationship with the...
CCP is carefully re-examined.

New historical narratives by Chaoxianzu scholars place Koreans at the center of Manchuria’s struggle against the Japanese imperial forces. They stress that most of the northeastern regions’ CCP members were Koreans: in 1930, over 90% of all CCP members were Koreans; 93% of the Communist Youth Organization members were Koreans; and virtually all of the 10,000 organized peasant families were Korean families.41 Even as late as 1934, more than half of all CCP members in Manchuria were Korean, and over 95% of the CCP’s guerilla armies consisted of Koreans. Chaoxianzu historians note that even the MPC Chinese leaders recognized the fact that “Koreans constitute the basic revolutionary force in Manchuria” in its report to the central CCP leadership.42 Furthermore, it is evident from the remaining documents from MPC archives that there were hardly any Han Chinese Communists in Manchuria and that the MPC encouraged Koreans to convert their neighboring Han Chinese to Communism. It gave directives to Koreans to produce propagandistic literatures and posters in Chinese and go into Chinese communities to spread Communist ideology among Han nationalities in Manchuria. Despite such critical roles played by Koreans, the MPC gradually moved against Koreans, which reached its peak with the Minsaengdan incident.

In 1931, the central CCP leadership guaranteed the full right of self-determination to Koreans, Mongols, Hui, Tibetans, Miao and Li in the Constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic, a right which also included the right of secession. While the MPC recognized the authority of the CCP Central Committee’s decision, it interpreted the concept of “self-determination” differently. MPC intentionally ignored the clause in the Constitution stipulating the right of secession, and argued that “self-determination” only promises “equal political power.”43 The committee ceaselessly emphasized “unity,” and harshly condemned the “leftist tendency of mechanically applying the principles of nationality relations in Lenin’s writings.”44 Therefore the MPC allowed Koreans to participate in the People’s Revolutionary Government with only limited political power. Although Ch’on Ryo, the author of the study, does not make any interpretative statements in this issue, his resentment is clearly expressed by his cursory comment that the MPC did not fully follow the directives from the center.

According to Ch’on, the Committee was heavily influenced by the leftist ideology of the Sixth Comintern Conference, and labeled Korean anti-Japanese nationalist groups as “dogs of Chinese bourgeois and Japanese imperialists; and thus purely anti-revolutionary fascist groups.” Such radical leftist ideology seriously impaired the process of bringing together all the Korean anti-Japanese forces in unity. The gravest mistake the Committee made, however, was concerning the thousands of original Choson Communist Party members who joined the MPC in 1930. Initially, the MPC welcomed the Choson Communist Party members as potential catalysts of advancing revolutionary movement of the Committee. They were interviewed and examined carefully before they were admitted to the party. However, soon after, the Committee came under the influence of Wang Ming’s

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41 Ibid., 12.
42 “A report by MPC organization department (1930),” as quoted in Ch’on Ryo, 12.
43 “Announcement of the MPC to the People (Sept 20, 1931),” as quoted in Ch’on Ryo, 13.
44 Ch’on Ryo, 13.
ultra-leftist line, and began to call the original Choson Communist Party members as “elements causing factional strife” and persecuted them. Many of these Korean party members had participated in the Minsaengdan (the People’s Livelihood Organization) activities from October 1931 to July 1832. According to a Japanese consulate report, Minsaengdan was organized by some Koreans for the purpose of relieving economic hardships of Koreans in Kando, but the organization did not last long because it failed to obtain general support from the public. However, because of the alleged pro-Japanese stance of the organization, Korean Communists who joined the organization came under direct attack from their Han comrades in the MPC. The situation quickly deteriorated, and eventually caused the execution of more than one thousand Korean Communist members during the next three years. The incident permanently marred the relationship between Koreans and Hans, and brought calamities on the anti-Japanese campaign in northeastern China.

Although all the wrongfully accused Minsaengdan members were re-declared innocent and posthumously rehabilitated in 1981 by the government of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, no one dared to get to the bottom of the issue. Why did the MPC so viciously attack Korean revolutionaries? Ch’on Ryo’s study does not directly answer this question either, but a subtle implication can be detected in his presentation. When the CCP first established its MPC in northeast China, its size and influence was minimal. Between 1927-1929, there were only 100-200 CCP members in Manchuria, all in the city. Even as late as April 1930, it had only 208 members. Consequently, when the Korean Communists joined the MPC in 1930, its membership suddenly rose to over 2,000, and Koreans dominated the Committee. Koreans played an extremely important role in establishing the party’s base in Manchuria. Yet, in spite of Koreans’ central role in its development, the MPC encouraged Koreans to allow Chinese members to take leadership. Their reasoning behind the suggestion was to attract more Han Chinese to join the party, but the desired eventual consequence was pushing Koreans out of leadership positions. As Park suggests, the Han Chinese leaders were threatened by the sudden influx of many Korean party members, so the Han Chinese leaders eliminated the Korean Communist leaders and senior revolutionaries in order to have complete control over the Korean population. The research in this area is still in its infancy. However, it has come a long way from merely parroting the official discourse that indiscriminatingly praises the achievements of the MPC and hides all its mistakes. Chaoxianzu historians have broken new grounds and dared to venture into the “forbidden zone.” They proudly stress that Koreans led the anti-Japanese struggles in Manchuria, and that most of the leaders of rebellion in Yanbian were Koreans. They even unhesitatingly state that anti-Japanese

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45 Park, 35.
46 “A Letter form the central MPC to southern MPC branch,” as quoted in Ch’on, 12.
47 Park, 32. 36.
49 Unlike most of the CCP publications that stress the leadership of the party, Ch’on emphasize the leadership of Koreans in their anti-Japanese struggles. Ch’on, 16.
struggles by Koreans had no direct link with the resistance movements of other nationalities in Manchuria, but more closely related to the independence movement in Korea. Such new developments in historical interpretation rose out of an effort to carefully balance the official party-centered worldview with a new Chaoxianzu-centered worldview. Without using hostile and exclusive language, Chaoxianzu scholars have constructed a nationalistic account of their past which, to a certain degree, counter-balances the official narrative. This fresh way of history-writing reflects Chaoxianzu historians’ effort to link an interpretive practice to a social and cultural praxis. For Chaoxianzu historians in the new historic era, history is not just about recounting the past. Rather, history functions as a way of reconstructing distorted national identity and evoking national spirit to unite its members. They fully understand that the driving force of nationalism lies in its historical embeddedness. By reclaiming their own history, they want to refuel the Chaoxianzu collective imagination and rebuild the culture-historic community of Chaoxianzu.

The experiences of Chaoxianzu illustrate that nationalism is not a fixed ideology or identity, but a dynamic field of shared memories. It constantly changes through interactions among various actors inside and outside of the nation. The present “nationalism” of Chaoxianzu is still being actively negotiated between Chaoxianzu intellectuals and the central government. The national identity of Chaoxianzu that came out of the negotiation is markedly different from the ones that these two parties once dreamed of creating. The CCP’s revolutionary vision of creating a true socialist society into which the Chaoxianzu is supposed to be gradually integrated, has been heavily compromised by its own mistakes as well as by the counter-narratives created by Chaoxianzu leaders. The newly emerging picture of Chaoxianzu national identity seems to favor neither of these two efforts of construction, thus providing all the more reason for continued fervency in ethnic negotiation. It is not possible to accurately predict the final outcome of the negotiations, because there are various complex networks of domestic and international relationships that affect Chaoxianzu national identity. Furthermore, it seems that there is another powerful influence that affects the outcome: the process of globalization and the post-modern wave of cultural pluralism and liberalization. Nevertheless, there is apparently a growing longing for historical consciousness and a search for roots among members of Chaoxianzu nationality. As a Chaoxianzu professor at Liaoning University (predominantly Chinese University) confesses:

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50 Piao Changyu in Koreans in China, 58. Unlike the official historical discourse that characterize the anti-Japanese movements of Koreans as struggles for “liberation of China,” Chaoxianzu historians often link them with the broader Korean national independence movement. For example, one of the earliest anti-Japanese demonstrations in Yanbian, the March 13th Movement, is retold by Chaoxianzu historians as a Manchurian extension of the March 1st Independence Movement that began in Korea.

An Hwach’un, “Concerning the special characteristic of 3.13 anti-Japanese Movement [3.13 Panil Udong ui T’ukjom e Taehayo],” in Kim Chonguk and others eds., A Study on the History of Chinese Koreans [Chungguk Chosonjok Yongu], vol. 1, (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1993), 202-213. The fundamental aim of the Korean anti-Japanese resistance movement is also re-articulated as it was originally expressed in Declaration of the Korean Fatherland Liberation Society in Manchuria [Jaeman Hanin Choguk Kwangbokhoe Sonon] which was published in June 10, 1936: “Let us fight for the true autonomy of the Koreans in Manchuria and the liberation and independence of Korea.”
relationship between roots of a tree and the branches; therefore when the roots are healthy, the branches will naturally be fecund. By the same token, in order for the roots to reach deeper, it needs to receive nutrients from branches and leaves. The leaves are bound to return to the roots (Luo Ye Gui Gen). Consequently, if Koreans abroad forget their language and history, even if they would succeed in foreign soil their success is limited by their banana identity.51 True success can only be obtained by ardently cherishing the roots.52 Chaoxianzu nationalism has divested itself of the political and territorial connotations that are often associated with nationalism of the modern era. At the same time, it has taken up stronger cultural and ethnic national identity as an historic culture-community that shares its deepest roots with Koreans in the Korean peninsula. With the cultural and conceptual roads paved, their pilgrimage of searching for national identity continues. A Chaoxianzu singer, Cui Jian, sings:

I have heard it, but never saw the 25,000 li.53
Much to say, but nothing to do, it is really difficult to know.
Burying heads, walking forward, we are all seeking self.
Coming and going, there is still no place to finally settle. ....
I ask the heaven and the earth, “how much more must I travel?”
I beseech the wind and the rain, “please, go far away from me!”
Many mountains and many rivers, I can’t even distinguish east from west.
Many people and many mouths, no one clearly speaks the truth.
How should I say and how should I act to truly become myself?
How should I sing and how should I chant to finally feel satisfaction? ....

- Rock and Roll on the New Road to Long March
  – Cui Jian

51 “Banana” is a nickname for Koreans who are completely assimilated to western (white) culture in terms of their inner sentiments, worldview, cultural inclination and philosophy; the only remaining feature of their “Koreanness” is the yellow skin color.
53 “li” is a Chinese measurement of distance. 1 li is equivalent to approximately 400m.
Anglo-US Relations in the Formation of SEATO

Andrew Hall

Introduction
The relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom has long been considered unusually special, encompassing strong cultural, economic, and political ties. After being born out of victorious collaboration in two world wars in less than half a century, the Anglo-American alliance faced a number of challenges in the mid-1950s, culminating in the Suez crisis of 1956. A major undertaking of this period was the promulgation of a treaty for the collective defense of Southeast Asia in September 1954, the creation of which required close transatlantic co-operation and agreement. The establishment of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, dubbed SEATO, proved to be a strenuous task for the United States and Great Britain, one where contrasting regional strategies were exhaustingly reconciled. This paper will examine the relations of the American and British governments from March to September 1954 in pursuit of a comprehensive security arrangement for Southeast Asia. The nature of their disagreements will be analyzed first and followed by a determination of how they were overcome.

