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Hun Joo PARK

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Paradigms and Fallacies: Rethinking Northeast Asian Security

Hun Joo Park

KDI School of Public Policy and Management, 207-43 Chongnyangri-Dong, Dongdaemun-Gu Seoul 130-868 Korea phone: 82-2-3299-1028

fax: 82-2-3299-1240

 $e\hbox{-mail: hjpark@kdischool.ac.kr}$

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Abstract

This paper examines the changing characteristics of the fundamentally distrustful, conflict-ridden, and power and interest-centric international politics in Northeast Asia and their implications for the region's stability especially in the post-Cold War era. No doubt that the power and interest-centric realist paradigm maintains its explanatory dominance in capturing the lack of reconciliation or institutionalization of regional cooperation both in postwar and post-Cold War Northeast Asia. When it comes to prescribing for the lack of institutionalized multilateralism or security cooperation, however, the analytic power of realist perspective becomes "sterile." It is so because realists assume the values, preferences and goals of the units or nation states as largely fixed or determined by the anarchical international system. Such a realist paradigm has frequently led to a self-fulfilling prophecy: as if inevitably pressured by the system, states end up pursuing their narrow and myopic national interests, further exasperating security dilemma. The paper argues that to help prevent the security dilemma from spiraling into a slippery and perilous path of arms competition in Northeast Asia requires the concerned states and their policymakers to switch their realist assumptions, redefine their self-interests, and adopt an international society framework which builds on reality.

I. Introduction

How to construct a more cooperative world under anarchy has been a perennial, if tantalizing, question in international politics. Noting on the sheer difficulty of expecting cooperative behavior under the government-less conditions of the international system, in fact, such realists as Hobbes portrays the state of anarchic nature as a state of war, in which the life of man remains "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes 1987[1651], 65). Other realists such as Morgenthau (1967) and Waltz (1959; 1979) may not be as pessimistic as Hobbes about the outcome of the state of anarchy, but they share in common the underlying assumptions of a Hobbesian world of power, interest, and rational egoism. In particular, Waltz defines the structure as consisting of three components: the ordering principle (anarchy), the functional differentiation of units, and the distribution of capabilities (Waltz 1979, 82). And because of the realist assumptions that the units or states are survival-seeking egoists in the anarchic, self-help system, the functional differentiation becomes insignificant in his structural explanation of international politics. Hence, Waltz infers the expected behavior of states from their placement in the power-centric system. However, realists' disinterest in the unit attributes or internal characteristics of states can lead to a seriously flawed and even harmful security thinking and practice.

In rethinking the problems and prospects of Northeast Asian security, which has been the subject of increasing scholarly attention since the end of the Cold War, this paper stresses the danger that comes from such blanket disinterest in the ideas, identity, and values of the units or states. In fact, non-problematizing the unit-level identity and choice or assuming them away has frequently led to a self-fulfilling prophecy: as if inevitably pressured by the system, states end up pursuing their narrow and myopic national interests. In post-Cold War Northeast Asia, in particular, the increasing unilateralism of United States foreign policy and the increasingly emboldened Japanese military and the country's often extremely nationalistic, right-wing elite being sucked into America's global strategic posturing are such cases in point. If state behaviors are indeed structurally pre-determined, particularly acute and serious would be the security dilemma problem among the Northeast Asian states, as each state's defensive as well as offensive capabilities feed and intensify security-heightening competition and possibly

¹ The ruler-less conditions impel self-protective behavior of the fearful and hostile man, which in turn generates the problem of vulnerability for everyone.

II. Two Images of the Post-Cold War Northeast Asian Security

Two images of the post-Cold War security in Northeast Asia have competed for scholarly attention. The dominant image was provided by Friedberg's (1993/1994) prediction that Asia was "ripe for rivalry." The prediction remained influential especially in Northeast Asia in part because the region continued to suffer from multiple sources of national mistrust, resentments and conflicts including historical animosities and lack of multilateral security cooperation. In contrast to Europe, where with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of its troops from Eastern Europe a new wave of larger European cooperation and integration began, the Northeast Asian region remains fraught with virulent nationalist sentiments, political and military rivalries, and emotionally-charged territorial disputes.

