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The Political Effects of U.S. Military Presence in the Asian-Pacific Region

Daniel Y. Chiu
Jonathan T. Dworken

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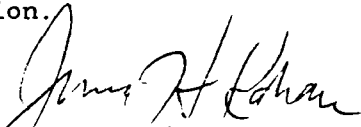
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The Political Effects of U.S. Military Presence in the Asian-Pacific Region

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ABSTRACT

This research memorandum explores the political effects of U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. It proposes a framework that outlines the goals of presence and the process through which political effects develop. It then uses this conceptual framework to examine the political effects of presence in the region. This paper surveys U.S. policy objectives in the future security environment in Asia and explores the direct contribution of presence to U.S. policy objectives and the indirect support it gives through bolstering stability. Finally, it notes some implications of the analysis for future U.S. force options in the region.

PREFACE

As the Cold War draws to an end, U.S. military presence in Asia is being called into question. Opponents of continued presence consider it a vestige of earlier times because the Soviet threat is in decline, and no other major threat to replace it is on the horizon. The U.S. presence abroad is a drain on valuable economic resources. Furthermore, the issue of burden-sharing is being raised constantly as Asian allies grow richer from their exports to the U.S.

Proponents of U.S. military presence, on the other hand, argue that the U.S. still has interests that need to be protected from military threats that were either previously overlooked or are now only slowly emerging. The U.S. must be forward-deployed to react in a timely manner to crises that could arise from such threats. Moreover, presence is deemed to have a positive political effect on the region, even if it is aimed at deterring no single overriding threat.

To examine several aspects of peacetime presence, CINCPACFLT asked CNA to undertake a two-part study on the political and military effects of U.S. presence in Asia. Part I examines the military requirements for peacetime presence. To explore the issues surrounding the second part of the study--the political effects of presence--CNA initiated several workshops that led to the following Briefing Papers: *The Sino-Soviet Thaw and Southeast Asia on the Brink*; and *Northeast Asia: Coming in From the Cold*. A Professional Paper, *U.S. Interests and Future Military Presence in Southeast Asia*, was also written. This research memorandum combines the authors' further research and the results of the workshops.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The U.S. military presence in Asia predates the Spanish-American War. The extent of this presence, however, resulted from U.S. participation in the Second World War, the Korean War, and Vietnam. Over the last 40 years, this presence became a counterweight to the expanding presence of the Soviet Union and the adventurism of its surrogates--Vietnam and North Korea. As the Cold War fades away in Asia, it is only natural that U.S. presence is being reevaluated.

The end of the Cold War, however, is not the only source of questions over presence. The U.S. budget deficit is constraining future force levels. The costs of overseas bases, relatively small yet highly visible, are increasing as host countries demand sizable compensation for allowing the U.S. access.¹ Furthermore, trade and other disputes with some Asian allies and friends may lead many Americans to feel that the U.S. should not spend its money to defend these countries, especially against vague, undefined threats.

Against this backdrop of pressures for withdrawal are the traditional rationales for U.S. presence. The most common are the usefulness of presence in four areas: (1) logistics support, (2) crisis response, (3) operational experience and in-theater training, and (4) intelligence gathering. One of the least studied, but often cited, justifications for U.S. presence has been its political effects. It has been argued that by deterring conflict and arms races, U.S. presence is a stabilizing influence in the region. The objective of this study is to examine this particular argument by exploring the political effects of U.S. presence in Asia.

APPROACH

This study uses both a deductive and an inductive approach. It first proposes a framework that draws a relationship between military presence and certain political effects.² This connection is based on examinations of Asian politics and U.S. influence in the region.³ The study then uses the theory as a conceptual framework to examine the likely political effects of U.S. military presence in Asia. Although proof of the relationship between presence and its political effects is not possible, this analysis seeks to create a convincing argument for this relationship.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of this analysis is limited by geography, subject matter, time, and basic assumptions. The study focuses on Asia, or more specifically, the Asian-Pacific region. For the purposes of this study, this area includes Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, but not the South Pacific, India, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf. With regard to subject

matter, the phrase "U.S. military peacetime presence" refers to deployments that are regularly planned, not dispatched specifically in response to events abroad. Presence has two components - forces and deployments. The forces covered here include those forces from all the military services: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. In this study, the term deployment refers to the full gamut of U.S. military presence abroad: from transits to exercises (combined or U.S. only), to access and basing. Military assistance is not included. Nonpolitical effects of peacetime presence, such as the ability to respond quickly to crises and military requirements in other regions, are not considered, as they fall under the rubric of military, as opposed to political, effects.