Shaping the domestic and international political climates for these negotiations were a number of contextual events and trends. Most broadly, the SEATO negotiations took place in the post-Second World War period when a new system of alliances was formed, the United Kingdom, together with a host of other Western powers, formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, pitting the communist bloc and the capitalist democracies against each other in the Cold War. In that same year, Communists overthrew the Nationalist Kuomintang government of China and renewed the Sino-Soviet Alliance soon after. The major powers on each side of this ideological divide, in the years that followed, continued to conclude a series of alliance treaties. The United States reached agreements with Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia and New Zealand, while the Soviet Union negotiated treaties with an array of Eastern European countries, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and communist Vietnam. The SEATO alliance was yet another of these plentiful alliances, though multilateral in scope.

The mid-1950s also saw the beginnings of the decades-long process by which the European powers granted independence to their colonies around the globe. By the conclusion of the Second World War the process of complete de-colonization was all but inevitable. By 1954, however, only a handful of states had been created in the preceding decade. In July 1946, the United States at last granted its sole major overseas possession, the Philippines, its independence after years of delay. French and British League of Nations mandates in the Middle East were granted independence between 1943 and 1948 while in South Asia, Britain reluctantly released India from its empire in 1947. The territory immediately split into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu-dominated, but secular, India. Finally in Southeast Asia,
Southeast Asia

Indonesia secured its independence from the Netherlands in a four-year struggle ending in 1949, but Britain retained its possessions in Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei. Most significantly to the development of SEATO, France struggled to re-establish its authority in its Indochinese colonies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos after the Japanese withdrawal; it was ultimately forced to relinquish these possessions by the Geneva Conference in 1954. This conflict occurred in the wider context of the de-colonization, of which the United States was a primary champion, and was a key impetus for the creation of SEATO.

In Indochina, France was unable to control the tumultuous internal forces demanding independence. The opposition forces, led by Ho Chi Minh, promoted both nationalism and communism, and thus garnered the support of the Soviet Union and China. The United States aided its ally France through sizeable military aid and moral support, hoping not to preserve France’s colonial possessions, but to prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia through independent and democratic states. Like in the Korean War of 1950-1953, the two sides were divided by fundamental and unwavering ideological opposition, pitting each superpower against the other in proxy wars that epitomized the Cold War. An implied corollary of these conflicts was the staunch support of each side’s allies in the stand-offs; however as the case of SEATO will show, this was not always the case.

A further characteristic of the 1950s international system that bared a great influence on the formulation of SEATO was the climate of domestic politics in the United States. The prevailing national obsession was fear of communist encroachment abroad and infiltration at home. Firstly, the idea of communist victories likened to “falling dominoes” was a widely accepted justification for American involvement in Indochina. Even if Indochina was not considered intrinsically valuable, its collapse could threaten allies or possibly the United States itself. Secondly, the anticommunist hysteria whipped up by Senator Joseph McCarthy had a profound affect on the formulation of government policies. The paranoia he induced in American politics between 1948 and 1956 limited the ability of the government to moderate its policies regarding combating communism; having one’s patriotism questioned by Senator McCarthy was the death knell of any political career in those extraordinary times. These political trends weighed heavily in the domestic political climate in which the United States sought to contain communism through SEATO.

The final principal element of the political environment in which the SEATO negotiations took place was an ongoing debate in Europe over the creation of a European Defense Community (EDC). The proposal rose out of the insistence by the United States to rearm Germany in order to bolster the defense of Western Europe against a newly nuclear Soviet Union. French Prime Minister René Pleven first proposed an EDC whereby Germany would be allowed to rearm, considered quite a dangerous prospect at the time, within the formalized structure of a European Army under the aegis of the NATO alliance. Furthermore, it appeared to

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be a natural complement to the nascent economic integration of Western Europe, such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1951. Despite a successful treaty summit at Bonn in 1952 and the support of the American government, the EDC proposal failed to be ratified by the very government that proposed it. Concerned about being overburdened by both the war in Indochina and requisite military commitments of the EDC, as well as objecting to the provision that French troops would be placed under foreign command, the French National Assembly declined to ratify the treaty creating the EDC on 30 August 1954. Both the British and American government found this deeply disappointing and frustrating, representing a major internal split among the Western alliance’s three leading members. The ensuing “EDC crisis”, which raised fears of American withdrawal from the Continent, was ended in late September by a British proposal for the creation of the Western European Union (WEU). The elements of French reluctance to adopt the EDC played significant roles in the evolution of the SEATO proposal.

Having set out a broad outline of the political climate and the major ongoing debates of the mid-1950s, a thorough examination of the formation of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization is now possible. In pursuit of exploring and analyzing the natures and causes of the rift in Anglo-American relations in the establishment of this body, this paper will first look at the failure of a proposal for “united action” to rescue the French forces from imminent defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam. This short-lived option, offered by US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in March 1954, failed to garner the support of America’s allies and even its own government. The precipitous decline of the prospects for French victory and the establishment of the Geneva Conference in April 1954, charged with reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict, largely mooted the idea in the end. In this first part of the analysis, there will be an examination of the various aspects of the proposal and the motives behind it. Following this will be a look at the responses this controversial idea elicited from within the US government and from its allies, and how each came to reject the possibility of any joint military intervention to assist the French forces in Indochina.

The second part of the paper will cover the creation of an alternative, long-term system for halting the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Though an immediate military response to this regional crisis was impossible, the United States and Great Britain each sought a means to protect their vital interests there in line with their foreign policy strategies. One the hand, there will be a review of the various conferences and meetings of government representatives that eventually put forward a study on the treaty creating SEATO. On the other, there will be a thorough analysis of the key areas of debate that dominated the conferences and intergovernmental communications between April and September of 1954. These salient and contested aspects to the collective defense organization were the timing of announcing and creating the body, its membership, the obligations and commitments it required, and its very purpose. It was in these numerous debates that the deep rifts in American and British perspectives and priorities manifested themselves.

From these areas of contention will be

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Anglo-US Relations in the Formation of SEATO

drawn a set of themes that characterize the nature and roots of Anglo-American discord in these negotiations. The most fundamental of these themes is the fundamentally divergent positions each had in relation to communist China. The US and British governments were dissimilar in their relations with the communist government as well as the possible threat it posed to regional and national security. A second source of transatlantic friction was the contentious relationship of each state’s chief diplomats, the British Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden and American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Though both men worked together frequently, their divergent styles of diplomacy posed a real hurdle for the achievement of compromise solutions to the issues at hand. A third theme to be examined will be disparate regional strategies of the two allies in Southeast Asia. America was firmly committed to stemming the spread of communism and seeing an end to colonialism; Great Britain, on the other hand, was concerned with the security of its regional territorial interests and maintaining a good working relationship with its fellow Commonwealth members.

Despite these issues, the United States and Great Britain were able to agree to a compromise text for a treaty. Honest compromise and the desire to remain close allies allowed them to overcome their major obstacles. Joined by Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand, they signed the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in Manila on 8 September 1954. In a document annexed to the treaty, protection was extended to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, but they were not themselves allowed to join the organization in accordance with the agreements reached at Geneva. SEATO, despite its similar name, was much less ambitious and articulate than NATO, owing to the disparate goals and limited aims of its members.3 As stipulated by the treaty, the organization’s consultative council met annually in Bangkok, Thailand until 1977 when it was officially disbanded following Pakistan’s withdrawal in 1968, the defeat of the United States in its war in Vietnam in 1973, and France’s suspension of its membership in 1975.

“United Action”

This chapter will track the rise and fall of Secretary Dulles’ proposal for “united action”, from its inception in March 1954 to its becoming futile a month or so later. There will be an in-depth analysis of the various aspects of the proposal the rationale behind it. Finally there will be an analysis of how and why “united action” failed to garner the support of the British and French governments and fell from favor within the American government. “United action”, due to its intentional vagueness and the presumption of belligerence, rendered itself dead on arrival. This idea failed to bring the Western powers closer to an acceptable solution to the crisis at Dien Bien Phu and only caused substantial political damage to the Anglo-American relationship in the process. It was promoted for its expediency but drowned in uncertainty and anxiety.

The perilous situation of the French military struggling to preserve its tenuous control over Indochina prompted the United States to reconsider its existing policy of financial support in March of 1954. The status quo whereby France received unconditional military aid, though not through direct allied intervention, was deemed insufficient to prevent the collapse of its garrison at their fort in Dien Bien Phu. In

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order to bolster French morale and inspire allied support for the French cause, Dulles declared in a speech to the Overseas Press Club of America on March 29, 1954 that “the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of communist Russia and its Chinese communist ally…should be met by united action.” He added that such a course “might involve serious risks” but urgency required immediate action to save the French forces from collapsing under the Viet Minh pressure.5

Dulles aimed to achieve a number of things in his provocative speech. Firstly, he sought to send a clear warning to the Viet Minh and communist Chinese that the United States was willing to intervene on behalf of the French. Dulles believed that China had thousands of troops ready to intervene on the side of the Viet Minh and a superior threat of force would be a useful deterrent.6 Secondly, he hoped the speech might muster domestic support for the possible deployment of troops in Indochina.7 The American people had yet to appreciate the value of Indochina to the national interest of the US to the extent their government did, though increasing talk of the “domino theory” and widespread anti-communist sentiment helped. Thirdly, Dulles hoped to convince the French to continue fighting instead of opting for a negotiated settlement.8 Such a course would no doubt involve ceding territory to communists, an unacceptable outcome for the US government.9 Broadly speaking, Secretary Dulles, with the President’s blessing, was preparing the path for a war in Indochina leaving immediate surrender as the sole acceptable option for the Viet Minh.10

At the time, the prospect of “united action” appeared for Dulles to be the most straightforward method by which the United States government’s two goals for Southeast Asia could be met. The American government sought both the independence of France’s Associated States, as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were then called, and the purging of communism from the region.11 Continuing to fight the war by proxy through France compromised the prospects of the former while letting the French seek a negotiated settlement made the latter impossible. The exact means to achieve these goals through “united action” were quite unclear, however. Dulles, it appears, purposely chose the vague term so as not to commit the United States to any specific course of action, but to nonetheless suggest that a coalition of willing states must make a collective effort, with the option of military intervention, to stem the spread of communism.12 The press and others instead met the vagueness with immediate suspicion and confusion.13 It was believed, however correctly, to be a euphemism for military intervention, the viability of which had not been established.

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5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 86.
8 Dulles to the United States Delegation (Geneva), FRUS, 1952-54, XVI, 731.
10 Ibid., p. 62.
11 Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs to Dulles, 8 April 1954, FRUS, 1952-54, XII, Pt. 1, 405.
12 Kaplan, 87.
13 Billings-Yun, 64.

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Members of Congress also entered the debate, adding their own interpretations of the term, but generally expressed confusion about the proposal. Senators and Congressmen demanded clarification from the White House regarding Dulles’ intentions when he called for “united action;” the best the White House could offer was to define it as “such action as might become necessary…as circumstances indicate.” This unhelpful response added to the claim that American intentions were being kept decidedly ambiguous, but it is unclear whether out of secrecy, uncertainty or self-doubt.

