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The New Geometry of Asian Architecture: What works and what does not.

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INTRODUCTION

The general judgment of scholars and policy experts is that the United States-Japan alliance has been unsuccessful at thinking innovatively about architectural design and the role of China in Asia. On the one hand, the United States, unlike China, has eschewed any interest in the region's various indigenous architectural efforts. Japan on the other hand is fully interested in regional architecture, but this enthusiasm is rejected by a region still suspicious of Japan's past and future intentions. American and Japanese inactivity is compounded by an underwhelming record of regional architecture initiatives in Asia – evident in the lack of an overarching security structure like that of NATO in Europe. For these reasons, international relations and areas studies scholars have rushed to a judgment of failure in the U.S.-Japan alliance's ability to think creatively and innovatively about regional architecture and about integrating China's rise in Asia. In this chapter, I argue that the future may not be as dim as people surmise. There is a definitive architecture emerging and evolving in Asia that the United States and Japan both support. It is not one dominated by China. Nor is it one characterized by U.S. departure. On the contrary this evolving architecture is inclusive of both powers. But there is a clear security dilemma that needs to be overcome to realize this positive future for regional architecture. This is one in which U.S./Japan-initiated regional efforts are seen as latent efforts to contain China, while regional/China-initiated proposals are seen as attempts to exclude the U.S. Non-zero sum solutions are indeed possible. The picture of the institutions that tie the U.S., Japan, and China in the region is much more complex than

“bilateral v. multilateral.” Instead, it is a combination of bilaterals, trilaterals, and other pluralateral configurations, and the complexity of this geometry is a useful tool in muting regional security dilemmas.

The Rush to Judgment

The general judgment of scholars and policy experts is that the United States-Japan alliance has been unsuccessful at thinking innovatively about architectural design and the role of China in Asia. On the one hand, the United States, unlike China, has eschewed until recently any interest in the region’s various indigenous architectural efforts. U.S. disinterest particularly at the end of the Cold War stemmed from a combination of a “ain’t broke, don’t fix it” mentality and initial concerns that such regional initiatives were meant to undermine U.S. leadership. Whether these initiatives took the form of Mahathir’s East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) or less radical alternatives (i.e., APEC proposals by Australia), the United States was decidedly ambivalent. In November 1990 Secretary of State James Baker criticized the notion of regional security dialogues replacing the American “hub and spokes” network of bilateral alliances in Asia which had been at the center of Asian security and prosperity for four decades.¹ Statements by then-assistant secretary for East Asia Richard Solomon in October 1990 typified the attitude:

...the nature of the security challenges we anticipate in the years ahead -- do not easily lend themselves to region-wide solutions. When we look at the key determinants of stability in Asia...it is difficult to see how a Helsinki-type

¹ See *Australian Financial Review* 2 May 1991 (“Security, in Letter and Spirit”).

institution would be an appropriate forum for enhancing security or promoting conflict resolution.²

This gave way (post-1991) to grudging acceptance that multilateral security dialogues could complement (but not replace) the U.S.-based bilateral architecture.³ However, at the same time that American acceptance of a role for regional security grew, the rhetoric remained somewhat ambivalent for an alternative reason: If the US were now *too* enthusiastic about multilateral security, this might be interpreted in the region as the pretext for American withdrawal. More recently, because of U.S. active discouragement of initiatives like the Asian monetary fund during the 1997-1998 liquidity crisis, or U.S. lack of enthusiasm for joining the new East Asia Summit, Washington has been widely perceived as disinterested at best, and downright subversive at worst. Even when the United States has shown interest, recently for example with the Obama administration's signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce (TAC), paving the way for membership in the newly formed East Asia Summit, the region has disavowed interest in having the U.S. as a full member.

Japan's postwar interest in regional security was even less enthusiastic than that of the United States. In theory such an attitude derived directly from the Yoshida doctrine which emphasized an export-based recovery strategy with security dependent exclusively on the United States. In practice as well, the alliance provided all that Japan needed in private goods thereby obviating any pressing need for alternative multilateral or bilateral partners. The cost of this dependence was persistent Japanese fears of

² Cited in Paul Midford, "Japan's Leadership Role in East Asian Security Multilateralism," *Pacific Review* 13.3 (2000), 372.

³ See James Baker, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs* 70.5 (1991/92); and Baker in *New York Times* July 25, 1991; and *East Asian Strategy Review*.

becoming entrapped in military contingencies or political situations in which Japan did not share or shared only partially American interests, but this was acceptable.⁴

Japanese disinterest in multilateral security also stemmed from an acute sensitivity to the region's lingering historical suspicions. Any multilateral security architecture would by definition require a larger Japanese leadership role than would be deemed unacceptable by many in the region. For example, discussions of a Northeast Asian NATO equivalent ("PATO") in the 1960s could not advance past popular opposition and suspicion that this might spark a renewal of Japanese dominance in the region. Such proposals fell on deaf ears at home as Japan experienced a postwar aversion to Asia and focus on the West (with World War II symbolizing Japan's expulsion from Asia). Japanese attempts at a larger political and economic role in Southeast Asia in the 1970s and in the 1980s in the form of Prime Minister Ohira's Pan-Pacific Cooperation Concept also met with fiercely negative reactions. Part of the problem in this regard stemmed from perceived zero-sum tradeoffs of U.S. and Japanese leadership roles in the region. In other words, from the perspective of potential participants in regional architecture, any enhancement of the Japanese role by definition meant a reduction in the American role and therefore looked like the US was "handing off" the region to Japan.⁵

More recently, Japanese leadership has become more deeply interested in regional architecture. Regardless of whether the politics in Japan is center-left or center-right, there is a perceived imperative to support regional initiatives and for this reason, every

⁴ See John Welfield, *An Empire in Eclipse* (London: Athlone, 1988).

⁵ Japanese disinterest also traditionally stemmed from the implications multilateral participation would have on outstanding territorial issues. With its fair share of territorial disputes in the region, Japan was concerned that certain proposals for multilateralism entailed a de facto ratification of the territorial status quo which worked against Japanese interests. For this reason, Tokyo opposed Soviet proposals in 1986 for a region-wide CSCE-type grouping in Asia as this might would reinforce the status quo and Moscow's possession of the northern territories.

recent Japanese cabinet has come up with a strategy for Asia and a proactive policy for dealing with China. The problem for Japan is that historical animosity still colors much of the region's and China's interaction with Japan. The United States historically bears partial responsibility for the gap between Japan's enthusiasm for regional integration and the region's trust of it. As already alluded to, because of the U.S. decision in the early postwar period to hold Japan closely and construct in minute detail its reconstruction into America's image, Japan never had the imperative to fully reintegrate in the region.⁶ The "hub and spokes design" for Japan and other Asian allies sought by John Foster Dulles and others in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations inhibited regional interaction, the result being that Japan, despite all its efforts still remains an outcast, viewed with suspicion no less than the Chinese. And the alliance is seen as a cold war entity – an anachronism in Chinese terms – that is ill suited and indeed remains an obstacle to full regional reintegration.