This study is intended to project trends and conclusions through 1995. This period is chosen because events in the region are quite fluid, but the underlying assumptions are likely to hold true through that time period.

Finally, several basic assumptions with regard to the major countries of Asia underlie the conclusions of this study. The most important assumption is that U.S.-Japanese relations are not likely to deteriorate to the extent that the foreign policy interests of the two countries diverge significantly. Should this happen, Japan could decide to adopt a more independent and assertive foreign and military policy. A perceived increase in its power-projection forces or any dispatch of Japanese troops abroad could sharply increase tensions, spark a regional arms race, create new military alliances, and raise tensions that could lead to crises and perhaps even end in conflict. It is also assumed that neither the People's Republic of China (PRC) nor the Soviet Union is likely to reassert itself regionally and threaten the security of Asian neighbors. The effects of such occurrences could be similar to those of Japanese assertiveness.

ORGANIZATION OF PAPER

To examine the issues surrounding the political effects of peacetime presence, this paper begins by outlining a framework for investigating the goals of presence and the process through which these effects develop. In the context of this framework, it then (1) surveys U.S. foreign policy objectives in Asia and the future security environment in the region, and (2) examines the direct contribution of presence to U.S. policy objectives and the indirect support it gives through bolstering stability. Finally, some implications are noted for future U.S. force requirements in Asia.

POLITICAL EFFECTS OF PRESENCE

Generally, military forces can be viewed as performing two basic functions: deterring wars during peacetime and fighting wars when deterrence fails. The peacetime presence of military forces in a given region, however, also has political effects: it deters conflict, assures allies, augments diplomatic influence, and aids foreign-policy initiatives. The means for this presence are military forces (all services) and different types of deployments.⁴ The links among the peacetime presence, the deterrence function of military forces, and political effects provide the key to understanding the political effects of military presence. To establish a framework for examining the political effects of U.S. military presence in Asia, this section addresses how political effects develop and what general objectives presence can fulfill.

PROCESS

The political effects of U.S. military presence derive from a process related to that of traditional deterrence theory. For deterrence to work, the *capability* and *commitment* to act must be *communicated* to and *perceived* by a potential adversary.⁵

Capability

The capability to act is adequate to deter an adversary if it enables the U.S. either to deny the adversary his objective(s) or to punish him enough to make him consider the contemplated action too costly and inadvisable. Capabilities include not just military equipment, but also the skill to use it effectively through training. U.S. military presence in Asia provides the capability to carry out a deterrent threat either directly or by symbolizing the capabilities of a larger force; U.S. ground forces on the Korean Peninsula are one example. Often, exercises also enhance capability, such as U.S. Marine Corps exercises in Thailand that increase the ability of the U.S. to defend that country from attack by Vietnam. U.S. transits through the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) are a visible display of the ability to keep them open.

Commitment

Commitment to act is also necessary. The large U.S. military presence in Asia is also a recognizable symbol of U.S. commitment to defend its allies and interests in the region. For more specific situations, though, the deployment of the appropriate forces for foreseeable contingencies is an effective means of showing commitment. As mentioned above, Korea, Thailand, and the SLOCs are good examples, as are joint exercises with Korea and Japan.

Communication

Capability and commitment are communicated through the visible display of the appropriately deployed forces. Sometimes, a threat may be so distant or anti-U.S. sentiment in a country so high that deployment of the appropriate forces may be impossible. It may still be necessary, however, to remind a potential aggressor that the U.S. has the capability and commitment to defend its ally. For example, should anti-U.S. feelings in the ROK increase, the U.S. may withdraw most of its ground forces from the Peninsula. In such an instance, the forces and deployments must be of a lower visibility to the population of the country being defended (the Republic of Korea (ROK)), but still be a discernible symbol of U.S. support to deter aggression (by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)). In these cases, which are among the most frequent, access (as opposed to permanent basing), naval visits, or exercises are often suitable.

Perception

The communication of capability and commitment are perceived by a country that, as a result, decides not to take an action it was considering. Perception often occurs if communication is successful. The role of perception is vital, but impossible to predict precisely. For example, it is likely that DPRK leaders perceive U.S. capabilities, though perception depends not only on communication, but on the analysis and decision-making system of the DPRK.⁶

POLITICAL EFFECTS

Based on the fulfillment of the requirements set out by deterrence theory, U.S. military presence can have four political effects. First, presence *deters conflict* by communicating capability and commitment to those nations whose policies might threaten U.S. allies or interests. It also deters conflicts by reminding countries that the U.S. will provide a buffer between belligerents, as it did between the PRC and the Republic of China (ROC).