In the ensuing days and weeks, Dulles was charged with the task of gathering allied support for the “united action” proposal. British Foreign Secretary Eden writes in his memoirs that he “had no objection to strong American words, but [he] wanted to make sure that they meant what they appeared to say.” The British government had been promised the United States had no intention of intervening in Indochina, and Eden feared that Dulles’ speech might have implied that Britain, as America’s most important ally, would intervene in Indochina too. Eden counseled Dulles to avoid taking any quick decisions in favor of military action writing, “Allied intervention, military or otherwise, or of any warning announcement before [the] Geneva [Conference]…would require extremely careful consideration.” His reservations about premature action before or during the upcoming Geneva Conference became the hallmark of British policy with regards to “united action”. Eden predicted that such a course would surely jeopardize the possibility of reaching a suitable settlement at the Conference.

In putting the proposal before the French, Dulles made two key stipulations to the proffering of American military forces. The first required that France push for greater independence of the Associated States, retaining only a measure of control over their security and defense lest they fall immediately into communists’ hands. The second required that the military operations in defense of Indochina must no longer be comprised solely of French troops and commanders. The United States government was consistently frustrated by their inability to influence their French counterparts in the execution of the war in Vietnam. Dulles hoped the lure of complete victory, not partition or withdrawal, would be enough to convince the French to overcome their reservations with the plan.

At the same time as this diplomatic effort was being undertaken, a debate within the Eisenhower administration was also taking place. The President and Secretary Dulles consulted with the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the status of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu and the prospects for a military victory. They, like Congress, were quite concerned with the price at which such a victory might come. The proposed method of intervention, dubbed Operation Vulture, would rely substantially on air and naval power, and was thus expected to be supported by the US Air Force and Navy, finding the increased prestige and budgets quite favorable. The chiefs of the Army and Marine Corps, however, were less favorable toward the plan fearing a high price in human costs.
of any land component.21

When Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a key proponent of “united action”, called a special meeting regarding the issue on March 30, he failed to get the support of any of his colleagues.22 In retrospect, it is surprising that both Radford and Dulles had such great confidence in the ability of the American armed forces to achieve victory in such unfavorable circumstances in the wake of the less-than-decisive end to the Korean War just a year prior. In Radford’s meeting, each service chief rejected the plan for intervention in Indochina. Air Force Chief General Nathan Twining, though supporting the idea of eventual intervention, balked at the haste with which Radford desired action.23 The other chiefs were more forceful in their disapproval, failing to be convinced that victory was achievable in Indochina and wary of the interference by French military commanders. The chiefs also cited the possible expansion of the conflict to a full-scale international war, further worsening the prospects of achieving the objective. The professional opinion of the American military, shunning both the precipitations and cost of intervention, did not bode well for securing Congressional approval for the employment of “united action”.

In the end, neither the French, nor the British, nor the American governments came down in favor of “united action” as the appropriate response to the Dien Bien Phu crisis. By April 1954 the French government of Prime Minister Joseph Laniel was perilously weak. The government was under increasing domestic pressure to find a way out of the costly fighting in Indochina. It clung to the hope that America would offer military support, if necessary, but was ultimately unable to swallow the conditions the US government required. For Laniel, allowing the American military to command and fight its war, considered an internal struggle, would be far too embarrassing to accept.24 They instead chose to cut their losses and put their stock in the upcoming Geneva Conference, previously agreed to at the Berlin Four-Power Conference in February of that year. A negotiated settlement had been a long-term goal of the French government, but it had hoped to enter the peace negotiations on the most favorable of military terms.25

The British government, never very supportive of seeking a military solution to the crisis, also declined to support “united action” worrying about the wider implications and consequences of expanding the war.26 The government felt Britain could not, and would not, be able to contribute any forces to allied initiative finding its troops already overextended around the empire and in NATO commitments. Moreover, the American government had even assured Prime Minister Churchill that intervention would not happen, and he expected his ally to keep to its word.27 The British government favored a negotiated settlement for other reasons as well, not least of which was Eden’s preference for diplomatic engagement and compromise.28 Additionally, Eden’s central role in the Geneva Conference as co-chair with the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, led him be optimistic, some say

21 Billings-Yun, 69.
22 Ibid., 70.
23 Ibid.
24 Kaplan, 51.
26 Edén, 105.
27 Billings-Yun, 67.
28 Undersecretary of State to Department of State, 5 May 1954, FRUS, 1952-54, XII, Pt. 1, pp. 450-451.
overly, about the prospects for finding a widely acceptable settlement there.29

The British also had a vested interest in avoiding an antagonistic relationship with communist China. The precarious location of Hong Kong made the colony reliant on access to food and raw materials from the Mainland essential to its survival, which could easily be jeopardized by an overly bold policy choice like “united action”.30 Furthermore, the large Chinese populations of its colonies of Malaya and Singapore, if seriously agitated, could threaten the internal stability of these areas.31 Intervention by the United States, with or without allied support, Britain feared might lead communist China to invoke the Sino-Soviet alliance precipitating a third world war in a century.32 For Eden, Dulles’ proposition was far too risky and unlikely to produce any valuable results. Britain’s concern of its regional interests likely agitated American policy-makers for being short-sighted, self-interested, and failing to appreciate the importance of saving Indochina to the survival of the free world.

Arguably the most important government’s position regarding “united action” was that of the United States, for even if France, Britain, and others supported the initiative, it would have been meaningless. As it turned out, the Europeans were not willing to adhere to the US plan, and the US was not keen on the idea of going in alone.33 A unilateral intervention by the United States, while marginally different militarily from a multilateral one, would have smacked of neocolonialist aggression. Despite requesting exploratory findings on various forms of intervention, President Eisenhower decided against the proposal in favor of giving the Geneva Conference a chance. Full-scale armed intervention did not fit with Eisenhower’s leaner “New Look” policy, which favored more efficient use of military force in protecting America’s national security.34 He even managed to avoid making any explicit decision by sending the matter to Congress while letting situation at Dien Bien Phu deteriorate unabated.35

Privately, President Eisenhower was not as fundamentally opposed to the conclusion of peaceful negotiations at Geneva as Dulles, viewing “united action” as a bit of a bluff rather than actual intent.36 Any agreement would certainly have guaranteed the independence of the three Associated States, fulfilling at least one major goal there. Furthermore, the alternative of continuing to operate solely through the French military was unacceptable and already proving unproductive. As the French hold of Dien Bien Phu worsened, a military victory seemed an ever more distant possibility. The administration duly changed its focus from the unsalvageable fort to the long-term security of the non-communist peoples of Southeast Asia.

“United action” as a viable foreign policy option never got its legs. The furor and confusion surrounding its announcement mired the initiative in controversy and
suspicion. Its principle elements, first the ceding of French control of the military reins to the Americans and second the determination that a decisive victory was possible, were never realized. For the British, its mere suggestion made them worry the United States would not follow up on its previous commitments. Eden was alarmed by Dulles’ choice of the word united implying he spoke for America’s allies when he had not been briefed on the idea. The haphazard manner in which Dulles handled the situation placed his relations with his allies on a poor footing for the commencement of the Geneva Conference. His numerous reincarnations of an intervention plan, even as the Geneva Conference got underway, continued until the complete defeat at Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954. He would immediately thereafter need their support in the negotiations for a long-term security organization for Southeast Asia.

**Formation of a collective defense organization**

On 26 April 1954, representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, communist China, and from each of the Associated States began negotiations in Geneva to reach a settlement on the war in Indochina, concurrent with a parallel conference on the question of Korea. This conference was in fulfillment of a compromise plan agreed to by the major powers at Berlin in February of 1954. The United States was worried that agreeing to negotiate with China at Geneva would involve implicit recognition of the communist government; the United States, until January 1979, only recognized diplomatically the Nationalist government in Formosa as the government of China. This tension with Chinese inclusion, and the Great Power status it implied, was continually irritating to the American government and affected its conduct at Geneva. The problem was skirted by carefully wording the agreement in Berlin.37

Also meeting around this time were the Prime Ministers of five newly independent Asian countries, namely India, Pakistan (comprising both current-day Pakistan and Bangladesh), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Burma (now Myanmar), and Indonesia, in Colombo from 28 April to 2 May 1954. Each was steadfastly neutral in the Cold War, and all save Indonesia were former British colonies though Burma was not a member of the Commonwealth. The views held by the Colombo Powers, whose meeting is viewed as the genesis of the non-aligned movement, were of the utmost importance to and a guiding principle for the British government regarding SEATO.

Though the negotiations for the creation of SEATO took place separately from the Geneva Conference, the debate there had a great impact on the relations among the allies and with their communist counterparts. Thus, by extension, the progress of the conference and the ongoing EDC debate were important factors in shaping Anglo-American during the SEATO negotiations. For example, the British disapproval of many US proposals at Geneva was often the result of being deemed unlikely to be accepted by the Soviets; this disapproval was not, as the Americans may have believed, out sympathy for the communists, but instead a more realistic approach to achieving a compromise. The British were far more committed to compromise whereas the Americans concerned themselves with appearances.

The beginnings of drawing up a proposal for the collective defense of Southeast Asia began before “united action” had been completely discarded as a policy option.

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37 Eden, 89.
Eisenhower had originally envisaged an organization with this express purpose before the announcement of the interventionist alternative.\footnote{Ibid., 84.} On the other hand, Sir Anthony Eden points to a discussion with French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in June 1952 in which he “proposed the creation of a permanent military organization [sic] to…plan the measures which could be taken for the defense not only of Indo-China but of the whole region.”\footnote{Ibid.} Nevertheless, at a US National Security Council meeting on March 25, 1954, just four days before Dulles’ speech at the Overseas Press Club, Eisenhower suggested a means by which the long-term security of Vietnam could be guaranteed. He suggested that Vietnam could appeal to its neighbors and Western powers to form a set of defensive alliances. This would have the added benefits of removing the “taint of French colonialism” and allowing the United States to share the burden of protection with its allies.\footnote{Billings-Yun , 53-55.} As the utility of “united action” faded, the proposal returned to the fore and began to take shape.

The first detailed initiative resembling a multilateral security organization was put forth just weeks prior to the commencement of the Geneva Conference. The US government proposed the formation of an ad hoc coalition of countries to act together, in accordance with the Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to end Chinese interference in the war in Indochina.\footnote{Eden, 92.} Dulles envisaged the participation of the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, and the three Associated States in this group. Interestingly however, Article 51 of the Charter upholds the “right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations.”\footnote{Charter of the United Nations (1945), Chapter VII, Article 51.} Seeing as Cambodia and Laos did not join the United Nations until 1955 and Vietnam not until 1977, the United States government must have been willing to suppress its anti-colonialist principles in considering Chinese interference as an armed attack against France by way of her overseas possessions.