American and Japanese inactivity is compounded by an underwhelming record of regional architecture initiatives in Asia. Unlike Europe, the history of architectural design has been unimpressive. There are no comparable institutions like NATO and the Warsaw Pact. States instead chose paths of security self-reliance, neutralism, or bilateralism (largely with the United States, but also with China or the Soviet Union). Attempts at constructing institutions did exist but these were largely subregional rather than region-wide (e.g., SEATO [1954], ANZUS [1951], and FPDA [1971]) and met with limited success.⁷ Efforts at a region-wide "PATO" equivalent to NATO failed

⁶ For the argument, see Victor Cha, "Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* (Winter 2009/10); and "Currents of Power: U.S. Alliances with Taiwan and Japan during the Cold War," in *The Uses of Institutions: U.S., Japan and Governance in East Asia* eds. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (NY: Palgrave, 2007), 103-29.

⁷ The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization was established at the Manila Conference of 1954 largely on the model of NATO, but failed because members found internal subversion rather than compelling external threats as their primary security concerns. The Australia-New Zealand-US Pact formed in 1951 as an extension of the US-Australia

miserably despite a compelling Cold war security environment and established venues for dialogue.⁸ While more recent institutions at official and track 2 levels have been more successful (e.g., ARF, APEC, CSCAP, NEACD, ASEM), they differ fundamentally from these predecessors, exhibiting a “softer” quality not extending beyond dialogue and transparency-building.⁹ The most advanced of these at the region-wide level is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), formed in July 1994 and meeting annually with regard to cooperative security dialogue and preventive diplomacy.¹⁰ The East Asia Summit is the newest regional innovation composed of 16 nations, first held in 2005 on an annual basis after the ASEAN leaders’ meetings, yet aside from the symbolism of a meeting of

treaty (the US-New Zealand axis dissolved in 1986). The Five Power Defense Arrangement was established in 1971 among Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. Its function was consultative based on historical legacies of the Commonwealth rather than any overt security purpose (See Leszek Buszynski, *SEATO: The Failure of an Alliance Strategy* [Singapore: Singapore Univ. Press, 1983]); Chin Kin Wah, “The Five Power Defence Arrangement: Twenty Years After,” *Pacific Review* 4.3 [1991]; and Michael Yahuda, *International Politics in the Asia-Pacific* [London: Routledge, 1996]).

⁸ For example, the Vietnam War Allies Conference met regularly in Saigon in the late-1960s, early 1970s providing a ready venue for multilateral security discussions on larger Cold War issues and strategy beyond Indochina, but nothing came of this. The Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC) was established in 1966 as a forum for cooperation among Asian states on cultural and economic issues. Members included Australia, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, South Vietnam, and Japan. Proposals in the early 1970s were floated by various countries (e.g., South Korea in 1970) to devise a new ASPAC charter based on collective self-defense with region-wide membership (including Laos, Indonesia, and Singapore), but these failed in part because of lack of support for a active Japanese leadership role in the group. For other studies of Northeast Asian regionalism focused more on economics and the Russian Far East, see Gilbert Rozman, “Flawed Regionalism: Reconceptualizing Northeast Asia in the 1990s,” *The Pacific Review* 11.1 (1998), 1-27.

⁹ Higher degrees of institutionalization exist among the original ASEAN nations including proposals for national defense manufacturer associations, C-130 flight training centers, F-16 joint training bases, etc.

¹⁰ The ARF was formed pursuant to meetings of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) in 1993.

Asian leaders to demonstrate regional coherence, the substance of this grouping still remains under question.¹¹

For these reasons, international relations and areas studies scholars have rushed to a judgment of failure in the U.S.-Japan alliance's ability to think creatively and innovatively about regional architecture and about integrating China's rise in Asia. Moreover, many experts see little hope for the future as the United States appears disinterested and distracted by wars in the Middle East and Central Asia and by domestic economic problems, while Japan remains in a state of political paralysis. To sum up the pessimist's view (which is the conventional wisdom): the United States and Japan are guilty of "old-think" in Asia: They conceive of regional relationships as exclusive and zero-sum. Their alliance operates within existing institutions in a form of pseudo-containment of China, and Washington and Tokyo prize the bilateral alliance architecture as something at odds with the region's multilateralism.

THE SECURITY DILEMMA IN ASIAN ARCHITECTURE

The situation, however, may not be as bad as many think. I believe there is a distinct architecture emerging and evolving in the region that is supported by the United States and Japan, and that is inclusive of China. Contrary to popular judgments of U.S. disinterest, the United States is neither leaving the region, nor ceding leadership to China; rather, it has every intention to remain an Asia-Pacific power. This continuing U.S. presence is grounded in a deepening and robust U.S.-Japan alliance, despite the dramatic change of government with the election of Yukio Hatoyama, and an active interest by

¹¹ The EAS members consist of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand. Russia and Timor Leste are candidate members.

both countries in building substantive and innovative regional groupings that include China as a critical player.

The conceptual problem nonetheless, is that there is a security dilemma in the region when it comes to the United States, Japan, China, and regional architecture. While I believe the overall picture that is evolving is positive as described above, the conventional pessimism derives from a set of mutually reinforcing insecurity spirals surrounding any efforts at regional architecture put forward by the great powers. That is, any U.S./Japan initiated proposals for regional organizations are perceived as an attempt to latently “contain” or “encircle” China. For example, when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe proposed the “Quadrilateral Initiative” in his summit with Indian prime minister Singh in August 2007 involving the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia, this was viewed as many as an attempt to contain China.¹² Similarly, Hatoyama’s proposals for an East Asia Community without the United States at the 2009 APEC summit in Singapore arguably could be seen as an effort to circumvent this security dilemma.¹³ And any China-supported efforts at regional institution-building are seen as attempts to exclude the United States. For example, the 1990s saw American criticisms of regional security dialogues like the East Asian Economic Caucus -- proposed explicitly or implicitly by China -- as inadequate efforts to replace the American “hub and spokes” network of bilateral alliances in Asia which had been at the center of security and prosperity for four decades.¹⁴ Washington’s early resistance gave way to a grudging acceptance of regional

¹² Brahma Chellaney, “New Great Game: The U.S.-India-Japan-Australia Quadrilateral Initiative,” *Asian Age*, June 2, 2007 at <http://chellaney.spaces.live.com/blog/cns!4913C7C8A2EA4A30!351.entry> accessed December 18, 2009; Praful Bidwai, “India/Japan: Abe's Visit Underlines New Strategic Alliance,” <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=39009>

¹³ Toru Higashioka, “Hatoyama Talks up East Asia Community,” *Asahi Shimbun*, November 16, 2009.