Noting that none of the pessimistic predictions about Asia's future has come to pass in the post-Cold War era, on the other hand, such optimists as Kang (2003) and Acharya (2003/2004) argue that Europe's or Asia's own unstable past would not become Asia's future. As the optimists note, Japan has as yet to go down the path of full-scale military rearmament; the level of Chinese irredentism or its military adventurism is not any higher than prior to the end of the Cold War; nor is the degree of danger from North Korean terrorism or its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, not to mention its implosion.

In particular Kang predicts far more stability in the region as a result of more bandwagoning with China. Kang thinly argues or mistakenly assumes that Asia's past China-centered hierarchical order was peaceful or consensual, and that the countries in the region would gladly and naturally subscribe to such a Chinese hegemony in the 21st century. As Acharya (2003/2004, 157) points out, however, historical records do not lend any undisputable support for the hypothesis about the supposedly consensual and peace-prone nature of Chinese hegemony-based regional hierarchy of the past. In effect, misleading and dangerous is Kang's faith in the legitimacy and peacefulness of such an order of the future. A politically unstable China or its disintegration may well be a nightmare, but if one assumes that China successfully attains this rather Herculean feat of continued economic development that would befit its regional hegemonic claim, a cohesive and hegemonic China would be of no less threat. While China meticulously publicizes its "peaceful rise," the neighboring countries remain more wary

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² For a recent, nice definition and discussion of the security dilemma as applied to the region, see Christensen (2003).

and fearful of China's rise. Clearly, an economically-engaged and prosperous China would contribute to building a more cooperative regional order in Northeast Asia, but whether a powerful and hegemonic China would be peace and stability-driven is an open question. Simply put, there is no evidence that can convincingly suggest that Chinese economic and military powers are any less fungible than those of any other countries, as realists would quickly point out.

Such realist insight would also put into question Acharya's justification or theoretical foundation for his own optimism with respect to the future stability of Asian regional order. Archarya argues that Asia's increasing economic interdependence and Westphalian norms of state sovereignty, equality and non-interference have become institutionalized within regional diplomatic and security practice and thus would continue to contribute to the region's peace and prosperity in the future. However, this paper finds that the realist paradigm provides a clearer understanding of the past and present regional order. Contrary to the expectations of the neo-liberal institutionalist economic interdependence paradigm (Deutsch et al. 1957; Haas 1964; Keohane et al. 1977), the region's increasing economic interaction and interdependence hardly spilled over into security cooperation.

What has kept the postwar Northeast Asian peace together to this day has been American hegemony-based hub-and-spokes system of bilateral arrangements, which has been fundamentally driven by respective national interests defined in terms of power (Dittmer 2002). Such an American hegemony-based, realist approach towards Northeast Asia coincided with Japan's Yoshida Doctrine of mercantilism, restrained remilitarization, and subordinate foreign policy during the Cold War (Dower 1993). As its second-class power status under the United States nuclear guarantee facilitated the rise of its economy, Japan strictly adhered to the American hegemony-based rules of the game. And by keeping the American forces on its soil, Japan reassured its neighboring countries of its intention not to revert to its militarist past.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, things have begun to change. Among others, the United States fundamentally shifted from a hegemonic strategy to a unilateralist one (Skidmore 2005). And with growing realism about regional power relations and the sense of crisis and diminishing confidence about the prospects of its own economic model in the increasingly globalizing international economy, Japan has been gradually drifting away from its low-cost and highly profitable Cold War strategy of locking itself into America's hegemonic strategy. Other things being equal, therefore, the more pessimistic outcome seems what the future will likely bring to Northeast Asia. But the outcome would not be a natural or automatic outgrowth of the

anarchical international structure and the presumably resultant behavior of narrow national interest-driven unitary states. Instead, it would depend on the socially-constructed behavior of nation-states and the ideas- as well as interest-driven process in which various states form evolving patterns of interstate relationships.

The next section looks at the evolving international politics in Northeast Asia during the post-Cold War period from the international systemic and regional perspective, and the fourth section follows up on the analysis from the unit state-level perspective. The two sections examine the changing characteristics of the fundamentally distrustful, conflict-ridden, and power and interest-centric international politics in Northeast Asia and their implications for the region's stability especially in the post-Cold War era. And then as a way of further documenting the ominous changes as well as the problematic consequences of fallacious policy paradigms underlying the concerned state behavior, the fifth section details the post-Cold War trend in military spending in the region. By way of conclusion, the sixth and final section emphasizes the pressing need for the concerned states to switch their assumptions and take a fresh look at alternative ways to build trust, cooperative multilateralism, and an "international society" (Bull et al. 1984).