The British government expressed its strong opposition to this proposal. While recognizing the benefits that such a security agreement would bestow on its regional possessions, such an action was deemed “unlikely to help [Great Britain and her allies] militarily, and would harm us politically.”\footnote{Eden, 93.} A premature threat of employing armed force in Indochina, Eden feared, would jeopardize the Geneva Conference before it even began and could easily provoke China into war, not deter her from it. By the time Dulles and Eden discussed the matter in person on 11 April, Eden was relieved to hear that the Americans had softened their stance and backed away from a pre-Geneva announcement threatening to use force. It was then too that Dulles confided in Eden the reasoning of the American government regarding Indochina, and again pitched “united action” to him. The US government judged France incapable of handling the situation in Indochina and immediate allied action must be sent to reinforce French forces. In rebuffing “united action” on the grounds that immediate action was unnecessary in light of the Geneva Conference, Eden nonetheless gave his support to studying a collective defense organization. It must be emphasized Eden only wish to endorse “the most careful
thought and study” of such an organization, finding no need to hurry things.44

The first formal meeting of interested parties to discuss the creation of SEATO took place on 20 April 1954, just less than a week before Geneva was set to open. Dulles convened the meeting, comprising the ambassadors of the group of countries from his aforementioned ad hoc coalition, to gauge their willingness to join such an organization and to discuss the methods its creation.45

Again, Eden wrote in his memoirs of his discomfort with the haste with which Dulles pushed this initiative. Dulles had not consulted him before the meeting was announced, and Eden was dismayed that it was too late to be cancelled. Moreover, he found it troubling that drawing up a select list of countries this early would make others, particularly India, feel excluded from expressing her views. Eden would have preferred informal and secret preparatory discussions among the interested parties regarding possible members before any official public announcement. In an attempt to soften the negative impacts, Eden was able to convince Dulles to recast the meeting as “a general briefing conference on the coming negotiations at Geneva.”46 For Eden, the damage had already been done, the membership all but crystallized.47

In these early weeks of the Geneva Conference when both Eden and Dulles were in attendance, Dulles repeatedly approached his counterpart about the need to help the French cause. Dulles lamented the poor state of French morale and sought Eden’s support in making a gesture of some kind to boost their spirits. Eden rejected making any threat of force or even giving “moral support” to such an American move.48 While he sympathized with Dulles’ pleas, he could not support any action that would hinder their negotiating position. Dulles switched his efforts to a swift formation of SEATO as the most feasible means of aiding the French, but again Eden urged patience and supported only secret negotiations on the matter.49

During a visit to Washington in late June 1954 by Churchill and Eden to their American counterparts, the structure of the planned organization took shape. In meetings he had with Dulles, Eden suggested that SEATO be a collective and reciprocal defensive arrangement, whereby members guaranteed the security of others in the event of attack. Its membership would be open to those willing to commit to take military action in the face of aggression. Eden said the organization would be like the Locarno Pact of 1925, in which a coalition of European countries, including Great Britain, France, and Germany, guaranteed each other’s territorial integrity in the wake of the First World War. Unfortunately for Eden, however, the use of Locarno evoked the memories of appeasement among the Americans; he did leave Washington confident his intended meaning was understood and even supported, however.50

Also convening in late June was the study group proposed two months earlier by the

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44 Ibid., 96.
46 Eden, 98-99.
48 Eden, 135.
50 Eden, 132-133.
United States. They again met in Washington to prepare a report on the key aspects regarding the structure and competencies of the collective defense initiative. A month later on 17 July, the working group submitted its findings to their governments for review and further negotiation. This was also the point at which the agreement that would bring a successful end to the Geneva Conference was in sight; it did finally come on 21 July 1954. The United States, Great Britain and their allies continued negotiations on the SEATO proposal through the summer. The British focused their energy on securing the support of the Colombo Powers, and if not, preventing their outright disapproval. The Americans, on other hand, were most intent on selling the organization as an effective measure of containment. For their efforts, only Pakistan, beyond those at the Washington meetings, agreed to join SEATO; the other Colombo Powers found joining the organization a violation of their professed neutrality.

Throughout these negotiations between the US and Britain, the primary authors of the SEATO treaty, there were a number of key, interrelated debates that dominated their correspondence. Rather than give a detailed chronological account of these negotiations, a more concise and coherent understanding can be achieved through a thematic analysis of each. The four prominent areas of discussion were the timing, composition, commitments, and purpose of the organization, each of which has been touched upon already. Though the first two dominated the volume of the correspondence between London and Washington, the latter two dealt with more fundamental aspects of the alliance, affecting what type of grouping SEATO would become.

Even before the failure of “united action”, the United States government began pushing for the rapid formation of a coalition as a bulwark against communist aggression in Southeast Asia. The immediacy for its creation was only enhanced by the rejection of “united action” and the desire to demonstrate Western unity and support for the French. Meanwhile, the British position regarding the timing of creating SEATO was always one of caution, patience, and hesitation. Essentially, the disagreement between these transatlantic allies centered on the appropriateness or necessity of establishing SEATO while negotiations for a peace settlement were proceeding, and to a lesser extent on garnering the most widespread support.

The driving force behind American position on this issue was largely diplomatic vanity. First, the US had no intention of subscribing to whatever agreement the parties at the Geneva Conference reached. Doing so would in effect have meant that the US government consented to the ceding of territory to communists.51 Such an act was unacceptable in the domestic political climate of the 1950s. Thus, if an immediate announcement were to negatively affect the outcome of Geneva, so be it. In fact, Eden reported to the Cabinet in July 1954 that the US delegation at Geneva “attempted to interfere with the successful completion of the Conference’s work.” 52

Second, Dulles was consumed by the desire to show Western solidarity in the face of the communist threat. A Five-Power Staff Conference was convened in early June 1954 by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand in this vein; its purpose was not only to discuss SEATO, but also to show a united front,

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however fictitious it was.\textsuperscript{53} The creation of a multilateral anti-communist alliance would be an excellent demonstration of cohesiveness and determination. Finally, Dulles repeatedly prodded Eden about making some symbolic gesture to help the French in their political and military predicament. The ongoing debate in France regarding the ratification of the EDC raised serious doubts about their abilities to participate in so many arenas simultaneously. As Dulles desired both French ratification and a continuation of the effort in Indochina, he figured a gesture by France’s allies could boost morale and guarantee the aforementioned goals. The immediate formation of SEATO would, Dulles surmised, lessen the military burdens of France in the region.\textsuperscript{54}

The British government, by contrast, did not feel bound to act by this same sense of urgency. Instead, the guiding principle of their policy on the timing of SEATO was to wait until the Geneva Conference had run its course, after which the situation could then be reassessed. Any premature action was sure to hamper the negotiations, in which Eden was investing a great deal of time and diplomatic effort. Another negative impact of a hastily contrived organization would be the inability to expand membership beyond the core group the US originally envisioned. Britain knew it would take considerable time and consultation to get India and the other Colombo Powers to agree to the organization.\textsuperscript{55} Their exclusion from all of the preliminary conferences effectively guaranteed their exclusion. For the Americans, this tactic of deferring to Asian opinion was merely a ploy by the British to delay action on the initiative.\textsuperscript{56} Though the Americans “let the cat out of the bag”, so to speak, in their April announcement of a Washington conference on SEATO, the British successfully delayed the actual formation to approximately six weeks after the conclusion of peace settlements in Geneva.

The debate regarding the composition of the collective defense system, in addition to being closely related to its timing, was in itself quite complex. The inclusion of certain countries, by some logic, would imply the necessary inclusion of others or be detrimental to existing ones. The ultimate determinant in the selection of which countries would, or could, be included in the arrangement was the value their participation offered to the strategy of the US or Britain. Each found particular members to be especially advantageous to their regional and global foreign policy strategies.

The core and undisputed members of the SEATO alliance were the three Western and democratic stalwarts of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The form and purpose of the alliance was almost wholly their design, which at the very least kept the negotiations much simpler and straightforward. This arrangement, however, posed a serious problem for the way in which the rest of the world would perceive the organization; a Western-dominated alliance appeared to many critics to be an act of neo-colonialism. The American and British governments took seriously this image problem and sought, though with varying degrees of commitment, to secure the membership of as many Asian countries as possible. As Eden noted, it is necessary

\textsuperscript{53} UK Geneva Delegation to Foreign Office, 22 May 1954, PREM 11/648415.
\textsuperscript{54} Kaplan, 126.
\textsuperscript{55} Inder Singh, 178.
\textsuperscript{56} Kaplan, 129.
“because the United States cannot subscribe to a white man’s club in Asia.”57

British participation in the security pact was both significant and necessary due to its colonial holdings in the region. Great Britain had troops stationed in their colonies of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore; there were also large naval bases in Singapore and nearby Hong Kong.58 The creation of SEATO would contribute significantly to the defense and security of these possessions as well as provide the alliance with potential bases.59 Like France, Britain was feeling the pressures of being extended militarily around the globe and such a defensive system would allow for crucial burden sharing. Furthermore, Britain intended that, upon independence, these territories would themselves join the alliance in their own right; none of them, however, ultimately chose to do so.60

Adding to the unfortunate dominance of Western countries were the memberships of Australia and New Zealand, former British colonies and newly formalized allies of the United States. Their membership was ostensibly for the sake of providing a southern anti-communist bulwark for the region and in deference to the intimate concern they had with the spread of communism in their neighborhood. Britain found their membership especially advantageous which “would remove the anomaly of [British] exclusion from the A.N.Z.U.S. Pact,”61 the alliance formed by the United States with the Australia and New Zealand in September 1951. This treaty marked an important shift for these countries, allying themselves with the US over their traditional partner in Britain. In a letter to the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) in July 1954, New Zealand’s Foreign Secretary justified this move. He wrote, “neither alone nor together are the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand in any position to meet the threat that might develop in South East Asia. We need the help of the Americans.”62 For the British government, the creation of SEATO was effectively an expansion of the ANZUS alliance in which it now had both a voice and an ear. The United States was pleased to have such eager and reliable partners.

The two remaining members that the United States had originally intended to participate in SEATO were Thailand and the Philippines, who were crucially themselves actually in Southeast Asia. Thailand, the only country in the region never to have been colonized by a Western power, had a reliably anti-communist and Western outlook. After the Second World War, the US provided assistance to the recently occupied country and supported its independence. Bordering Cambodia and Laos, Thailand was arguably the most strategically important member of SEATO, being the front line against the flow of communism. Similarly, the Philippines, a former a colony the United States to which independence was granted in 1946, is located just several hundred miles from Vietnam across the South China Sea. Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Field, vestiges of its colonial past, were key US military installations in the region and would be integral to the defense of Southeast Asia.63

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59 Eden, 93.
61 Eden, 93.
The Philippines, like Thailand, would benefit from the economic and military aid from the US that accompanied SEATO membership. The most controversial and troubling potential memberships were those of the Colombo Powers, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Burma. Though the US found their participation generally advantageous, the British government’s preoccupation with their opinion, and the delay this required, was a serious thorn of contention between these allies. The eventual inclusion of Pakistan appears to have proved more detrimental to the alliance than its absence would have been. Throughout the negotiations regarding the formation of SEATO there was a large volume of correspondence between the British Foreign Secretary and his High Commissioners in New Delhi, Karachi, and Colombo. Eden was committed to keeping these Commonwealth governments abreast of the proceedings at Geneva and the development of the SEATO proposal. He was reaffirmed in his preference for patience and thoroughness from these governments, and often acted as a spokesman for their views to the United States.

This relationship, whereby Eden gave so much deference to the opinion of the Colombo Powers, seems somewhat odd in light of the actual correspondence. Indeed while Burma was considered on the front line of the defense in that it bordered Vietnam as well as China and thus was a strategically desirable member, the British government itself admitted the limited military contribution India, Pakistan or Ceylon could make to the SEATO alliance. It is also true that while they were symbolically important as both Asian and neutral powers, their participation always seemed an unlikelihood in the face of America’s unabashed anti-communism. Ceylon’s government for example, cited “the spirit in which [SEATO] has been...conceived” when objecting to participation in the agreement. Another curiosity is that in spite of the negative comments the British Foreign Office tended to receive from these countries on the SEATO proposal, Eden more often categorized their responses as “on the whole encouraging” or something similar. In fact, the more significant symbolic gesture was Britain’s apparent concern with the priorities of its Commonwealth partners; perhaps this was a means to demonstrate this relationship could be friendly and productive despite their colonialist past. The alternative of acting in merely Britain’s own self-interest risked alienating these countries, countries that remained in many other ways of great importance to Great Britain.