¹⁴ See *Australian Financial Review* 2 May 1991 (“Security, in Letter and Spirit”).

institutions on the condition that it complement (but not replace) the U.S.-based bilateral architecture.¹⁵

Non-zero sum solutions are clearly possible, in my opinion, and this security dilemma can be unwound if parties adhere to some core assumptions and beliefs about the architecture that works best in the region for the United States, Japan, and China.

Assumption 1: No single institution shall define the region

The first assumption that countries need to internalize – particularly, Washington, Tokyo, and Beijing – in thinking about regional architecture is that no single umbrella institution bests defines the region. The conventional comparison has always been made with Europe in which Asia is seen as lacking because there is no region-wide Asian equivalent of NATO. But every region has its own history and its own identity. What serves the political, security, and economic interests of one region may not be optimal in another.

Indeed there are many attributes about Asia that make it less suited to a region-wide grouping than Europe. Unlike Europe. East Asia did not consist of a contiguous ground theater opposed by 200 Soviet divisions with a clear dividing line between East and West. The Asian theater was both land and maritime; and there was no “goal line stand” in the heartland of the continent (for example, in the Soviet Far East) for which to prepare.¹⁶ Couple these geostrategic facts with the absence of true wartime allies in Asia

¹⁵ See James Baker, “America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community,” *Foreign Affairs* 70.5 (1991/92); and Baker in *New York Times* July 25, 1991; and *East Asian Strategy Review*.

¹⁶ Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East* (NY: HarperCollins, 1999), p. 26.

as existed in Western Europe during the Pacific War, the conditions for the creation of a postwar multilateral coalition were far from ideal.

Asia's bilateralism was also a function of the region's deep distrust of Japan as part of their postwar, postcolonial, nationalist identities, which trumped any arguments for re-integrating the former adversary in a region-wide coalition.¹⁷ Social historians also argue that American planners prioritized Europe over Asia after World War II, and believed that security multilateralism was a more complex form of organization requiring a level of sophistication and responsibility presumed of Europeans and assumed to be non-existent among "inferior" Asians.¹⁸ As Hemmer and Katzenstein conclude, "...trust [was] absent, religion and democratic values were shared only in a few cases, and race was invoked as a powerful force separating the United States from Asia. The U.S. preference for multilateral or bilateral security arrangements followed from these different constellations."¹⁹

¹⁷ Gerrit Gong ed., *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2001); Nicholas Kristof, "The Problem of Memory," *Foreign Affairs* 77.6 (November/December 1998), 37-49.

¹⁸ Memorandum by the Regional Planning Advisor (Ogburn), Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison), 21 January 1953. Secret. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-1954, East Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. XII, Part 1, pp. 260-62. As Bruce Cumings wrote, the idea of little yellow and brown people sharing a multilateral table as equals with ivy league-educated east coast intellectuals was beyond comprehension. See Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War, Volume II* (Princeton: Princeton, 1990), p. 93; MacArthur testified in 1951 that his rule of thumb was to treat the Japanese as twelve-year-olds. See John Dower, *War without Mercy* (NY: Pantheon, 1986), p. 303; also see David Capie, "Power, Identity, and Multilateralism: The United States and Regional Institutionalization in the Asia-Pacific," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Toronto University, May 2002; and Christopher Hemmer and Peter Katzenstein, "Why is There no NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism," *International Organization* 56.3 (Summer 2002), p. 588.

¹⁹ Hemmer and Katzenstein, "Why is There no NATO in Asia? p. 588. also Capie, "Power, Identity, and Multilateralism," p. 68.

In Asia, furthermore, the level of postwar intra-regional trade was low which would have been an important spur to greater multilateralism in the region when compared with Europe.²⁰ Low levels of economic development reduced the incentive for multilateralism because there was no incentive for states to venture outside the relationship with Washington to secure material needs. Unlike in Europe, Asian politics ranged from authoritarian to democratic, making it more difficult to organize in a multilateral fashion based on common values.²¹ Finally, Asia's threat matrix was not nearly as binary as that of Europe where a singular threat called for a collective response. In Asia, some viewed the Soviet threat as paramount (e.g., Japan), others viewed the Chinese threat as compelling (Taiwan), others viewed the Japan threat (Korea), and yet others were focused on internal threats.

The prescriptive point to be made here is not an opposition to region-wide groupings, but merely that the expectation that the "answer" to regional architecture equates with a single institution may be misplaced. Heaping such expectations on efforts, for example, like the East Asia Summit is unfair. It creates a standard that is impossible for the institution to meet given the history and diversity of the region. And it leads to false judgments regarding the failure of creating regional architecture in Asia.

Assumption 2: Adhoc institutions work better than formal ones.

The second assumption is that the history of institution-building in Asia generally shows formal institutions tend not to be very effective. Some organizational literature tells us

²⁰ Anthony McGrew and Christopher Brook, eds., *Asia-Pacific in the New World Order* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 57.

²¹ Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18.3 (Winter 1993/94), pp. 13-14.

that the creation of formal structures can create a self-reinforcing dynamic where institutional purpose and growth occur in a symbiotic manner. In Asia, however, the few attempts at formal institutions in Northeast Asia have been spectacularly unsuccessful (we define success as tangible and coordinated steps by multilateral partners that advances solutions to substantive problems). In the early 1950s, Syngman Rhee of South Korea, Chiang Kai-shek of Taiwan, and Elpidio Quirino of the Philippines put forward the concept of a PATO that failed to gain support. John Foster Dulles attempted to create a Pacific Ocean Pact conceived with Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, and Japan which also failed.²² During the Vietnam war, South Korea sought to create a multilateral grouping out of the Vietnam War allies, but this failed as well. In each case, the key similarity was the relative priority placed on the formality of the institution over the functional purpose or task at hand. And like many institution-building ventures that emphasize structure over purpose, a great deal of attention and energy becomes wasted on the criteria for membership, the rules of the organization (i.e., in what country should the secretariat be; how should the chairmanship rotate).

In Southeast Asia, there has been relatively greater success than in the northeast subregion in creating formal institutions with established secretariats, regular meetings, and packed agendas.²³ The primary criticism, however, of these institutions is that they end up being “talk shops” in which opinions are discussed, only to be rediscussed at the next meeting with no real substantive progress on resolutions. Harshest critics ridicule the “talent show” performances at the Asean Regional Forum as an example of the

²² See Cha, “Powerplay.”