III. Northeast Asia in the Post-Cold War International Politics³

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have not quite proved to be the end of history, obsolescence of wars or the retreat of the nation state. Instead, the postwar, albeit limited, achievements and principles in institutionalized cooperation and multilateralism may be in danger of being unlearned in the post-Cold War era (Higgot 2005).⁴ The mismatch between the "overdeveloped" global economy and the underdeveloped global polity does appear more striking than ever before. Such starkly contrasting tendencies are all the more intense in Northeast Asia, where quite virulent strains of nationalism and frequently incompatible mercantilist strategies remain potentially disruptive of the regional status quo.

Perhaps the most dominant systemic factor that overshadows the politics in Northeast Asia is America's global strategy as practiced in the post-Cold War era. The United States foreign policy has increasingly tilted towards unilateralism, and the September 11th terror attack further exasperated the trend. The tendency towards American unilateralism entailed its rejection of a series of major international treaties

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³ This section heavily draws on Park (2004).

⁴ Incidentally, Ruggie (1993, 11) defines multilateralism as "an institutionalized form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct."

and agreements, including the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, its slighting of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and its war with Iraq without securing UN support as part of its war against terror.

To be sure, the postwar international order which the United States led was not as multilateralist as it was hegemonic: America only loosely subjected itself to multilateral constraints in return for providing its allies with military protection, political and financial support, and access to American market (Skidmore 2005).

No doubt the United States postwar policy was more multilateralist in Western Europe than in Northeast Asia. Especially in Western Europe in the wake of its intensifying rivalry with the Soviet Union, the United States chose to deter Soviet threat by rebuilding and rearming West Germany as the West's front line. Being mindful of the deep-seated fears and suspicions in Germany's war victims—especially France, the United States fully supported the Western European idea of reinstating German sovereignty and rebuilding its economy only within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the EU's precursor (Grieco 1996). In short, in order to guarantee that it no longer posed threats to its neighbors, Germany ceded its sovereignty to the multilateral organizations, taming its military power.

In contrast, in East or Northeast Asia, the United States viewed its military capabilities as sufficient to neutralize the surrounding threat, and thus preferred to maintain its interests in the region through bilateral arrangements. The United States exercised exclusive control over the postwar occupation of Japan, and in reshaping the Japanese political and economic order, China or Korea did not have any say, nor did the U.S. consult any other key concerned countries over the matter. In contrast to Germany, Japan ceded its military sovereignty to the U.S.—outside of any multilateral framework. In part because the Japanese emperor did not abdicate his throne as a symbol of Japan's full admission of war guilt, and in part because Japan never truly tried to reconcile with or compensate for the Asian victims of its continental war and brutal colonial rule, fear and mistrust fundamentally and perpetually mar the international relations between Japan and its neighbors in Northeast Asia.

Thus, despite that the absolute level of intra-regional trade has been on the rise in part thanks to the dynamic growth of the Northeast Asian economies, the lack of institutionalized multilateralism still aptly characterizes international relations in Northeast Asia (Kurth 1989; Betts 1993/1994; Friedberg 1993/1994; Blackwell et al. 2000). In the wake of the turn of the 21st century, for instance, Japan and China became the largest trading partner to each other, both respectively overtaking the United

States; China also became the biggest market for South Korean exports and investment capital (Korea Customs Administration). The three Northeast Asian countries also began to take part in regional cooperation between central banks and finance ministries under the 2001 Chiang Mai agreement. Although the regional financial cooperation may be seen an incipient form of multilateralism, one can hardly fail to note that it came rather inadvertently in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. It took on a rather narrow, sector-specific type of multilateralism and thus remained in scope confined to the financial sector only.