To further complicate this matter of Colombo Group membership was the lone accession of Pakistan to the organization. First, its hostile relationship with India and its explicit desire to acquire Western arms seems to have precluded any eventual membership by India. Second, many member governments expressed concern about Pakistan citing its SEATO membership in calling for help in the event of an armed attack.

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64 Kaplan, 157.
65 UK High Commissioner in Ceylon to CRO (undated), PREM 11/650266.
67 UK High Commissioner in Ceylon to CRO, et al., 10 September 1954, FO 371/111888.
69 Kaplan (1990), 129.
70 Inder Singh (1993), 179.
by India.\footnote{UK High Commissioner in Australia to CRO, 16 Sept. 1954, Foreign Office Information Policy Department Files (FO 371), FO 371/111888.} For all of Britain’s diplomatic efforts, the results were much less than satisfactory for all concerned. In any event, Pakistan left the SEATO treaty in 1968.

The expansion of membership to the South Asian countries also posed a problem for the United States, which figured there would be pressure to similarly extend the treaty area east and north to Formosa, or even Japan and South Korea.\footnote{Eden to Cabinet, 14 June, 1954, PREM 11/649.} This widening of the scope of membership and the area of concern, surmised the US, would unnecessarily complicate and overburden the alliance. Eden correctly noted that these countries were not comparable; Formosa’s attitudes toward China and communism, for example, were of a vastly different scope and intensity than India’s.\footnote{Eden (1960), 97.} Nonetheless, this problem posed the question of determining where to limit the area in which countries would be committed to act in the event of communist aggression. Article VIII of the SEATO Treaty, in rectifying this problem says, “the ‘treaty area’ is the general area of Southeast Asia, including the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general area of the Southwest Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude.”\footnote{South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, 8 Sept. 1954, Foreign Office Protocols of Treaties (FO 93), FO 93 1/515.} The prescribed line of latitude effectively excluded all of Formosa, as well as Hong Kong, from the treaty area and kept the focus on Southeast Asia alone. This debate over membership had little to do with the practicalities of defending Southeast Asia and more to do with politicking.

Those aspects of this Southeast Asian collective defense system, which were arguably the most important, namely its commitments, functions, and purpose, were in fact the least disputed. Due to the relatively little correspondence or significant mention in Eden’s memoirs one must assume that there was a quick consensus reached on these more substantive matters. The treaty calls for maintenance of peace and security in the region through the employment of several means. Beyond the mere military solidarity and commitment to the common defense, the treaty also stipulates that the parties promote democracy through the rule of law and individual liberty in addition to economic development through mutual assistance.\footnote{Ibid.} To the cynic this merely reads that the wealthy Western powers would be buying the cooperation of and access to the countries in the region; Thailand and the Philippines were legitimately and rightly concerned with their security and the threat of communism, however.

The only question of concern regarding the commitments that members were obliged to meet was when and the extent to which military forces would be employed. For all members including even the United States, the creation of SEATO was a means to share the military burdens of defending the region. Great Britain and France were especially concerned about having to commit a dedicated portion of their military forces to the body, much like those required by NATO, but the United States made no such insistence in this case.\footnote{Matthew Jones, Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961-1965: Britain the United States and the Creation of Malaysia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.} As stipulated in the treaty, a member is required to act only upon unanimous agreement of the members and in “accordance with its constitutional processes.”\footnote{Ibid.} Thus the arrangement was left...
loose and flexible, keeping the costs of membership relatively low.

From this litany of disagreements and differences of opinion, several themes can be observed that point to the roots of this transatlantic discord. The most important issue that affected these allies was their divergent views on the threat posed by communist China to the security of Southeast Asia. Britain, on the one hand, took the position that China must be dealt with diplomatically. This was in part due to British reliance on Chinese benevolence with regard to Hong Kong as previously mentioned, but also its government’s preference for peace through engagement. Thus at Geneva, Eden welcomed Chinese participation in the Conference and held many private talks with Chou En-Lai to reach a compromise on Korea and Indochina. The United States, on the other hand, was loath to associate with the communist regime, especially due to China’s Korean War aid to the North, allowing the US to disregard the Geneva Conference out of hand.78

The crux of this issue, however, was the threat that China posed to the peace and security of Southeast Asia. While the aid it provided to the Viet Minh was no secret, the United States government judged full-scale intervention to be imminent and inevitable. This was the reason behind advocating both “united action” and the SEATO alliance as measures to deter the Chinese from entering the conflict. The British government judged the situation to be almost exactly the opposite. Such provocative and hasty actions would certainly, in its opinion, draw China into the conflict that could then rapidly escalate into a global war.79 The speedy creation of SEATO might also alarm China with the formation of a string of military alliances around it from Japan and South Korea, down through Formosa and Indochina, to India and Pakistan. With no imminent threat of a war with China in Indochina, the creation of SEATO could continue at a careful and slow pace in pursuit of Britain’s long-term strategies for the region. The judgment of the United States dictated that delay was a perilous risk and immediate, demonstrative action was of the utmost importance to the containment of communism in Southeast Asia.

A second source of discord in the transatlantic relationship during the formation of SEATO was the poor personal relationship of John F. Dulles and Sir Anthony Eden, each country’s chief diplomat. These two men, though forced by their government positions to work closely together on a wide range of global issues, simply did not get along; this is in surprising contrast to the affinity of their respective superiors, President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Churchill, dating from co-operation in the Second World War. Eden, a seasoned British diplomat, had a very astute and gracious manner in the conduct of his duties as Foreign Minister. This, unfortunately, did not mix well with Dulles’ more haphazard manner of speech and hawkish tendencies. “My difficulty in working with Mr. Dulles,” writes Eden, “was to determine what he really meant and in consequence the significance to be attached to his words and actions.”80 Eden often wrote of his frustration with Dulles’ frequent disregard for British opinion...

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78 Bell, 36.
80 Eden, 63.
machinations. For example, while at Geneva, Eden read of a deal reached between the American and French governments on the terms of a possible intervention in Indochina in the Swiss newspapers and not from their governments; this clearly insulted him deeply.

On the other hand, Dulles was frustrated by Eden’s all too frequent citing of the Commonwealth’s opinion in his reasoning for delay and his stubborn commitment to the Geneva Conference which the latter was co-chairing. It seems rather evident that such a poor relationship would hamper the ability of these two men to reach a consensus when such important issues were at stake. On the other hand, it is possible that this animosity was the result of each advocating conflicting policy choices in their negotiations, thus automatically setting them at odds. In either case, the Dulles-Eden relationship was an integral aspect of political dynamic in which SEATO was created, and was a manifestation of the troubles in the Anglo-US relations during this period.

The disparate strategies that Great Britain and the United States employed for Southeast Asia in the post-Second World War world were a third basis for diplomatic friction in the formation of SEATO. The United States had a grand strategy to tackle the menacing spread of communism, namely the principle of containment. The creation of a mutual defense system for Southeast Asia followed its previous bilateral relationships with a host of Asia-Pacific states that shared the commitment to anti-communism. SEATO was also fully in accordance with the domestic political pressure in the United States to take a firm, if not provocative, stance against communism, to keep the dominoes standing as it were. Britain was incentivised to create the SEATO system for a series of individual goals and was less moved by any grand motives. The organization would improve the security of its regional possessions, lessen the pressures of its global military reach, correct the anomaly of its ANZUS exclusion, underwrite the Geneva Accords, and provide an institutionalized means to influence the formation of US policy in the region. The six months of negotiations and diplomatic wrangling were the reconciling of these different approaches.

In addition to these broad influences on Anglo-American relations were two prominent international issues that contributed to strained diplomacy. First, the continued debate concerning the creation of the EDC consumed a great deal of time, energy, and diplomatic effort. Its failure and the scramble to develop an alternative disappointed the American government adding to transatlantic tensions and requiring a strategic reappraisal of American military strategy with regard to Europe. Second, Anglo-American relations were further strained by the developments in Guatemala, which had a government with communist leanings. The US government threatened to search any ship heading for Guatemalan ports, including British ones, without warning if necessary to prevent Guatemala’s government from amassing weapons. This possibility outraged the British government demanding that no “forcible action” be taken against British ships by their American allies. Later in the crisis, Britain,

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81 Ibid., 98-99.
82 Ibid., 119.
83 Kaplan, 129.
84 Dockrill, 20.
85 Bell, 29.
86 Eden, 135.
together with France, abstained from a key vote in the UN Security Council keeping the situation off of the Council’s agenda at the request of the United States who preferred handling the crisis through the Organization of American States (OAS). These additional events put further pressures on the Anglo-US relationship during their SEATO negotiations.

Manila Conference and Conclusion

On 8 September 1954, the representatives of eight countries met in Manila, capital city of the Philippines, to sign the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty establishing SEATO, as well as the Pacific Charter, which promoted economic and cultural co-operation and respect among the signatories. The final topic of debate to be sorted out was the determination of which threats would invoke the alliance. This issue epitomized the core differences in British and American disagreement over SEATO. The British government argued against making restrictions on the types of aggression, which would surely undermine the broadly defensive nature of the treaty. America’s insistence on narrowing the threshold to just communist aggression, the organization’s raison d’être, was based on a desire neither to mince words nor to be drawn into other regional conflicts, which were of less concern. The British correctly predicted that such a move would most certainly preclude any neutral countries from subscribing to the treaty. The resulting compromise reached relegated the specification of communist aggression to an addendum of the treaty as an “Understanding of the United States of America.”

In essence, the British capitulated to the Americans for the sake of the alliance. For all their foot-dragging, the British mostly fostered animosity with the US as well as suspicion from India.

This process of forming a lasting defense arrangement for Southeast Asia proved long and arduous for both British and American diplomats. The number and significance of their disagreements were rather unusual for would-be allies. “In fact,” writes Coral Bell, “if one had to base one’s estimate of the strength of an alliance on the degree of consensus between the parties as to the nature and seriousness of the threat…one might have difficulty in establishing the existence of an Anglo-American alliance in this part of the world despite the formal legal tie of SEATO.”

Radically different views on the threat posed by communist China led to contradictory assessments on the necessity for “united action” and an immediate defensive coalition; Britain feared provocation with it and America intervention without it. Contrasting appraisals for the security needs of the region, based on interests and responsibilities for different areas, affected the shape and scope of the defense system. Britain sought to secure its colonial possessions and curry favor with the Colombo Powers, whereas America was most imminently concerned with the advance of communism in Indochina.

To further muddle this debate was the abrasive relationship of each side’s chief negotiator and spokesman. The personal rapport of Eden and Dulles was consistently poor and unproductive with neither taking much stock in the other’s priorities. Each was consumed by the image perceived by others in the formation of SEATO; the groups they sought to please were vastly different. The American government, above all else, had to remain staunchly anti-communist in its diplomatic activities, for both domestic and international reasons. It sought demonstrative and immediate overtures to this end through

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87 South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, 8 Sept. 1954, FO 93 1/515.
88 Bell, 37.
The intervention proposals and Western solidarity in its support of France. Secondly, it had to maintain is support for the independence of Europe’s colonies and the establishment of democracies in them; Britain’s were no doubt a source of embarrassment for the US government. In contrast, Britain sought no immediate end to those colonial ties and moreover sought to placate its Commonwealth partners through regular updates and negotiating in their interests. Britain strove to preserve her status as a world power, being actively engaged around the globe, and acted as force for peace through its negotiating position at Geneva.