Second, presence *assures allies*. Assurance is a positive consequence of deterrence. It occurs when an ally or friend is convinced that the U.S. will defend it by deterring an opponent and by fighting should deterrence fail. Although deterrence and assurance are two sides of the same coin, the distinction between them is vital to understanding the political effects of peacetime presence: *deterrence is directed at the beliefs of an opponent; assurance is directed at the expectations of an ally.*

Although U.S. military presence assures the same way it deters--by communicating the capability and commitment to defend an ally--it affects the beliefs of the ally. In so doing, assurance can prevent arms races, forestall proliferation, and dampen militarism. For example, assurance can prevent arms races by *making unnecessary a*

massive Japanese military buildup to deter Soviet aggression or Chinese threats, thereby forestalling arms-race spirals between Japan and other Asian countries. Assurance has worked to forestall proliferation in the same way in the ROC--by making it unnecessary to procure nuclear weapons. Finally, assurance helps dampen militarism, thereby making calls for militarism less pressing.⁷

The third political effect of presence is that it *augments diplomatic influence*. An ally's reliance on U.S. presence to deter a threat and the positive effects of assurance derived from deterrence can be used in diplomatic negotiations through linking the topic of negotiations to the continuation of that presence. The threat, explicit or implicit, of the withdrawal of forces is present, for example, when negotiating trade policy and burden-sharing with Japan, as well as in talks on trade policy and political reform in the ROK. Similarly, though only indirectly related to presence, a link exists between reform in the PRC and the U.S. military relationship (technology transfers and port visits) with that country.⁸

A final effect of presence is *aid to foreign policy initiatives*. This effect is the only one of the four that is not linked directly to deterrence. Military visits to adversaries, especially port visits, can signal or cement improving relations, as they have done with the PRC. They can also be used to attempt to influence military elites, one of the goals of the Soviet port visits (discussed below). One goal of "good-will" visits is to improve local and regional public opinion of the U.S. Putting these last two effects under the rubric of "influence," the goals of U.S. presence can be thought of as deterrence, assurance, and influence.⁹

ASIA AND U.S. POLICY

To set the stage for an examination of the direct and indirect political effects of U.S. military presence in Asia, it is necessary to understand the context in which those effects operate. These conditions center on U.S. policy objectives in Asia and the changing security environment in that region.

U.S. INTERESTS IN ASIA

U.S. interests in Asia predate the Cold War.¹⁰ In fact, the traditional U.S. role in the region as a country that balances dominant powers and promotes free trade goes back to the Open Door Policy with China. Based on those traditional interests, current U.S. foreign policy focuses on three groups of interests. U.S. security interests, as noted above, include the prevention of the domination of the region by one power and the protection of free passage through the SLOCs.¹¹

U.S. economic objectives center on the promotion of free trade, economic development, investment, and access to raw materials. U.S. trade with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan alone surpasses the value of U.S. trade with all of the countries of the European Community.¹² In addition to those three countries, the region includes some of the fastest developing nations in the world, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Furthermore, over the last decade, the U.S. has become increasingly dependent on capital from the region to finance its budget deficit. This finance, to a large extent, has come from Japanese and ROC reserves of U.S. dollars.

The overriding U.S. political interest in the region used to be the obstruction of the rise to power of communist regimes. As the political-ideological threat from the Soviet Union, the PRC, and Vietnam has declined, however, the U.S. has begun to pursue the advancement of democracy throughout the region. Japan is the only secure democracy in the region, but many other countries, such as the Philippines, the ROC, the ROK, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and (perhaps) Singapore are moving toward democracy, though its final form in those countries may not be the same as that in the U.S.

As the following section explains in more detail, military threats to these three groups of interests are uncertain, vague, and diverse, in sharp contrast to the perceived simplicity of the Cold War. A major war with the Soviets is now highly unlikely. Still, regional wars, especially the possibility of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, are possible. The greatest military threats, however, are unpredictable crises. Some of these may be related to arms races associated with states competing to fill a regional power vacuum.

FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The underlying sources of conflict present in Asia even before the Cold War will continue for the foreseeable future.¹³ The following sources, which have become inexorably linked with each other, ensure that tensions in the region will remain: (1) historical animosities, (2) border and territorial disputes, (3) ethnic and religious tensions, and (4) widespread poverty with a perceived inequitable distribution of income. Although the underlying sources of conflict will continue to exist, the major tensions between traditional antagonists are decreasing, thus reducing the chances of military conflict.¹⁴

Decreased military tensions between the powerful states in the region along with several other factors have led, to a limited extent, to what some experts call "spontaneous disarmament."¹⁵ The Soviet Union is reducing its troops deployed facing the PRC and naval deployments in the region. More than 10 percent of U.S. military personnel will soon leave the ROK, Philippines, and Japan. China has demobilized some of its forces. Vietnam has withdrawn from Cambodia and is decreasing its military by up to 15 percent. Finally, Japan has announced its smallest increase in military spending in 31 years.¹⁶

Unlike Europe, however, a regional security framework is not likely to develop to help further reduce tensions.¹⁷ There is no general sense of concern, due, in part, to the lack of many common borders. Some territory at sea is disputed, but it is more difficult to fight over. Moreover, historical animosities remain a significant obstacle to overcome if there is to be cooperation in a security framework.¹⁸

Perhaps the greatest change in the security environment is the transformation from fear of Soviet hegemony to fear of a power vacuum and its potential results. A power vacuum might occur if U.S. military disengagement is sensed, decreasing the perception of commitment of the U.S. to defend its allies and friends. This could have three results. First, one state in the region could feel that it has the opportunity to be more militarily assertive and attempt to gain influence over the other states of the region. Second, a state could feel vulnerable because it senses that it cannot rely on the U.S. to help protect its interests. Third, and most likely, a U.S. withdrawal would have the unintended consequence of magnifying the relative power of certain states. So far, U.S. presence has diminished the importance of differences in the military capabilities of the regional powers. Upon the withdrawal of that presence, these differences could be perceived as far more significant. For example, a U.S. withdrawal would make Japan the largest naval power in the Pacific based on its already existing forces.

In any of these scenarios, the expansion of military capabilities is likely to occur in the region as a result, which is of particular significance to the U.S. with regard to Japan and the PRC. Such expansions could set off an arms race. Other states, such as Vietnam, the ROK, the ROC, and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) might expand their forces due to historical fears of those two large powers and each other. Asian and subregional arms races, as well as nuclear proliferation perhaps, would ensue, thus increasing tensions and the possibility of conflict.

PRESENCE AND U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES BY COUNTRY

This section uses the framework established earlier to examine the political effects of military presence in the Asian-Pacific region.¹⁹ It examines the main trends in each country, as well as the role military presence has in supporting U.S. policy objectives with respect to each particular country.

JAPAN

Although there has been no agreement yet on the Northern Territories, Japan clearly perceives the Soviet threat as decreasing due to less hostile Soviet intentions. According to one news report, the new Japanese Defense Agency Chief recently reasoned, "Moscow does not pose a potential threat to Japan although the Soviet Armed Forces are still powerful enough to pose such a threat."²⁰ As noted above, this reduced threat has caused a slowing of the Japanese military buildup. The opposition to sending Japanese military forces to the Persian Gulf shows widespread resistance to military assertiveness. Internal pressures for a more forceful policy exist, however; some Japanese feel that the country has the right to have a more assertive foreign policy due to its economic power. This view was also expressed during the Gulf crisis, and some analysts look for a growing moderate group of Japanese who favor a more assertive, but not militarist, foreign policy. To further complicate matters, widespread fear of such assertiveness exists throughout Asia based on memories of the Second World War and, to a small extent, spurred most recently by Japanese intervention on the Senkaku Islands.²¹

U.S. military presence serves two related purposes with regard to Japan.²² The first is to deter the following array of threats to Japan:

- Soviet attack
- Closing of the SLOCs on which Japan relies for almost all of its oil and raw materials, as well as much of its trade
- Attack or forced nationalization of Japanese assets in foreign countries
- Chinese military buildup as an attempt to gain regional hegemony.

The second purpose of U.S. presence is assurance. Japan must be assured that the U.S. will act to defend its interests, or it may feel compelled to go it alone, with three possible results. It could build extensive power-projection forces itself, thereby leading others to a region-wide arms race and increased chances and/or intensity of conflicts. Moreover, in the more distant future, Japan might feel that

it needs a nuclear guarantee of its own against the Soviet Union or the PRC. Lastly, a perceived threat to its national security would increase domestic support for those favoring a more assertive military policy.