In short, there is a striking variation in the level of institutionalization of regional cooperation between Western Europe and Northeast Asia, and the region's growing economic cooperation has hardly translated into security collaboration. In contrast to Western Europe, as a result, no multilateral treaties but a series of bilateral arrangements govern Northeast Asian security. To this day, for instance, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a 1994 extension of the ASEAN's Post-Ministerial Conference, remains the only official and still infantile multilateral security institution for regional dialogues. Thus, the lack of cooperative multilateralism in Northeast Asia as combined with America's global anti-terror war and what it entails for the regional politics seems quite ominous in anticipating what the future is likely to hold for the peace and stability of the region.

IV. The Primacy of Contending National Interests in Northeast Asian Affairs and Its Implications for Regional Stability

As discussed above, Japan had been rather content with its less than fully sovereign status under America's nuclear umbrella prior to the end of the Cold War. Since the end of the Cold War, however, Japan has become increasingly unwilling to remain a second-class power in international affairs. As the world's second largest economy and a major contributor to international organizations, Japan no longer shuns acting in the international scene as one of the world's great powers, and in fact, it has been seeking a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. The change of Japan's posture has reflected the rightward drift of its polity: While the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been unable to free itself from the Cold War framework of mind, effectively deal with the collapse of Japan's economic bubble, or offer an alternative vision and leadership for the post-Cold War era, its right wing elements have ushered in dramatic changes in Japan's foreign policy stance.

At the heart of the controversial changes lies the revision of the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which renounces "war as a sovereign right of the nation and the

threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." While the provision does not recognize Japan's right of belligerency, through gradual loosening of the official interpretation of it, Japan's right-wing politicians have been bringing about an incremental rollback. The Peace-Keeping Organization Law in 1992, for instance, allowed Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) to undertake peace-keeping missions, and the 1998 revision of the 1978 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines deepened bilateral cooperation and extended it to "areas surrounding Japan," areas to be defined in situational terms. The cooperation further intensified after September 11, 2001. In October 2001, Japan under Prime Minister Koizumi adopted a Terror Special Measures law and provided substantial logistical support to America's anti-terror war in Afghanistan. Moreover, despite the United States' failure to attain United Nations sanctions for the 2003 war in Iraq, Japan sent its armed SDF forces—for the first time since the end of World War II—to Iraq, albeit in a subordinate and non-combat role. Further, Japan's National Defense Program Outline of December 2004 described China as a source of concern for Japan. And in a February 2005 joint statement on security cooperation, the United States and Japan named Taiwan as a matter of joint concern in a formal statement for the first time. Departing from its traditional strategic ambiguity, in other words, Japan deliberately made its position on Taiwan clearer by declaring that Taiwan is a mutual security concern. In making such policy changes and attaining a closer integration with America's global anti-terror alliance, Japan's right-wing politicians resorted to the principle of fait accompli, exploiting and feeding the nationalist paranoia about the rise of China and the North Korean nuclear and missile threats.

To be sure, China has also become more assertive in foreign policy, feeding a negative feedback loop and engendering a heightened Sino-Japanese rivalry and conflict. China's 1995 nuclear weapons tests, its 1996 bracketing of Taiwan with ballistic missiles, and its emotional dispute over the Diaoyu (or what the Japanese call Senkaku) Islands represent cases in point. Particularly with respect to Taiwan, China asserts that reunification with the mainland is the only solution. China insists that it explores peaceful means first, but as demonstrated in the adoption of the anti-secession law in early 2005, which provides a quasi-legal basis for use of force, China's state power holders refuse to rule out the military option on the Taiwan question. From the standpoint of China's national security, therefore, the renewed U.S.-Japan alliance and its missile defense programs pose grave threats to its core interests especially with respect to Taiwan. Clearly, how China behaves and uses its growing influence in its relations with other states will be as influential as how Japan handles its external

conduct in determining regional stability and cooperation.

Arguably, however, the greatest source of Sino-Japanese security dilemma currently stems from Japan's identification of its foreign policy with America's global anti-terror strategy even at the expense of regional cooperation. Japan's proactive joining of the United States' war on terror has aroused the deep-rooted suspicion that the specter of Japan's old militarism is on the rise once again. China's, and South Korea's for that matter, fear and mistrust of Japan remain compounded by Japan's persistent mishandling of its history, including: Japan's apologies without genuine introspection about its military aggression, exploitation and genocidal attack; the Japanese government's prohibition of history textbooks which address its wartime atrocities as well as its approval of right-wing textbooks that actively justifies Japan's invasion of Asian countries as a liberation.