In spite of these disadvantages and hurdles, Britain and the United States were able to agree in a matter of months to a mutually acceptable organization. Britain was successful in delaying the actual formation of the pact until after the completion of Geneva, but the form and composition of the organization was mostly what America had intended all along. What bridged the gap was largely British acquiescence to the demands of its more powerful ally. Beyond the inclusion of certain states or the timing of initiative, the most important aspect of the entire ordeal was Britain’s seat at the negotiating table, Eden having Dulles’ ear. Recognizing the unequal nature of their alliance, the British could best maximize their influence through fiercely defending their position, but at the end of the day striking the best compromise possible so as not to be deemed unnecessary. So, for as long as Britain remained the ally to which America turned first for advice, consultation or co-operation, than there would at least one goal was achieved, the preservation of the alliance. SEATO provided for Britain “an informal power base by means of which it could exert its influence over world affairs alongside the US the Soviet Union.” If Britain were to have a grand strategy to match America’s containment of communism, it would be the maintenance of Anglo-American solidarity and ever-close co-operation. As Eden writes, “If allies are to act in concert only when their views are identical, alliances have no meaning.” The United States and Great Britain spent much of 1954 with differing views but eventually were able to find satisfaction in a compromise. This would not be repeated a mere two years later in the dramatic Suez Crisis of 1956.

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91 Dockrill, 10.
92 Eden, 138
ASEAN’s Role and its Management of the Sino-Japanese Rivalry

Tai Wei Lim

Introduction
As the US gets involved in the post-War on Iraq reconstruction and is bogged down by the escalating postwar violence there, a quiet but new equilibrium is emerging in East Asia. The regional powers of China and Japan are aligning vis-à-vis themselves to achieve a new power structure and equilibrium in East Asia. The new equilibrium may not necessarily mean more instability for the region but might impose some adjustment discomforts for all East Asian states and organizations like ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The need to accommodate new players and maintain ties with old ones will require delicate rebalancing of interests and realignments of positions. Part of this new equilibrium entails resolving Sino-Japanese rivalries over regional security organizations, including that of ASEAN. Overall, from ASEAN’s point of view (both military and economically), they have to deal with the simultaneous presence of two increasingly assertive regional powers, a Japan that is still the world’s second largest economy and increasingly muscular militarily and a China that is becoming a formidable economic force on top of being the traditional nuclear power in East Asia.

Conducive for Neutrality
ASEAN as a grouping wants to achieve equilibrium in its ties with both China and Japan and treat its relations with both of them in a neutral manner. At the same time as ASEAN wants to maintain economic ties with the Japanese, some leaders prefer to see the Chinese card as an option to place less reliance on the developed West (traditionally including Japan), particularly the US in terms of trade as well as political leadership. Some ASEAN leaders have positioned US priorities in issues like terrorism and rebuilding Iraq as minor ones compared to other regional economic developmental issues that are more closely aligned with Chinese interests. Thus, in some sense, for these ASEAN leaders, China is more of a natural ally than the Americans, especially in issues like the regional economy. By this logic, since Japan is closely aligned with US interests, Japan might be perceived to be veering away from ASEAN interests in comparison with the Chinese.

Because of its traditionally interwoven interests with both countries, ASEAN may then be located as a neutral medium for balancing the two countries militarily and economically, performing an unofficial function as a security organization that perpetuates peace in the South China Sea, a delineating line between Japan and China. Within the organization itself, the members are equally divided in their affiliations to the two powers. Myanmar is a traditional close ally of China, buying arms from China (for e.g. Myanmar is one of the largest customers
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Southeast Asia

of the Chinese export F-7M fighters) and even reportedly hosting some of China’s military equipment. Vietnam is a socialist country that switched from being a close communist comrade of China to an adversary during the era of the Sino-Soviet conflict, becoming a Soviet client state.

Indonesia, a close ally of China during the Sukarno years during the 1960s, became fiercely anti-communist during Suharto’s years and only established formal relations with China many years later. The irony is that Sukarno’s daughter is now back as the president of Indonesia after the fall of the Suharto regime during the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Thailand, which some in ASEAN now see as the next leader of ASEAN, is a strong ally of the US and the only ASEAN state that was not formerly Japanese colony during WWII. It receives large amounts of investments from Japan (the main production facility for Japanese automobile manufacturing in Southeast Asia) and was involved in hosting Japanese warships on their way to the Gulf recently. Singapore is the most economically advanced country in ASEAN, serving as a regional headquarters for many Japanese multinational companies (MNC) and a strong US ally. Singapore hosted Japanese Self-Defense Force (SDF) C-130 military planes when Japan evacuated her citizens from Cambodia in the 1990s. At the same time, however, she remains the only ASEAN country to be populated mainly by overseas Chinese whose older denizens bore the brunt of Japanese brutalities during WWII.

The Philippines remains another strong ally of the US and is generally friendly to the Japanese and has been traditionally one of the stronger voices against Chinese naval activities in the South China Sea because of her island disputes in the Spratlys (of which the Philippines is a claimant). Malaysia, another claimant to the disputed islands, has a former strongman leader, Mahathir Mohamed, who is a close admirer of Japanese economic development, enjoys his friendship with Japanese nationalist Shintaro Ishihara (both co-authored books on speaking up against the US) and instituted the “Look East” policy of learning from Japan. However, under Mahathir, Malaysia took a strong position against what it sees as neo-Western imperialism (especially US policies towards Israel and the Middle East), creating friction between her and the US (sometimes US allies such as Japan and Australia as well). Therefore, taken as a whole, ASEAN is rather balanced and neutral towards both China and Japan, with some members tilting towards either one of them on different issues.

Because of the disparate makeup of the organization, ASEAN is able to reconfigure a variety of Japanese and Chinese interests purely into its own interests through the bargaining and internal aggregation of interests within the organization. The end products of this give-and-take bargaining to come up with a common ASEAN position takes into consideration the sensitivities and interests of both Japan and China, making it suitable as a regional security buffer organization. In this manner, Japanese and Chinese interests, be it sea lane or air space access, Southeast Asian raw materials, or even territorial disputes, can be accommodated.

ASEAN as a Military Buffer Zone

However, this does not mean that ASEAN is only capable of being a passive player in the region, only reactive to Japanese and Chinese maneuvers. In terms of military issues, ASEAN is able to provide a reasonably sizable role in the region, even regarding the fact that the military budgets of both China
and Japan are set to become even more formidable. In March 2002, China announced that it was going to increase its military budget by 17.6 percent to 20 billion US dollars, which will dwarf the budget of the next comparable East Asian power Australia by almost 3 times.\(^1\) Japan, the other dominant East Asian power, earmarked US$40 billion (officially third in the world tally) for its defense spending in 2001, overshadowing Australia’s defense budget by a factor of 5 times - nearly the entire combined budgets of countries in the region.

ASEAN, as it were, is being squeezed between two great powers.\(^2\) If ASEAN states were to confront China or Japan individually, the inequity of such exchanges would be overwhelming. Individually, many ASEAN states (with the exception of perhaps Singapore and Malaysia) have seen their military capabilities decline considerably since the 1997 Asian Financial crisis, especially the hitherto Southeast Asian big brother of Indonesia.\(^3\) However, with strength in numbers and differentiation of roles, ASEAN as a whole can stand a better chance. Differentiation in strengths between different ASEAN members means that there is potential for them to participate in collective security. For example, Singapore is advanced in telecommunications technologies and early warning systems. In some areas of armaments, the CISCO industries of Singapore were, at one time, one of the world’s largest producers of small arms. She, however, lacks manpower for military projection. Manpower is something that Indonesia (maintains a 200,000 strong land force)\(^4\) and Vietnam (one of the world’s largest standing armies) are abundant in.

There are also some little publicized military facts outside ASEAN, for example, Thailand is one of the few countries in the world to possess a helicopter carrier for power projection while the Philippines can claim ownership to one of the most prestigious officer cadet schools in the world. Taken together, these strengths can serve as a credible deterrence to any temptations by bigger regional powers to act irresponsibly. Simultaneously, the individual weaknesses of the ASEAN states is also sufficient to ward off any Japanese or Chinese fears of the organization becoming a military threat to harm their interests. As the organization matures, it may want to develop a collective defense mechanism to activate regional military cooperation when the interest of one state is transgressed, along the lines of NATO. Although this is far from realization and the organization remains loosely constituted, the already established individual links with the regional powers through Japan-ASEAN friendship treaties and free trade agreements or multilateral links with all of the regional powers like the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN-China Security Dialogue will serve as a starting point for ASEAN’s role in mediating regional security.

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4. Ibid.
Coping with a Muscular Japan

Ever since WW II, Japan has had a pacifist existence. Under Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution, it “renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force.” For many years, Japan concentrated on economic recovery and fast growth. However, she is now concentrating on augmenting her military contribution to the world. ASEAN views of a more muscular Japan are ambivalently tinged with awe, fear, support and caution. Perhaps, of particular concern to ASEAN is the advancement of Japanese military power in the agendas of anti-terrorism, anti-piracy and peacekeeping operations.

Anti-terrorism

Terrorism is now the call for a strengthened Japanese presence in the region and the world. The 2001 Antiterrorism law following 9-11 allowed Japan to send the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to an area near an actual combat zone, in this case the Indian Ocean, to refuel to coalition ships as part of the military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan and provide relief for Afghan refugees. Ironically, part of the reason behind Japanese military rejuvenation is the foreign pressure (gaiatsu) imposed by recent US administrations. In the first Gulf War, Japan was criticized for giving too little too late. At that time, Japan was controlled by what many saw as a liberal-leaning weak coalition government. But in the recent Gulf War, things had changed. The Iraq law legislated following the US-led war in Iraq permits Japanese direct deployment in a foreign state. To steer clear of the postwar peace constitution, Japan introduced counter-terrorism laws that allowed her to deploy 5 to 6 7,250-ton destroyers to the Gulf region in a bid to be more internationally involved in the conflict.5

The neo-conservative movement in power in the US as well as an increasingly confident Japan led by a right-leaning faction of the conservative Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) facilitated this deployment with the bill to dispatch the troops to the combat region on Christmas day. On 140 different occasions, within the one year period, the MSDF supplied a total of 234,000 kl of oil worth US$70 million on Japanese tab.6 Although MSDF activities are limited to rear areas external to the combat zone, the refueling duties is a major support role to US and British combat operations. The ongoing fighting in Iraq complicates international peacekeeping operation as the SDF, if fired upon, would have to defend themselves. The law, however, presumes that SDF activities will be restricted to non-combat zones in sensitivity to constitutional and legal constraints. However, with Iraqi insurgents’ attacks on the U.N. and Red Cross, the SDF may face direct fire and forced to respond, making combat and non-combat zones indistinguishable.