²³ Amitav Archarya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2000), especially Chapter 6.

substance-less nature of the meetings in which diplomats are reduced to amateurish performances that may build some goodwill (and lasting memories), but do not advance solutions to bilateral or multilateral problems. Many criticize the newest regional initiative, the East Asia Summit, in this fashion. The first meeting of the EAS in December 2005, involving the ASEAN ten members, the ‘Plus Three’ members (China, Japan, and South Korea) and Australia, New Zealand, and India was accompanied with much fanfare. Kishore Mahbubani, the former Singaporean foreign ministry official and opinion leader, declared the meeting as marking the official start of the long-touted “Pacific Century.”²⁴ Yet, more energy was expended arguably on the criteria for membership than on substantive issues. Both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations have been cautious about their support of this new institution in part because it has shown little value-added and might detract from what Americans perceive to be the more substantive work done in APEC.²⁵

By contrast, the institutions that appear to have been more successful at taking tangible, coordinated steps to solve a substantive problem are ones formed on an *ad hoc* basis for a functional purpose. In December 2004, for example, when the worst tsunami in recent history killed over 300,000 people in South and Southeast Asia there was no formal regional or multilateral institution available to conduct tsunami disaster response and relief operations. Once the scale of the disaster became apparent (initial reports from the most devastated areas in remote Banda Aceh, Indonesia and other locations were delayed), international actors scrambled to find an appropriate response. None of the

²⁴ “Rising Unity in East Test for Global Trade,” *New Zealand Herald*, November 19, 2005 cited in Bruce Vaughn, “East Asia Summit (EAS): Issues for Congress,” (Congressional Research Service: January 11, 2006), p. 4.

²⁵ Vaughn, “East Asia Summit (EAS): Issues for Congress,” p. 4.

existing institutions, however, like the ASEAN Regional Forum or APEC were capable of responding to the devastation in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India.

Instead, a makeshift coalition of willing countries formed – that became known as the Tsunami Core Group – consisting of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India within the initial 48 hours of the crisis to set up disaster response infrastructure and to bring an unimaginable amount of relief supplies and assets to the area. The coalition countries together provided more than 40,000 troops and humanitarian first responders, helicopters, cargo ships, and transport planes -- within a nine-day period. The Core Group set up the basing arrangements, provided financial resources, military assets and personnel, and constituted the core of the global response to the problem until other international relief agencies could mobilize and get on the ground.²⁶ If institutions are defined by their capability to address a problem successfully, then the Core Group met that mark. However, if the success of Asian institutions is judged superficially by how long its extant structures remain in place, its procedures and rules, and how many joint statements it issues, then the Core Group was not successful. The consultation “procedures” of the Core Group was distinct from other multilateral institutions in its sparseness and functionality. Consultation consisted initially of phone calls between the U.S. president and the leaders in Tokyo, Canberra, and New Delhi, and then daily conference call at 22:00 (EST) and emails at the deputy foreign minister levels. As one

²⁶ Daniel Twining, “America’s Grand Design in Asia,” *Washington Quarterly* 30. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 79-94; and Ralph Cossa, “South Asian Tsunami: U.S. Military Provides Logistical Backbone for Relief Operation,” *Ejournal USA: Foreign Policy Agenda* (March 4, 2005) <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2005/March/20050304112100dmslahrellek0.5331537.html#ixzz0a5F8S6oo> December 18, 2009.

State Department official recounted, the calls were limited to 40 minutes in duration, and there were never more than three items on the agenda.²⁷ There were no grand meetings or “G-4” type formal gatherings. The only adjustment to this “procedure” was the eventual inclusion of Jan Egelund, UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, in the daily calls as the Core Group sought to coordinate its efforts in preparation for the U.N.’s arrival on the scene. Moreover, as soon as its mission was accomplished, the Tsunami Core Group disbanded itself deferring to international disaster response effort. U.S. Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman put it best: “The Tsunami Core Group was an organization that never met in once of diplomacy’s storied cities, never issued a communiqué, never created a secretariat, and took as one of its successes its own demise.”²⁸

The absence of a multilateral institution for Northeast Asia is perhaps the most striking aspect of its security architecture when compared with other regions of the world. While multilateral institutions of some form took root at the beginning of the Cold War in Southeast Asia, Europe, and even the South Pacific (ANZUS), nothing of a similar type formed in Northeast Asia.²⁹ The one institution that has evolved, however, was formed initially in an adhoc fashion. In 2003, shortly after revelations surfaced that North Korea was in violation of a 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework denuclearization agreement with the United States, the five powers in the region agreed to come together in a multilateral negotiation with the North to solve the nuclear problem. The Six Party talks were never

²⁷ “Bush Announces Tsunami Aid Coalition,” CNN.com <http://www.cnn.com/2004/US/12/29/bush.quake/index.html> accessed December 30, 2009.

²⁸ Marc Grossman, “The Tsunami Core Group: A Step toward a Transformed Diplomacy in Asia and Beyond,” *Security Challenges*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2005), p. 11.

²⁹ See Cha, “Powerplay” op cit.

conceived as a formal security institution for Northeast Asia, but were an adhoc reaction to the second North Korean nuclear crisis. The organization continued for some six years thereafter, albeit haltingly at times. The organization reached some interim agreements on denuclearization, and in the process created habits of consultation, greater familiarity, and interaction among the five parties (U.S., Japan, ROK, Russia, and China). Moreover, by putting China in the chair of the Six Party talks, this created greater Chinese stakes in solving the problem because it put Chinese face on the line. The 2005 Six Party Joint Statement holds out the vision, if the talks ever lead to denuclearization of North Korea, for transforming the Six Party talks into a formal institution for Northeast Asian Peace and Security.³⁰

The experiences of the Tsunami Core Group and the Six Party talks are significant for institution building in Asia. One of the primary impediments to institution-building in Northeast Asia is a collective action problem. That is, states generally harbor relative stronger inclinations to secure private goods from any multilateral efforts rather than to provide public goods. Naturally, this makes it harder to incentivize states to invest in formal institutions without a specific near-term payoff. Adhoc groupings in response to an immediate problem help to solve the collective action problem. First, those players with a proximate interest in the issue will step forward (thereby solving the membership problem). Second, the task-oriented nature of the grouping leaves no time for long drawn out procedural discussions, rule making, and

³⁰ For the Joint Statement, see <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm> (accessed 31 August 2009).

other material and opportunity costs associated with formal institution-building.³¹

Function is more important than form and process. Parties are forced to work together, on the spur of the moment, yet the urgency of the task creates efficient coordination and effective solutions. As Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman, who was a critical player in the tsunami response, noted, “[the Core Group] was an adhoc coalition that ignored traditional groupings. We pulled these specific countries together simply because they were the ones with the resources and the desire to act effectively and quickly.”³² Third, through this adhoc coordination, the parties developed habits of consultation, greater transparency, and a degree of familiarity and trust.