While postwar Japan has tried to buy friendship and support for its leadership role in the region with increased economic interaction and interdependency, in the post-Cold War period it seems to have begun to lose confidence in the effectiveness of this economic means. As Green (2003) perceptively points out, the key source of Japan's external behavior has been shifting from a faith in economic interdependence and its spill-over effects to a "reluctant realism" with a growing emphasis on power and national security-driven interests and tendency toward more populist foreign policies.⁵ To be sure, Japan has not yet taken a strict realist policy based on its national interests defined in terms of power. Japan has neither pursued only relative gain at the expense of neighboring countries nor translated its economic might fully into military power as yet. Instead, it has combined its strategy of engagement and continued economic interaction and cooperation with that of hedging against the prospect of such potential threats as a China's rise (Green 2003, 78-79).

Indeed, what has held the Sino-Japanese rivalry and conflict in check has been the overwhelming presence of the US in the region and Japan's continuing reliance on the alliance. The predominant military and political presence that the United States enjoys in the region has restrained Japan from, say, fully reciprocating American military ties, let alone Japan's desire to keep or not to damage its economic interests. China also prefers to keep the troubled history of Japan's wartime atrocities in the background where it cannot disrupt economic ties or complicate its relations with Japan. China is surely the world's seventh largest economy, but with its 1.3 billion people, it still remains one of the world's poorest in terms of its GDP per capita. China's rapid growth, in fact, hides a multitude of domestic problems, including rampant corruption,

⁵ See also Pempel (1998).

uncertainty over future political transition, rigid and troubled financial institutions and inefficient state-owned enterprises, and a large number of migrant workers in urban slums without family, health care, or resident permit. Any serious faltering of the economy could threaten China's political stability. Thus, China's focus on maintaining economic growth and dealing with the multitude of internal problems has compelled China to emphasize its "peaceful rise."

Being natural rivals for primacy in the regional politics, nonetheless, China and Japan frequently take confrontational approach to each other. Ostensibly for Japan's failure to show contrition about Japan's past militarism in the manner acceptable to China, for instance, there has been no official visit to China by the Japanese prime minister since October 2001, and none by the Chinese president to Japan since the disastrous visit to Tokyo by Jiang Zemin in December 1998, the longest hiatus since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972.

The South Korean-Japanese relations have also remained fraught with misgivings, resentments, and dislikes. In fact, despite the strategic imperative of maintaining strong bilateral ties as a cornerstone in the America-led postwar security structure in Northeast Asia, South Korea and Japan have often verged on flirting with diplomatic disasters even on such relatively marginal issues as a renewed conflict over Dokdo, a rocky set of South Korean-controlled islets. In February 2005, for instance, Japanese ambassador to South Korea publicly claimed Dokdo as part of Japan's territory in the heart of Seoul, calling it Takeshima. And in March 2005, Shimane prefecture on Japan's west coast adopted an ordinance designating February 22nd as "Takeshima Day" to mark the date in 1905 when Japan first claimed the islets in the midst of Japan's usurpation of Korean sovereignty. The claim and the ordinance infuriated South Koreans, and the South Korean government fulminated that it was tantamount to invasion. South Korean furies have been further stoked by the latest round of the Japanese government's approval of history textbooks which whitewash Japan's war crimes.

The problem is that in tandem with the strengthening of Japan's alliance with the United States in the face of what the Japanese right wing sees as the threat of a rising China and the North Korea nuclear program, Japan no longer tends to back down or yield to the concerns or pressures of its Northeast Asian neighbors—even at the expense of the spirit of trust and regional community building. Without regards to Chinese and Korean protests, for instance, Prime Minister Koizumi continues to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors Class-A war criminals and has a museum that denies Japan's wartime atrocities and justifies its invasion of Asian countries as liberation. In short,

Japan's foreign policy posture has been unmistakably changing especially during the last few years, and what used to be only minority views of Japan's right-wing politicians such as notorious Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara seems to have become the polity's dominant trend during the same time span.