Japan’s deployment of an Aegis destroyer to the Gulf represents a major step in Japan’s growing confidence in its military role in the world. The frank admission by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda that this decision was made independently of the US is in fact more important than the actual deployment. Moreover, this assertion was backed up by Prime Minister Koizumi who reiterated that Japan could deploy its destroyers whenever it wants. Deployment of

5 The Aegis-equipped destroyer Kirishima left for the Gulf on December 16, 2002 and replaced the 5,050-ton Hiei destroyer already in the Gulf with petrol supplying duties. Before Iraq was occupied by the US, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) sent two refueling ships and three destroyers to the Indian Ocean to supply petroleum to US and British naval ships. Japan’s navy is regarded by many to be the second most advanced navy in the world after the US.

Japanese forces will inevitably involve ASEAN countries. Southeast Asia was involved in an indirect manner when Japanese warships pass through ASEAN states on the way to the Gulf area. For example, a Japanese destroyer and a naval transport ship escorted heavy machinery from Thailand to Qatar.

Other than dealing with the presence of Japanese ships in the region, ASEAN also has to cope with the presence of Japanese peacekeeping troops in places including Southeast Asian countries. The deployment of Japanese troops overseas originated from a series of laws beginning in 1992. The PKO (peacekeeping operations) cooperation law, legislated in 1992, led the way for the SDF’s role in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations in Cambodia with the condition that such missions are only permitted under a state of ceasefire agreed between warring parties. This condition arises from international law as UN peacekeeping efforts are limited under the United Nations 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law. Under this law, a ceasefire between warring parties is necessary before UN military personnel can step into the fray.

A hint of future Japanese proactive stance in multilateral military operations can also be discerned from their mindset change. On 19 Dec 2002, a prominent government advisory panel on defense under Yasushi Akashi (former UN undersecretary general and head of this panel) argued that Japan’s involvement in international affairs was a “fundamental” duty. The panel also argued that Japan should step out of any existing Japanese peacekeeping restrictions, citing Australia’s successful example of intervention in East Timor as a case study for securing peace in the region (despite the fact that Australia’s move was viewed angrily by some of its ASEAN neighbors including Indonesia in particular and the controversial Howard doctrine of Australia as the US’s deputy in the region). At a high point in the immediate post-911 period, some Southeast Asian leaders like Prime Minister Mahathir even clumped the US and her allies like Australia and Japan together, criticizing the travel alerts issued to their citizens traveling to Southeast Asia. The crux of the issue here, perhaps, is the level of interventionism that is perceptually permissible in the East Asian region, especially by Japan’s neighbors and ASEAN.

This is only the beginning of a more muscular Japan although it is likely the Japan will operate within perimeters defined by the US-Japan Security Treaty for the foreseeable future. If Japan’s military activity, for any reason, turns out to be a little more than what is comfortable for the region, ASEAN has a precedent to fall back on. Australia’s self-proclaimed role as the US’s deputy sheriff in the region announced in 1999 entrenched in a government White Paper released in 2000 calling for a military interventionist doctrine drew flak from her neighbors who accused Australia of being arrogant. This subsequently led to greater clarification of the position from Australian government and sympathetic voices amongst the Australian


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In the same way, if the Japanese military role in the region is perceived to be counterproductive, the same pressures can be applied, especially since Southeast Asia serves as a resource base for Japanese companies and is an attractive export destination (500 million people strong) contributing to Japan’s export drive out of recession recently. Looking back to recent history for specific Southeast Asian pressures (gaiatsu) on Japan, the outbreak of strong anti-Japanese sentiments in ASEAN capitals in the mid-1970s had also produced similar pressures on Japanese foreign policy, strong enough to bring about the 1976 Fukuda doctrine. The doctrine preached closer cultural and educational links with ASEAN countries, including the establishment of Japanese studies departments in ASEAN universities.

Coping with a Rising Dragon - The Emergence of China

Symbolically, China’s emergence is seen as an opportunity, a challenge and a threat to different people in various quarters, depending on what their interests are. The glimmering development of China in its ability to launch a man into space, operate the world’s first Maglev, operationalize the initial generators in the world’s largest hydroelectric dam, host Olympics and Miss World, enter WTO - all taking place at about the same period of time are highly impressive to many in East Asia. While most East Asians see Chinese development as a positive sign, a minority view (including some Japanese and Southeast Asians) sometimes regards these achievements as having military potential, especially when it comes to China’s space program, and worry about its impact on regional security.

The emergence of Chinese economic, political and military strength is contributive to the current policies found in many countries of accommodating the rise of China rather than countering it and ASEAN is no exception. Many are also aware of China’s complex and wide array of domestic issues that need to be resolved such as income disparity, corruption issues, state-owned enterprises, western China development, SARS, etc. Most would still want to see a stable China as they believe that it is in the region’s best interest for that to happen. Through WTO, multilateral and bilateral engagements, China has begun to do its part in trying to allay East Asian fears over its rise, given the historical dominance that China had over the rest of East Asia throughout history.

Because of China’s size, history and economic potential, ASEAN’s relationship with China is rather different from ASEAN’s working relationship with Japan. While China is seen as more or less an autonomous singular entity, ASEAN perceives Japan as being embedded within the complex network of regional US defense alliances. Collectively, the US Pacific Fleet and its staunch allies in Australia (hosting US forces at Shoalwater Bay and coordinated exercises like Tandem Thrust), Singapore, Thailand (Cobra Gold) and the Philippines may be depended upon by ASEAN to limit the Chinese navy’s reach. China, on the other hand, does not enjoy the far-flung, wide-ranging network that Japan enjoys within the US orbit. Within the ASEAN region, China has a major ally in the form of the military regime in Myanmar and is a major arms exporter there.9 There are reports that

Myanmar is also hosting some Chinese military installations as well in exchange for close Chinese friendship. However, this is a comparatively minor alliance within the whole Southeast Asian security rubric.

While this may seemed unfair to the Chinese and may even make ASEAN an indirect accomplice to a US containment strategy towards China in the Asia-Pacific, China enjoys the advantage of being perceived as an independent power relatively free from superpower influence. When there are ill-feelings towards the US, for example in the War on Iraq, some Islamic states in ASEAN may associate Japanese interests with the US. Similarly, in economic issues like the proposed Asian Monetary Fund during the height of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, some ASEAN states associated the Japanese position with that of the US in her reluctance to set up the Fund or to exclude the US from it. China, on the other hand, is relatively unencumbered by such perceptions and is seen to be more autonomous comparatively.

Thus, China may then enjoy her position as a more clarified and independent entity when it comes to regional cooperation involving ASEAN. She is also fast becoming an alternative to turn to whenever there are ASEAN positions that do not coincide with US interests, especially for its newer socialist CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) members or its Islamic-majority members (Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei). Its role as an independent working partner for ASEAN comes across very clearly in regional economic cooperation. In the economic sphere, the Chinese have negotiated a free trade agreement (FTA) with ASEAN countries – a highly welcomed initiative since China is perceived by ASEAN as sucking away external investments destined for the latter - a region still recovering from the 1997 financial economic crisis. Such economic ties will increase interactions within the region and possibly enhance China’s leadership role in the regional economy as well. In other non-traditional regional security areas, China is also working with ASEAN to make the region safe. Some are highlighted below.

**Security cooperation**

The security aspects of the ASEAN-China relationship have expanded to non-traditional fields like counter-terrorism after 9-11. ASEAN and China have jointly approached the issue of terrorism which was previously regarded as an individual burden of countries in the region e.g. the joint declaration of counter terrorism in the “10 plus 3” meeting in 2001.10 In terms of island disputes and the management of offshore oil under the East Asian continental shelf, China also participated in the ASEAN+1 (China) meeting in 2000 to work with ASEAN to draw up a regional code of conduct in the South China Seas around the disputed Spratlys Island.11 ASEAN countries seemed to agree on the approach to manage China by engagement through rule-based institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), to ensure that China becomes a responsible member of the region.12
Economic Cooperation

In the economic sphere, bilateral trade between the respective ASEAN countries and China has improved considerably. Trade between the original members of ASEAN, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore and China expands almost 15 percent yearly. During the ASEAN China Dialogue “The Challenges of Cooperation” (15-16 April 2002), it was revealed that in numerical terms, Sino-ASEAN trade had jumped tremendously from US$7.1 billion in 1990 to almost US$29.6 billion in the year 2000. Capital and cross-regional investments between ASEAN and China have also accelerated with ASEAN’s Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in China growing by 57 percent each year in one decade between 1990 and 2000. Simultaneously, China’s investments in the region have also increased tremendously. Specific niche industries in ASEAN like tourism have benefited greatly from the increased economic ties between the two countries. In the year 2000, Chinese travelers became the region’s second largest source of tourists. Most importantly for ASEAN and perhaps the region, China can be a stabilizer of regional currencies by holding fast to its rembi (Chinese yuan) peg, lessening the risk of a financial crisis in the region sparked off by currency fluctuations.

However, with greater Chinese economic prowess, there were also fears of Chinese competition overwhelming ASEAN’s industries. China is taking in 50 percent percent of foreign FDI to the East Asian region as opposed to ASEAN’s 20 percent (figures exclude Japan). Though the challenges posed by China’s economy to the region may be real, China may not become the only hegemonic production base in the region or the world (the so-called “World Factory” argument). Southeast Asia’s resource-processing and raw materials industries may be able to complement the Chinese economy. Besides overall ASEAN trade, China is also targeting specific ASEAN countries in its drive for economic cooperation with the region. This includes looking at increasing economic cooperation in the greater Mekong sub-region (Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam). At this moment, China is intensely involved in the quadrilateral cooperation (Thailand, Laos, South China and Myanmar), promoting river trade and constructing physical roads from South China to Thailand via Myanmar and Laos (known as North-South Axis).

Most significantly, however, is an open Chinese market that will make it easier for ASEAN manufactured products to reach the burgeoning Chinese middle class as China seeks to increase her consumption of goods produced by regional countries. Existing cooperation between ASEAN and China looks set to grow if the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) is implemented. In the same ASEAN-China Dialogue “The Challenges of Cooperation” (15-16 April 2002), it was estimated that ASEAN’s exports to China would grow by 48 percent and China’s exports to ASEAN by 55 percent or by 0.9 percent (for ASEAN) and 0.3 percent (for China) per year. The ACFTA will cover a 1.7 billion people market, gross domestic product of almost US$2 trillion (S$3.7 trillion) and bilateral trade of US$1.23 trillion. If implemented, the ACFTA can help to cushion the fallout in the

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
region from China’s growing economy by allowing ASEAN countries to have a useful head start in exporting goods to China.

**Non-traditional Security**

**Economic Rivalry**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is not the only vehicle that can ensure regional economic security. Regional and bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) are other devices that ASEAN can utilize as institutions for enhancing rule-based regional trade and commerce. On the economic front, there is perception in some quarters that Japan is losing its polish as the economic leader of East Asia. Within East Asia, she has only so far concluded a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Singapore, a country without agricultural industries to complicate such negotiations. There is some basis for disappointment with Japan’s free trade initiatives. Japan’s widely anticipated and closely-watched FTA deal with Mexico fell through, diminishing hopes for FTAs with regional ASEAN powers such as Thailand and Indonesia, two countries with formidable agricultural resources.

**China and Regional Free Trade**

In contrast, China has revved up her engine for a comprehensive FTA with ASEAN within ten years with negotiations already started. The former even proposed a scheduled mechanism that gives advantages to ASEAN countries by granting favorable export conditions for their exports to China for a few years before full implementation of the ASEAN-China FTA. With little fanfare, China has quietly become the largest export market for Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan almost at the same time while it is the second largest market for Japan and third largest for the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. Her economic clout is growing at an enormous pace in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, China is seen to be the shining star of East Asia with her tourism potential as well as demand for raw materials stimulating Southeast Asian economies.