Fourth, these adhoc institutions can serve “institutional growth” purposes as well. In the case of the Tsunami Core Group, even though the institution disbanded after the crisis, the experience spawned the growth of other related institutions in Asia including the regional tsunami early warning system (US-Japan); the trilateral strategic dialogue (TSD) involving the United States, Japan, and Australia; and the proposal for a quadrilateral (U.S.-Japan-Australia-India) based on the original Core Group concept.³³ In the case of Six Party talks, while the grouping has not solved the North Korean nuclear

³¹ In the case of the Six Party talks, the costs associated with the grouping were eventually borne by China as the host, which at one point, Beijing disdained and requested the such costs be more evenly divided among the six parties.

³² Grossman, “The Tsunami Core Group: A Step toward a Transformed Diplomacy,” p. 12.

³³ The TSD was not a direct result of the Core Group experience, but was a core element of the TSD agenda (to carry on the cooperation experienced among the three). See William Tow, “Assessing the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue,” East Asia Forum, 12 February 2009 <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/02/12/assessing-the-trilateral-strategic-dialogue/> (accessed 30 August 2009). The Quad concept was pushed by the Abe government in Japan. See Brahma Chellaney, “Quad Initiative: An Inharmonious Concert of Democracies,” Japan Times, 19 July 2007 <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/eo20070719bc.html> accessed 30 August 2009.

problem, the regularized sessions, sometimes lasting over two weeks at a time, provided the parties other opportunities to use the institution to accomplish other business. In the course of the talks, two parties might hold side discussions on preparing for an upcoming bilateral summit; or in the case of the United States during the Bush administration, the Six Party venue became a useful place to hold additional discussions about creating a new grouping to address climate change (the Asia Pacific Partnership for Climate and Clean Development).³⁴ In addition, as part of the effort to explain Six Party diplomacy to other countries in the region, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice created another adhoc “add-on” institution of the “Five Plus Five” – that is, the five of the Six Party countries (without North Korea) plus Indonesia, Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand. These meetings took place at the ASEAN regional forum or at UN General Assembly. Again, a purely functional group in nature with no larger grand designs, but adhoc a very effective institution.³⁵

Assumption 3: Bilateral and multilateral institutions are mutually reinforcing

The third concept critical to overcoming the security dilemma concerns the place of U.S. alliances in the region. The postwar “hub and spokes” system of bilateral alliances created by the United States in East Asia was, for some five decades, the only true “architecture” in the region that was successful. It provided private goods to alliance

³⁴ The AP-6 (U.S., Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia) was officially inaugurated in January 2006 in Sydney, Australia, but key discussions on concept and membership occurred on the sidelines of the Six Party talks. See “US Agrees Climate Deal with Asia,” BBC News, 28 July 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/4723305.stm> (accessed 30 August 2009).

³⁵ “Asia, US hold talks without Defiant North Korea,” Agence France Presse 28 July 2006 available at <http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/News/tabid/59/newsid399/36/Default.aspx> (accessed 31 August 2009).

partners, and the aggregation of these individual alliances provided public goods to the region. The growth of other regional initiatives led many to view a potential contradiction. Americans viewed regional initiatives like Mahathir's EAEC as deliberately intended to undermine the alliance network. Others blamed the inability to form effective "truly Asian" regional institutions directly on the American alliance system. Thus, a zero-sum algorithm was created. U.S. bilateral alliances operated at odds with multilateral institutions in Asia. China made this clear when it once referred to the bilateral alliance system as "Cold War anachronisms" that no longer fit with the region's architectural needs.

Closer analysis of the region's recent successes, however, suggest that the U.S.-based bilateral alliance structure (or other bilateral alliance relationships) in Asia and the emergent multilateral groupings are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the relationship is far from zero-sum. In fact, it is positive-sum in the sense that effective and successful multilateral efforts have often been built upon pre-existing bilateral relationships. Conceptually, this would appear to make sense. Any collective effort to address a problem or advance a policy agenda among several players may work best when the players already have pre-existing patterns of cooperation, consultation, and a degree of trust. In the case of bilateral relationships, whether this is in the form of the U.S.-Japan alliance or ROK-China relations, the history of transparency, working together, and joint capabilities can become very useful, if not indispensable, assets for any collective effort.

Again, we are drawn back to the prominent cases of the 2004 tsunami and the Six Party talks, as well as recent multilateral counterproliferation initiatives. The tsunami

case is already being remembered as a classic example of how multilateralism and bilateralism are tightly intertwined. The coalition countries, U.S., Japan, India, and Australia together provided more than 40,000 personnel in a little over nine days. Over 4,000 Indian first-responders arrived in Sri Lanka. The U.S. supplied over 12,600 personnel, 21 ships, the U.S.S. Mercy hospital ship (with 1000 beds), 14 cargo planes and more than 90 helicopters to bring relief supplies to the most inaccessible damaged areas in Indonesia. Australia and Japan provided over 1000 personnel, medical teams, and other material and financial assistance.³⁶ By any stretch of the imagination, this was a herculean effort completed at unimaginable speed. A multilateral, regional effort of this magnitude could not have been conceivable if it had not been built upon the existing bilateral relationships shared among the Core Group members. Many of the U.S. ships diverted to the area to help were moved out of U.S. bases in Japan, for example. The need for logistics support from Singapore and Thailand in order to move relief supplies into hardest hit and inaccessible areas in northwest Indonesia could not have happened at the speed it did without pre-existing channels of bilateral communication between Washington and these countries. Australia's immediate action and willingness to jump into the fray was in part due to the close bilateral relations between the Bush and Howard governments. The Core Group showed how a successful multilateral "institution" in Asia effectively grew out of the existing network of bilateral U.S. alliances and other bilateral relationships in the region. Though counterfactuals are difficult to prove, it

³⁶ Grossman, "The Tsunami Core Group: A Step toward a Transformed Diplomacy in Asia and Beyond," and Cossa, "South Asian Tsunami: U.S. Military Provides Logistical Backbone for Relief Operation."

would have been hard to imagine a similar level of cooperation among countries without such ties.