Against such a backdrop, it is not surprising that Korean and Chinese elites as well as their publics remain fearful and suspicious of a renewal of Japanese militarism and aggression. As Ikenberry and Mastanduno (2003, 11-12) cites 1995 *Yomiuri Shimbun* survey results, the difference between Japanese self-perception and the views of its neighbors remained striking:

Asked if they thought Japan might become a great military power again or that if already is one, Japanese public opinion was overwhelming: 74 percent said they did not think Japan would ever again become a great military power, while 18 percent said that it may become one. In contrast, among Koreans, 56 percent strongly believed that Japan may become and 26 percent thought it already was a military power. PRC respondents were roughly divided on whether Japan would again become a military power.

Hence, the Northeast Asian governments need to recognize the necessity of sincerely seeking ways to make territorial disputes or history textbook issues less of a flashpoint. The frictions may in fact constitute some manifestations of the unresolved and entangling problems of the militarist past, and they may as well be signs of rising right-wing nationalism and confident determination to pursue more narrowly-defined national interests.

Clearly, no country can be perfect or without blemish, and neither Korea nor China can necessarily claim high moral superiority to condemn Japan for its failure to show a truly contrite heart. Nevertheless, Japan's rapid upgrading of its security alliance with the United States and its steady and increasing rollback of its pacifist constitution—without open debate or consensus-building process— are of grave concern particularly to Korea and China. Japan does need an open, public discussion on the changes to its constitution and military policies. Or, the brittle shell of Cold War pacifism may incrementally crumble away, and even some small but emotionally-charged territorial issues may prove to become the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Historically-embedded tensions, rivalries, and nationalist passions would rise further in Northeast Asia especially if the United States is viewed as encouraging Japanese militarization, albeit as part of its global strategy. The close integration of Japanese foreign policy with America's global anti-terror war efforts and the consequent revitalization of the U.S.-Japan alliance have indeed accompanied Japan's increasing "normalization" of its military sovereignty. In effect, America's global war on terror

since 2001 has had negative repercussions on Northeast Asian affairs. It not only deflected America's attention from focusing on peaceful resolution of North Korea's disputed weapons of mass destruction. But it also entailed America's confrontational approach to North Korea as a rogue state, an approach that has led to the hardening of the hard-line posturing of the North Korean hardliners, further damaging the prospect of a prompt resolution of the crisis and the construction of a more cooperative multilateralism in the region.

The North Korean nuclear crisis represents clearly another flashpoint to the deepseated conflict-ridden politics of Northeast Asia, where the United States needs to show heightened sensitivity to the region's priorities. The heightened American security concerns are understandable in the wake of the 9/11 terror, but the current application of its global anti-terror war approach to North Korea would not successfully resolve the North Korean nuclear dilemma and deadlock. Instead, America's anti-terror approach may well aggravate the situation by refusing to recognize North Korea's sovereignty rights and its legitimate survival and security concerns.⁶ There is no question about the immorality and bankruptcy of the North Korean regime: It literally killed millions of its own people by years of man-made famine as well as its notorious concentration camps. But to prevent the nuclear dilemma from further escalating into a major crisis and conflict, if not a cataclysmic clash that no country wants, requires understanding and recognizing North Korea's perceptions of security threat and its sense of vulnerability to America's preemptive or preventive attack. From Pyongyang's present standpoint, nuclear weapons may seem the only thing that can provide its insecure state with some semblance of deterrence against the military might of the world's only Only with a genuine, dedicated, and reciprocal meeting of minds, superpower. designing a peaceful and feasible solution to the deadlock would become possible.

V. The Trend in Military Spending in Northeast Asia

The biggest problem in analyzing the state of regional security in terms of military expenditures is the lack of exact and consistent data. A number of sources offers yearly estimates of military spending, and the three most commonly cited include *the Military Balance*, the *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers* (WMEAT), and *the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook*. But the numbers from even these sources are not in full agreement with one another. China

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⁶ There is no evidence that can suggest that North Korea has ever sold its weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons to anybody, and with respect to nuclear weapons, it just does not have enough, if at all, to think about selling any of them to any terrorist (See Preston 2005).

may be one of the most egregious cases of information inconsistency: *The SIPRI Yearbook* holds that Chinese military spending amounted to \$20 billion in 1999, while the WMEAT report claimed that \$89 billion was the correct figure. Other sources place Chinese expenditures in between of the two figures. Such inconsistency in data partly explains the dearth of scholarly analysis on military spending and its trends. Nonetheless, my sense is that by looking at the broad trend in regional military spending, one can identify patterns of security practice and interaction. In fact, during the post-Cold War period, one is struck by the fact that Northeast Asia represented the world's only region that failed to reap any peace dividend from the Cold War's end. Whereas the military expenditures as a share of GNP decreased in all other regions of the world from 1993-2003, for instance, those in East Asia increased from 1.8 to 2.1 percent during the same period, further exasperating the patterns of the Cold War era (*The Military Balance: 2003-2004*).