**Japan and Regional Economic Cooperation**

Some seasoned watchers and diplomats would even go to the extent of arguing that Japan had wasted her chances at displaying regional economic leadership and put forward the perception that Japan is now led by Chinese initiatives. Japan’s perceived weakness in economic diplomacy is contrasted against her large economy (still world’s second largest) and the vast array of technologies and management skills she offers for ASEAN. In 1997, during the last Asian financial crisis, an event which somewhat affected her image as the economic leader in the region, Japan actually pledged US$80 billion fund to help Southeast Asian economics. On its side, ASEAN is careful not to veer excessively towards China and, thus, has accepted Japanese offer to foster security and friendship ties. In December 2003, the ASEAN leaders congregated in Tokyo for a summit to strengthen non-economic (including military) ties. Japan has had more success at less ambitious bilateral economic agreements. A case study of the JSEPA (Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement) is demonstrative of this. The successful

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22 Ibid.
ASEAN’s Role and its Management of the Sino-Japanese Rivalry

Southeast Asia

Conclusion of the JSEPA was announced in Shanghai on 20 Oct 2001 by the leaders of both Japan and Singapore. The purpose of the JSEPA is to enlarge the size of both countries’ markets, institutionalize the policy reforms in both countries and expand free trade between them. The areas of policy reforms include freeing up bureaucratic procedures for movement of goods, services and people through electronic systems for customs clearance and standardization, product testing and certification. To allay any fears of non-participating countries to the JSEPA, the Prime Ministers of both Japan and Singapore affirm that the JSEPA rules will be consistent with any WTO multilateral rules and with ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) domestic contents rule.

Besides free trade, JSEPA initiatives also target the Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) industry, promoting the mutual recognition of skills standards of Infocomm project managers in Singapore and Japan through skills certification and enhanced security measures in e-commerce through cross-recognition of data protection models. At the government levels, both governments will work with each other to promote the development of e-Governments. Other sectors that the JSEPA will liberalize include human capital management, financial services, tourism, media/broadcasting and development of SMEs. These sectors can be promoted through a joint sharing of databases for these industries between the trade agencies of both countries.

In terms of human capital management, both countries will co-develop startup incubators and research manpower in life sciences, aided by a stronger framework to protect intellectual property rights. Other than developing human capital between both countries in high tech industries, they will also co-provide training to other developing countries. In addition to benefits between two states, the JSEPA also benefits regions within Japan. In pursuant to the JSEPA, Singapore’s Productivity and Standards Board (PSB) and Kumamoto (a city in the Southern part of Japan) signed a MOU to increase their trade relationship. Kumamoto has been identified by Singapore as a hub for Singaporean companies to invest in the Kyushu region where Kumamoto contributes USD46 billion to Japan’s GDP and about 10 percent of the GDP of Kyushu island while Kumamoto intends to use Singapore a springboard for Kumamoto companies that want to do business in Southeast Asia through Singapore’s business contacts and knowledge database.

In conclusion, it is the mutual interests between the two countries that had propelled ratification of the JSEPA. For Japan, the signing of the JSEPA would be the first policy precedent in bilateral trade agreement. Besides mutual benefits for Japan and Singapore, the JSEPA will also benefit other countries in the region, especially for ASEAN as the JSEPA will help lock in Japan’s economic engagement in Southeast Asia for the long term. It may also stimulate other Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between Japan and other ASEAN countries, and serve to engender regional and global trade and investment liberalization efforts. Japan is likely to extend such agreements to other ASEAN countries in a way to

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23 Tai Wei Lim, “Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA),” Singapore Institute of International Affairs, www.siiionline.org/article/JSEPA%20500%20words.doc
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.

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circumvent its difficulties with bilateral FTAs due to a strong domestic farm lobby and traditional bureaucratic resistance to liberalization.

The Issue of Piracy

Outside military issues, coastal security has also been a focus for both China and Japan, especially in the vital but what is perceived to be the inadequately policed sea-lanes of the Straits of Malacca. Because Japan lacks oil, it has to import oil mainly from the Middle East and this oil inevitably has to pass through the Straits of Malacca. With a greater desire to bolster ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)'s efforts in combating piracy within their own territory, Japan announced its intentions to send Coast Guard vessels to Southeast Asia to conduct joint patrol exercises with ASEAN nations.

In an effort to beef up their already formidable coast guard and naval presence, Japan is integrating its Coast Guard into the Maritime Self-Defense Force. The new Japanese naval posture includes piracy in its purview. To add strength to their new attitudes towards piracy, the Japanese Coast Guard has also dispatched coastal patrol vessels to Singapore to conduct bilateral exercises with the Singapore Coast Guard. Similarly, the Chinese navy has recently conducted exercises there to combat piracy and familiarize themselves with the waters in the Straits’ sea-lanes that connects the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean.

Terrorism

Terrorism is a new focus in non-traditional security matters. Along with the greater involvement of China and Japan in the fight against global terrorism, ASEAN is also beefing up its own terrorism deterrence to shake off the image of being soft on terrorism and to promote greater autonomy in handling terrorists in their own backyard in a bid to ward off interventionism by regional powers. While ASEAN’s greater resolve does not exclude cooperation with either Japan or China in anti-terrorism cooperation, ASEAN also wants to draw limits on foreign participation in issues of terrorism within Southeast Asia.

The Bali bombing in Indonesia has awakened ASEAN to the dangers of terrorism in the region. The danger is further exacerbated by the large number of people (nearly 200) killed in Kuta beach, a popular resort beach in the famous tourist island of Bali. This has prompted ASEAN to rethink their strategies towards terrorism that has been seen as disparate and not far-reaching enough. The long-term solution to the problem of terrorism cannot rely only on war against terrorists. A sustainable long-term solution is needed to address the problem of terrorism and its seeds that sprouted the movement in the first place in Southeast Asia. These reasons that gave rise to terrorism can be summarized in two main areas – poverty and social ostracism.

Poor economic conditions breed radicalism that may foment terrorist causes. Economic problems are deep and would require substantial help to remedy it. The second problem is that of social ostracism. The terrorists, including the Al Qaeda sympathizers in the Philippines, are able to capitalize on the feelings of isolation from the general landscape in that country to get more recruits for their causes. As such, unless the Muslim minority in the South is...

reintegrated back into the national orbit, the problem may worsen. Though some compromises were made on the part of the Filipino government to offer amnesty to the rebels but, with the subsequent terrorists acts the kidnapping of Germans tourists, these efforts were stalled.

The quest to tackle terrorism may be momentous for each individual country in Southeast Asia but, collectively, they may be able to work towards a solution. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) must work together to prevent further proliferation of terrorism in the region. For example, Singapore initiated proposals to get tourist dollars back into the region again. The leadership in Singapore went down to the specifics of working together in projects that can boost confidence in the region. One of these projects could be in tourism where Southeast Asian nations can promote the diversity of the region to attract tourists back again.

One of the worst outcomes of the terrorist label were the travel advisories issued by advanced nations for their citizens intending to visit Southeast Asia. Besides affecting one of the most important industries in the region, tourism, these travel advisories can similarly deter international investors from coming into the region. To fend off this negative development, a new tourism agreement took effect between ASEAN countries to introduce a coordinated approach in introducing smoother visa processing, more comprehensive upgrade of tourism sites, faster and less bureaucratic air services, lower travel taxes and the co-promotion of Southeast Asia as a travel destination. Through such initiatives, perhaps the badly needed foreign currencies can come back to the region again.

The call for ASEAN unity seems to have emanated strongly from all regional leaders, fearful that the bombing might give the wrong impression to international investors that the region is a hotbed for terrorists. The ASEAN region may run into being labeled as that with a string of incidents such as the kidnappings in the Philippines, arrests of cell members in Malaysia and Singapore, insurrections in Mindanao and other Southern Philippines territories, crowned by the highly destructive bomb blast in Bali. While post-Bali bombing has created a greater awareness of the threat of terrorism, more needs to be done as the recent jailbreak of the top terrorist suspect in the Philippines as well as the Marriott bombing indicate. ASEAN is determined to show greater resolve in handling issues of terrorism and, for now, the outbound markers on regional cooperation with non-ASEAN partners permits cooperation with all regional powers including Japan and China to instill greater confidence in bringing tourists back to Southeast Asia but disallows unilateral attempts at preemptive intervention in ASEAN territory such as that advanced by Australia’s Howard doctrine.

Conclusion

Overall, some of Japan’s neighbors (including ASEAN) may feel the jitters over Japanese remilitarization and growing confidence in international affairs. This is coupled with the popularity of hawkish politicians like Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara who periodically makes remarks on Japanese nationalism during WWII or arguing for stronger postures against Japan’s neighbors, namely China and the Koreas and a tendency to blame foreigners (including other Asians) for the rise of crime in Japan. Other reasons cited by observers for Japanese shift towards stronger
militarization are the loss of economic direction after the collapse of Japan’s bubble economy in the late 1980s and a dilemma between accommodationist and confrontational attitudes towards China’s emergence as an economic power in the region.

Japanese efforts at multilateralism may also contribute a more balanced security situation in East Asia. Although many see Japan’s intentions to deepen defense ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a challenge to China’s own efforts to draw closer to Southeast Asia, it simultaneously represents the Japanese intention to engage regional organizations in defense matters. It is this form of multifaceted, multilayered complex interlinks between states in the region that will draw East Asian closer together in a delicate security interdependence, perhaps the precursor that will foster greater security in the region, much like the European situation.

Finally, East Asia’s war apology issues with Japan are losing its tenacity in the region, outside the sporadic protestations over remarks by certain rightwing quarters in Japan. This may also facilitate Japan’s position in the region not just as an economic leader but also a military power, something that its highly advanced defense forces and sizable military budget is capable of offering. This can be seen in Japan’s decision to deploy planes to Cambodian crisis to withdraw her nationals during the Cambodian crisis, the deployment of troops overseas and her increasing desire to get into security arrangements with ASEAN.

As for China, while acknowledging China as a traditional regional military power in the region, the focus is shifting to China as a regional economic power, a second engine of growth in addition to Japan who has fuelled much of Southeast Asia’s postwar growth in East Asia. This new construct of an economically vibrant China complements the ASEAN’s treatment of Japan as a defense partner. In other words, Japan is no longer seen only through economic terms while Chinese power is no longer solely conceived in military terms. If managed well, ASEAN could find a partner in both military and economic aspects in both China and Japan. To achieve this, ASEAN needs to ensure neutrality in managing these two powers without giving them the impression that it leans on one more than the other.

This buffer neutrality performed by the organization can contribute to peace in the region. It may even play bigger roles in mediating other non-ASEAN related political disputes, such as serving as a dialogue facility for the North Korea nuclear issue as it has done in the past. As ASEAN derive benefits from managing the two powers and also serving as a neutral zone for both of them, it also has to be proactive in ensuring that any interventionist tendencies on the part of Japan or China must be carefully monitored. In this way, moves to create spheres of influence within ASEAN to the detriment of other great powers should be countered readily. In other words, ASEAN should not play the regional power game subjectively in order to serve as a neutral region in East Asia. For now, its simultaneous economic and military partnerships with both China and Japan serve this purpose well.