In the case of the Six Party talks, although built as an adhoc coalition to deal with the North Korean nuclear crisis, Obama administration officials informally have already recognized it as the first and only multilateral institution comprising the five major powers of East Asia (U.S., Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia). The success of the institution in terms of denuclearizing North Korea has been far from complete given Pyongyang's intransigence, but few observers would deny its utility as a negotiation process that has worked tirelessly over the past seven years and thus created new habits of consultation and transparency among the parties involved. The success of this institution derived from the strong bilateral relationships that constituted the multilateral body. The United States, in the initial thinking to form the group, relied on its alliances with Seoul and with Tokyo, as well as trilateral coordination to be an important spur for cooperation within the group. Both Seoul and Tokyo saw the Six Party talks as a way to improve and grow their bilateral relations with Beijing. And President Bush was fond of challenging his Chinese counterpart to view success in the Six Party process as an important test of the strength of U.S.-China relations. Similarly, another new grouping, the trilateral strategic dialogue or TSD, involving Japan, Australia, and the United States constitutes another useful new multilateral institution dedicated to dealing with a wide range of items including climate change, counterterrorism, counterproliferation, UN reform, and disaster relief.³⁷ As a participant in some of the first meetings of the TSD, I

³⁷ For a good study of the TSD, see "Assessing the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue," National Bureau of Asian Research, Special report #16, December 2008

was personally impressed by the degree to which the bilateral agendas of the three countries truly comprised the multilateral tasks and action plan of the TSD. By way of comparison, other multilateral groupings that are not grounded in tight bilateral relationships such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have been far less active or successful.

Recently, there have been several other noteworthy examples of multilateral institutions that are based on core bilateral relationships. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and Container Security Initiative deserve mention. Created in May 2003, PSI is now an international coalition of more than 90 countries dedicated to stop trafficking of weapons of mass destruction and related delivery systems and materials to terrorists and to countries of proliferation concern. PSI is a functionally-based institution that relies on voluntary actions by member states to use their existing national and international authorities in joint cooperation to stop interdict illicit movement of WMD by sea, air, or land. Member states endorse a set of principles to stop illicit WMD transfers.³⁸ By most accounts, this has been a successful multilateral effort.³⁹ There have

<http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/SR16.pdf> Accessed December 31, 2009

³⁸ The principles call on PSI participants, as well as other countries, to not engage in WMD-related trade with countries of proliferation concern and to permit their own vessels and aircraft to be searched if suspected of transporting such goods. The principles further urge that information on suspicious activities be shared quickly to enable possible interdictions and that all vessels "reasonably suspected" of carrying dangerous cargo be inspected when passing through national airports, ports, and other transshipment points. <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c10390.htm>

³⁹ China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Iran oppose PSI, disputing the legality of its efforts.

been over 37 interdiction exercises involving PSI countries.⁴⁰ Although specifics have not been publicly released, U.S. officials have asserted that there have been about two dozen cases of successful PSI cooperation to prevent WMD transfer. And Ulrik Federspiel, Denmark's ambassador to the United States, asserted at a May 2005 event that "the shipment of missiles has fallen significantly in the lifetime of PSI."⁴¹ President Obama in his April 2009 Prague speech declared his intention to strengthen and expand PSI.⁴² The effectiveness of this multilateral institution, however, rested on strong bilateral relationships. Though the U.S.-led PSI eventually grew to 95 countries, its core and initial formation rested on eleven countries, all of whom had already close bilateral relations with the United States (Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom). This initial group because of their pre-existing ties and common nonproliferation agenda, speedily devised a set of core principles in September 2003. Some of the early flagship exercises that cemented PSI as a real entity were hosted by countries with which the United States

⁴⁰ Opening Remarks by Acting, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tony Foley at the PSI Regional Operational Experts Group Meeting, June 22, 2009, Sopot, Poland, p.5 http://dtirp.dtra.mil/TIC/treatyinfo/psi/psi_remarks.pdf accessed December 30, 2009.

⁴¹ U.S. officials also point to an October 2003 operation to seize centrifuge components aboard the German-owned *BBC China* destined for Libya as a successful PSI operation. U.S. official cited was then-undersecretary of State Robert Joseph, cited in Arms Control Association Fact Sheet, "Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) at a Glance," <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/PSI> accessed December 30, 2009 and Wade Boese, "Interdiction Initiatives Successes Assessed," *Arms Control Today* (July/August 2008), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_07-08/Interdiction accessed December 30, 2009. For other cited successes, see Opening Remarks by Acting, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tony Foley at the PSI Regional Operational Experts Group Meeting, p. 7.

⁴²"Remarks by President Barack Obama," Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, 2009 http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/ accessed December 30, 2009.

already had strong bilateral security relationships: Poland, Singapore, and Australia. These countries also played key roles in PSI's growth, chairing sub groups like the Operational Experts Group and other PSI outreach activities.

In addition, bilateralism was critical to PSI's success through the countries it excluded. One of the chief architects of PSI, then-Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton, stated in November 2003 shortly after President Bush's announcement of PSI that the new multilateral grouping would not target the trade of India, Israel or Pakistan. Again, such arrangements could not have been agreed upon with such alacrity absent pre-existing bilateral ties among the core countries in the multilateral effort.

Finally, consistent with the principles of functionalism and informality, PSI is meant to be adhoc and informal. There is no secretariat or formal organization that serves as a coordinating body. Information about potentially dangerous WMD transfers are to be shared on an adhoc basis and with appropriate parties to ensure effective counterproliferation successes. U.S. officials in fact have discouraged talking about PSI as an organization but rather as a series of common practices among like minded states regardless of political orientations.

The Container Security Initiative (CSI) offers a similar example of the positive sum relationship between multilateralism and bilateralism. The CSI was created in 2002, led by the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Inspection. Its purpose was to create mechanisms for screening container cargo from use by terrorists to clandestinely transport WMD.⁴³

⁴³ Container cargo accounts for almost 90 percent of world trade. In the U.S. some eleven million containers are offloaded at U.S. ports annually, while U.S. Customs and Border Protection processed on average some 20 million containers entering the U.S. by sea, rail,

Methods include use of tamper-proof devices to prevent container exploitation, sharing of intelligence, pre-screening procedures, and the use of detection technologies (e.g., gamma ray imaging). CSI has become a widely successful multilateral cooperation initiative where 58 ports worldwide are part of the program. The initiative has created a new global standard for securing cargo with WMD and terrorist threats. This multilateral initiative, however, drew its strength from cooperation with about 20 core ports in countries, most of which already had a pre-existing bilateral relationship with the United States, including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Israel, Belgium, Germany, Canada, UK, and the Netherlands.