As of 1999, North America, Western Europe and East Asia accounted for 78 percent of world military expenditures.⁸ North America took up 34 percent of world military expenditures in the same year. While the region's share was up from 1989, it was so because the decline in the region's military spending proved slower than the general trend in the world. North America's real expenditures actually declined by three percent per year from 1989-1999. The United States remained the largest military spender, accounting for 96 percent of North American and 33 percent of world spending in 1999.⁹

Western Europe with 22 percent represented the world's second largest regional defense spender in 1999. But as was the case with North America, the general trend is towards decline: the region's military expenditures declined by almost two percent per annum from 1989-1999, with such major countries as Germany and the Great Britain showing higher rates of spending decrease than the regional average figure. The rising expenditures of Turkey (eight percent growth per year during the decade) were the major factor which dampened the regional average to a mere two percent.

Most noteworthy is the East Asian region, whose share of world military spending more than doubled from 1989-1999, up from ten to 21 percent at an annual growth rate of well over three percent. It constituted one of the two major changes in the global

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⁷ The WMEAT reports warn that the figures for Chinese military spending should be taken with a pinch of salt. It is so in part because no appropriate exchange rate is available in China, the WMEAT uses purchasing power parity (PPP) estimates. Also, there is a inconsistency or discrepancy problem of what is counted as military expenditures not only in various estimates but also in varying countries.

⁸ This section heavily draws on WMEAT (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/18723.pdf).

⁹ The United States quickly restored its Cold War-level military expenditures in the wake of the September 11th terror in 2001.

trend in military spending during the immediate post-Cold War decade (with the other being the sharp decline in Eastern Europe's share of world military expenditures from 34 to seven percent in the wake of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the region). Almost the half of the growth in regional spending came from China, but even if one discounts the China factor because of the uncertainty of its statistics, other Northeast Asian countries have also significantly contributed to the increase in expenditures. During the decade after 1989, Japan's real military spending jumped by 20 percent, South Korea's by 25 percent, and Taiwan's by 80 percent, while North Korea's declined by 11 percent. The rise in the Northeast Asian countries' military spending is, to be sure, in line with their economic development; yet, the rise remains quite significant in light of the general decline in world military expenditures since the end of the Cold War.

Even if one looks at the relative economic burden of military build-up in the post-Cold War period, striking is the increased level of the Northeast Asian region's military spending as a share of their GNP in comparison to the decline in all other regions of the world. The global military expenditures as a share of world GNP fell from 4.7 percent in 1989 to 2.4 percent in 1999. However, the level in East Asia increased to 2.1 percent by 2003, up from 1.8 percent in 1993, while that in NATO countries except the U.S. dropped from 2.5 to 1.9 percent, and that in non-NATO countries slipped from 1.9 to 1.7 percent from 1993-2003 (*The Military Balance: 2003-2004*).

The sheer size of the military spending in Northeast Asia itself is worth noting. If we trust WMEAT estimates, China is the world's second biggest military spender with \$89 billion in 1999, although the American military budget of over \$450 billion for 2004 dwarfs this highly-estimated figure. Even if we use China's officially declared military spending, the absolute amount is not small. With double-digit increases per annum, it has more than doubled since the mid-1990s to almost \$30 billion by 2005. With respect to Japan, despite its thus far sticking to its Self Defense Forces' share of GDP at one percent, it spent \$45 billion for its military in 2004. Japan constitutes the world's third or second biggest military spender depending on which Chinese figure to count. Japan's SDF dramatically increased expenditures on missile defense to \$1.2 billion for 2004, nine times more than the total spent from 1999-2003, and it already has 38,000 kilograms of plutonium, with which it can make over 7,000 nuclear warheads at any time if so it chooses (Matthews 2003, 76-78). South Korea's spending totaled \$16.4 billion, and Taiwan's \$7.5 billion in the same year (*The Military Balance: 2003-2004*).