Feedback effect

The positive sum relationships between bilateralism and multilateralism are not unidirectional. Just as bilateralism can fuel and facilitate multilateral efforts. These regional practices can feed back and reinforce existing bilateral relationships or create new ones. In the case of the Tsunami Core Group, not only were the pre-existing bilateral ties critical to the success of the multilateral effort, but the Core Group's work fed back and contributed to an improvement, indeed rejuvenation, of key bilateral relationships between the United States and India, as well as the United States and Indonesia. In the case of the TSD, as noted above, the new multilateral grouping drew its strength from U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Australia bilateral ties, but the added feedback effect was a strengthening of bilateral ties between Australia and Japan. This process

and truck. See Container Security Initiative 2006-2001 Strategic Plan (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, n.d.)
http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/trade/cargo_security/csi/csi_strategic_plan.ctt/csi_strategic_plan.pdf accessed December 30, 2009.

eventually led to the first bilateral security declaration between Tokyo and Canberra in March 2007.⁴⁴ Howard government and then later Rudd government officials also valued the TSD as a way of engaging the United States and reinforcing their bilateral ties, which some felt were being neglected by Washington.

THE NEW ARCHITECTURE OF ASIA

If we accept the three assumptions laid out in this paper – 1) no single institution defines the region’s architecture; 2) effective regional institutions can be informal and adhoc; and 3) positive sum relationships exist between bilateralism and multilateralism – then the vision of architecture in Asia is a more complex and fluid one than that of a single “PATO” or East Asia Summit. Instead, the emerging architecture is constituted of a series of bilateral and plurilateral groupings organized on a functional basis to solve a problem. Some of these groupings stay together and take on a more formal institutional structure, but others don’t. Some last after the problem is solved as they may conduct additional business within the group, but others do not. The model for this sort of “regional community” is not civilizational, where a particular “Asia-ness” defines the group (e.g., Hatoyama’s East Asia Community concept), nor is it postwar western Europe. Instead it is more akin to a business model – where coalitions form among entities with the most direct interests to solve a problem. Entities participate because they seek to secure private goods (i.e., either profits or avoidance of losses), but the aggregation of their atomistic efforts precipitate collective benefits for the region

⁴⁴ For the text, see <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0703.html>

(market). The membership in these coalitions, moreover, is not defined by political ideology, but by functional need. And they are more often than not overlapping and interlinked in terms of the memberships. The United States, Japan, and Australia, for example, may discuss UN reform in the TSD, but Japan, China, and Korea will discuss currency swaps in the ASEAN plus-three forum. And the U.S., Japan, China will discuss counterproliferation in the context of the Six Party talks. What emerges is not a hub and spokes conception, nor an East Asian Community, but “networks and patchworks” of differently configured and overlapping bilaterals, trilaterals, quadrilaterals and other multilateral groupings that stitched together define the regional architecture.

Complexity Mutes Security Dilemmas

Some may argue that the geometry of regional groupings I describe for Asia is too complex a vision for regional architecture because it has no core, no metrics for coherence, and no single superstructure. The common view is that complexity is suboptimal for multilateral institutions because it increases the chances for misperception and miscommunication; it increases transaction costs; and it decreases efficiency.

But complexity is actually a critical component of architecture for Asia. Given the underlying historical animosities, the diversity of regime types, and the shifting balance of power, complexity offers distinct benefits. Conceptually, it creates opportunities, and it does not constrict space for formation of bilaterals and multilaterals. Materially, it helps to mute the core security dilemma of U.S.-Japan versus China visions of the region. Complexity allows the three great powers of Asia to operate in multiple groupings, sometimes with each other, and sometimes exclusively, which helps to circumvent zero-

sum competition. A quadrilateral among the U.S.-Japan-Australia-India, as proposed by then-Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe in 2006, for example, might incite insecurities in China, if it were the only regional grouping available, but Beijing would be engaged with Japan in the context of the ASEAN plus-three, with the U.S. and Japan in the context of a U.S.-Japan-China trilateral, and with India in the context of the EAS. South Korean insecurities sparked by a U.S.-Japan-China trilateral might be ameliorated by its own participation in the Plus-Three with China and Japan, and the traditional U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral alliance consultations. The point here is not that insecurities disappear merely with membership in these various groupings, but the complexity and density of these many groupings greatly reduces anxieties associated with exclusion.⁴⁵

In sum, complexity and functionality help to mute security dilemmas. If groupings form that do not include a given party, the rationale for exclusion is functional rather than ideological. Moreover because the excluded party knows that the given grouping is not the only game in town, it knows there are many other opportunities for regional engagement. Finally, functionality as a criteria for the groupings pretty much ensures that the major powers (i.e., U.S., Japan, China) will be included in most of the “heavy-lift” regional efforts, also helping to reduce security dilemmas.

U.S.-Japan-China and the Geometry of Asia

The emerging “patchwork” architecture for Asia carries several important empirical implications. First, the American bilateral alliance system, while certainly not wholly

⁴⁵ In this context, the most potentially troublesome groupings may be ones of larger than three members that excludes China. From a policy prescription perspective, it might be best to avoid these. Or, ensure that there are comparable groupings in which China can play in order to mute security dilemmas.

constitutive of the architecture, still plays a very important role. Many of the plurilateral groupings in Asia “spin off” of the bilateral alliances (i.e. trilaterals constituted of two bilateral alliances) and some of the larger groupings (e.g., Core Group, Six Party talks) are grounded in key U.S. alliances. Far from being “cold war dinosaurs,” U.S. alliances remain a critical component of Asia’s future architecture.

Second, good relations among the three major powers of East Asia is an important condition for the architecture to thrive. This may seem like an obvious point. But it is one that has often been missed in scholarly discussions of the region. The variable of U.S.-Japan-China relations was, for example, largely assumed to be a non-factor in determining outcomes in post-cold war East Asia in the sense that most scholars simply assumed conflict within this triangle. Realists assumed this for reasons of power imbalances and a rising China. Others assumed that for reasons of historical animosity, particularly between Japan and China, that the future of East Asia was “ripe for rivalry.”⁴⁶ Yet all of these predictions about East Asian conflict were proved wrong precisely because there has been much greater cooperation in the U.S.-Japan-China axis than any had thought possible.⁴⁷

How stable a part of the regional architecture will this triangle remain? The U.S.-Japan axis still remains unusually stable. Despite all the naysayers, the alliance between

⁴⁶ Aaron Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3. (Winter, 1993-1994), pp. 5-33; Richard K. Betts, “Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War,” *International Security* 18, 3 (Winter 1993/4); Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (NY: HarperCollins, 1999); and Kent Calder, *Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia* (NY: Morrow, 1996).

⁴⁷ Victor Cha, “Winning Asia: Washington’s Untold Success Story,” *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007).

Washington and Tokyo remained remarkably strong despite the end of the cold war. A series of self-evaluations in the form of the Armitage-Nye initiative of 1995 and then in the form of the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) reduced anxieties on both sides of the Pacific as to whether the alliance could function in a wartime contingency as well as served to reduce corrosive civil-military tensions stemming from the large U.S. military footprint.⁴⁸ The alliance also expanded in scope, particularly during the Koizumi years to take on broader global responsibilities including Self Defense Forces in Iraq and in Afghanistan over recent years has expanded in scope.

The election of the Hatoyama government in 2009, ending nearly five decades of almost uninterrupted conservative Liberal Democratic Party rule, potentially adds a new variable to the picture. Hatoyama has sought to remove Japan from its perceived over dependence on the United States, evident in the prime minister's delay of the DPRI agreement and the removal of MSDF naval vessels from support for the war in Afghanistan, among other actions. Furthermore Hatoyama has offered proposals for an East Asian architecture without the United States (which arguably could be perceived as his own effort to mute security dilemmas in Asia – in the sense that a Japan-only proposal for an East Asian community inclusive of China might be interpreted by Beijing more

⁴⁸ Joseph Nye, "Strategy for East Asia and the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance," *Defense Issues* 10, no.35:1-4 1995; Institute for National Strategic Studies, "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," October 2000 (National Defense University)

favorably than a U.S.-Japan sponsored one). The meaning of Hatoyama's election for the alliance remains unclear. But it is unlikely to lead to dramatic changes in the U.S.-Japan alliance that would destabilize the triangle. Hatoyama's strategic ambitions appear aimed at enhancing Japan's regional and global role supplementary to, not in lieu of, his relations with the United States.⁴⁹ Moreover, his proposals for an East Asian community devoid of the United States has not been well-received in Asia, including notably, the Chinese.⁵⁰

Relations between the United States and China also appear relatively stable. Sino-American ties over recent years have been much better than predictions made at the end of the cold war. Successive U.S. administrations have adopted, albeit in different packaging, the basic strategy associated with Robert Zoellick's concept of "strategic stakeholder." Put forward in 2005 when he was Deputy Secretary of State, the concept basically calls for China to contribute more to the public goods of the international system as it grows in power.⁵¹ This strategic template, not one of containment (or other such tortured terms as "conengagement – containment and engagement), has been the single most successful model for U.S.-China relations. The Chinese like it because it is the first American grand strategy for Asia that acknowledges China's place at the table as a great power. Moreover, the concept implicitly accepts that China's rise – even as a non-

⁴⁹ During the campaign, his view of a more diversified foreign policy outlook for Japan had to be couched in more exclusionary tones vis a vis the United States as Hatoyama sought to portray the LDP as too U.S.-centered.

⁵⁰ Michael Green, "Japan's Confused Revolution," *Washington Quarterly* (January 2010), p. 12.

⁵¹ Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility? Remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations," September 21, 2005, http://www.ncuscr.org/files/2005Gala_RobertZoellick_Whither_China1.pdf accessed January 4, 2010

democratic great power – is not necessarily a zero-sum game if China channels its expanded capabilities in the direction of supporting rather than overturning the existing system.⁵²

Finally, Sino-Japanese relations have been remarkably stable, again contrary to predictions at the end of the cold war. Despite power imbalances associated with a rising China and a hotbed historical-emotional tensions, Tokyo and Beijing remain tied together through increasingly higher levels of trade, investment, and tourism. During Koizumi's prime ministership, for example, tensions mounted over his trips to Yasukuni shrine, which resulted in China's boycott of summit diplomacy with Japan for a couple of years. However, even during this period, economic ties remained strong (bilateral trade in 2006 was over \$200 billion), and his successor Abe Shinzo – more conservative than Koizumi – repaired relations by avoiding such irritants in relations.⁵³ Beijing and Tokyo have become acutely aware of their need for one another. Japan needs the Chinese economy to grow out of its perennial recession. China needs Japan's technology and expertise to address its climate change and clean energy needs. Hatoyama's Democratic Party, which

⁵² The turn in Taiwan domestic politics away from the DPP and to the KMT have undeniably contributed to the reduction in tensions as well.

⁵³ Wenran Jiang, "New Dynamics of Sino-Japanese Relations," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2007, pp. 15-41; Raviprasad Narayanan, "Sino-Japanese Relations and the 'Wen Jiabao effect'" Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, *ISDA Comment*, April 20, 2007, http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/SinoJapaneseRelationsandtheWenJiabaoeffect_RNarayanan_200407 accessed January 4, 2010; Rizwan Ghani, Strategic Implications of Growing Sino-Japan Relations, December 06, 2007, *American Chronicle*, <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/45019> Bruce Wallace and Mark Magnier, "China, Japan patching up diplomacy Mutual economic ties have grown during years of tense relations, so leaders decide to put on a better face," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 2007, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/feb/17/world/fg-chijapan17> accessed January 4, 2010.

tends to hold more progressive views on historical reconciliation than the conservative LDP, portends continued improvements of ties on the Sino-Japan axis.⁵⁴ The new government signaled this early in December 2009 when DPJ kingmaker Ichiro Ozawa took 140 politicians to Beijing for a goodwill tour, and Hu Jintao took individual portraits with every single one of them.

The geometry of Asia's architecture does not get constructed out of one umbrella institution like EAS, nor does it remain wedded solely to the hub and spokes alliance system of the United States. Instead it is a complex collection of different shapes -- triangles, quadrilaterals, hexagons that are all functional in nature, adhoc, and overlapping. While each of these shapes is important in its own right, the one triangle that is critical to a functioning architecture is the U.S.-Japan-China triangle. Whether this trilateral sits as part of larger groupings or different axes of the triangle participate in other regional groupings, the architecture benefits from stable relations within it.

Final thoughts

Future problems in the U.S.-Japan-China triangle could certainly throw a wrench into Asian architecture. But a more proximate concern these days is the global financial crisis. The crisis itself does not impede architecture. Indeed, it could spur the creation of other regional groupings. The agreement signed by the ASEAN plus-three members, China, Japan, and South Korea in December 2009 to launch a \$120 billion multilateral currency swap arrangement is an illustration of this.⁵⁵ The broader concern, however, is

⁵⁴ Green, "Japan's Confused Revolution," p. 12.

⁵⁵ Kanga Kong, "Asia to Launch Currency Swap Facility in March," *Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 2009.

growing trade protectionist sentiment. If states address financial recovery by turning inward, viewing free trade as the source of problems rather than for growth and recovery, this will have a deleterious effect. This is largely because one of the key collective goods for the region in free trade will not be provided for. It would be hard for any architecture to operate well in such an environment.