Perhaps most ominously, the Northeast Asian countries' increased military spending

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¹⁰ International Herald Tribune, March 5-6, 2005.

in the post-Cold War period has not been directed at mere modernization of their respective armed forces, but at expanding their war-fighting capabilities. Going beyond simply replacing older fighter aircrafts with at least some "fourth-generation" ones, the militaries have been "acquiring greater lethality and accuracy at greater ranges," which would include expanding blue-water navies, tanker aircraft for air-to-air refueling, early warning aircraft, and missile defenses (Bitzinger 2004). In acquiring such advanced, foreign-built conventional weaponry, Taiwan spent almost \$26 billion, Japan \$22 billion, South Korea \$16 billion, and China \$7 billion during the 1990s. This rising trend of regional military expenditures and power projection capacities seems set to continue for the foreseeable future. South Korea, for instance, plans to invest over \$17 billion in upgrading its military forces from 2003-2007, and Taiwan over \$20 billion in the next decade (Ibid.).

VI. Paradigms, Fallacies, and the Future of Northeast Asian Politics

This paper has analyzed the highly distrustful and increasingly conflictual patterns of Northeast Asian security relations in the post-Cold War era, where the "ripe for rivalry" image remains more influential than any other. Undoubtedly, the power and interest-centric realist paradigm maintains its explanatory dominance in capturing the lack of reconciliation or institutionalization of regional cooperation both in postwar and post-Cold War Northeast Asia. As documented above, in fact, the post-Cold War era has ominously witnessed an intensification of conflict, rivalry, and security competition in the Northeast Asian region, broadly in accord with what the realist paradigm would have us expect.

When it comes to prescribing for the lack of institutionalized multilateralism or security cooperation, however, the analytic power of realist perspective becomes "sterile." It is so because realists assume the values, preferences and goals of the units or nation states as largely fixed or determined by the anarchical international system. In this respect, neo-liberal institutionalists do not differ from realists: They fundamentally share the realist disinterest in the unit-level phenomena, paradigmatically assuming unit states' identically egoistic behavior under anarchy. The international systemic pressures supposedly dictate the patterns of state behavior, and by assumption, the resultant, largely invariable state behaviors and their interactions do not make difference in shaping or changing the anarchical system. Such a realist paradigm or wholesale disregard for the unit state-level values, principles and policy choices has frequently contributed to a further exasperation of security dilemma in the post-Cold War period.

However, assumptions, if paradigmatic, are not true or false, and for that matter, realist assumptions must not be confused with realities. The fact of the matter is that states or their policymakers do not always act egoistically. Self-interest may be the dominant behavioral trait in human beings or nation states, but its definition or conception has been overly narrow, verging nearly on the level of animal instincts. Self-interest can be open, broader and considerate, if not exactly inclusive of, selfinterest of others. Even at the expense of their own immediate interests, nation states do at times advance principles or enlightened ideas, especially if they regard their principled behavior as more advantageous to them in the longer run. Some classic examples of such would include the United States' Marshall Plan in the wake of the Cold War and Gorbachev's new thinking in Soviet foreign policy at the close of the Cold War. And such an alternative approach or paradigm is called for especially in the post-Cold War Northeast Asia, where the specter of power politics and military rivalry over contending national interests has increasingly loomed large on the horizon. To help prevent the security dilemma from spiraling into a slippery and perilous path of arms competition requires the concerned states and their policymakers to switch their realist assumptions, redefine their self-interests, and adopt an international society framework which builds on reality.

This is not to argue that any of the concerned states including the hegemon can act entirely free from the systemic pressures or without regards to power and interest-driven considerations. To the extent power matters, for instance, any realistic effort to develop cooperative multilateralism in the region may have to rest on some support of hegemonic power. Even under the anarchical international structure, however, there is room for policy choice for each and every state, albeit in varying degrees, and how states and their policymakers choose to act and what values and principles they hold in their choice of actions can and do help shape the kind of an international society it will have in the system. Subscribing entirely and straitjacketedly to the realist assumptions and its worldviews as policy guidelines may lead to outcomes that no one wants or desires.

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