Because Japan relies on U.S. presence, the threat to withdraw it has given the U.S. some extra negotiating leverage on various issues, ranging from trade to Japanese financial support for U.S. troops stationed there. Thus, continued presence can be important as a bargaining tool in the evolving U.S.-Japanese relationship.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The tense stand-off on the Korean Peninsula represents the greatest possibility of major military conflict in the region.²³ The following trends, however, suggest that the likelihood of war will be somewhat reduced in the future:

- Relations between the two countries are improving as historic talks between the two have begun.
- The DPRK is being pushed to take a less hostile stance and is losing the support of its traditional allies as the ROK improves relations with the USSR and the PRC.²⁴
- Japanese contacts with the DPRK may help it economically and offset this isolation by bringing the DPRK into a more constructive relationship with the West.

Still, a great deal of uncertainty exists, especially over the imminent leadership change in the DPRK. The transition could aid improved relations, or the new leadership could react violently to the isolation of Korea from its allies by trying to build nuclear weapons or starting a military confrontation to force the PRC to choose sides. On the whole, though, the current outlook for relations between the two countries is positive.

The main objective of U.S. military presence on the Peninsula is to deter DPRK aggression. As this belligerence becomes less likely, assurance of the ROK becomes easier. Such assurance that it will be defended against aggression from the North and any possible increased Japanese assertiveness in Northeast Asia serves the purpose of preventing nuclear proliferation by the ROK, which could further antagonize the DPRK and other countries. Such proliferation would also cause considerable concern in Japan and could be one factor that may cause that country to follow suit. Furthermore, assurance based on U.S. presence decreases the perceived threat and reduces the ability of the government to use national security as a reason to suppress opposition and democratic pressures as it has in the past. It also has allowed the government to target its economic resources toward development. Finally, the implicit threat of U.S. presence has served to help U.S. diplomats in various negotiations.

SOVIET UNION

The Soviet threat is perceived as declining throughout the region for the following reasons:

- The domestic political, nationalities, and economic problems are forcing the country to turn inward.
- Economic needs are also driving its quest for improved relations with many Asian countries.
- The Soviets have decreased their support for Vietnam and the DPRK.
- Militarily, the USSR is reducing troops on its border with the PRC. With regard to naval forces, it is withdrawing from Southeast Asia, reducing OPTEMPO and modernizing by stressing quality over quantity.²⁵

The traditional main goal of U.S. presence (exercises and the stationing of significant forces nearby) has been to deter aggression by the USSR or its surrogates. In this new environment, this objective is becoming easier and has allowed the U.S. to pursue other goals through presence. New forms of presence, such as exchanges and port visits, have two main, direct effects. They signal improving superpower relations, which assures the countries of Asia that they will not be dragged into a war, and they cement military-to-military ties to make future cooperation possible. It is also hoped that this presence will be one factor contributing to the overall improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations, which could lead to more favorable Soviet stances on Asian issues.²⁶

CHINA

Several trends make the PRC and ROC areas of possible concern in the future.²⁷ First, with regard to relations between the PRC and the ROC, conflicting tendencies exist: on the one hand, closer economic and humanitarian relations decrease tensions; on the other hand, a small, but growing, independence movement on Taiwan and the increased international participation of the ROC, as well as the return of hardline PRC leaders, heightens the possibility of conflict.

Second, the relationship between China and other powers could also be of concern. As Cold War and Sino-Soviet tensions recede, the PRC has lost its traditional foreign-policy framework--balancing the U.S. and the USSR. This may increase the PRC's interests in a greater regional role. Dramatic domestic-policy changes also make its foreign policy unpredictable. The PRC, and to a lesser extent the ROC, is particularly concerned with Japan translating its economic power into military capabilities.

The U.S. presence has historically tried to deter the PRC from attacking the ROC, and to act as a buffer between them. In assuring the protection of the ROC from attack, U.S. presence helps forestall proliferation by the ROC. As noted above, U.S. presence in Asia decreases the need for Japan to further increase its power-projection forces. By assuring the PRC and ROC with regard to Japanese ambitions, U.S. presence obviates the need for massive Chinese military buildup, which might then spur even more extensive Japanese power-projection force improvements.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Fear of Vietnam has been the "glue" holding ASEAN nations together, as well as the driving force behind the limited cooperation between ASEAN and the PRC.²⁸ As Vietnam withdraws from Cambodia, ASEAN solidarity may decrease. Furthermore, the likely continuation of territorial disputes between ASEAN and the PRC, and within ASEAN, will cause a deterioration of Sino-ASEAN relations. The ASEAN countries also fear an encroaching Indian Navy and Japan's translating its economic influence in Southeast Asia into political hegemony.

Despite these concerns, a strong defense pact between the ASEAN countries is not likely for the following reasons:

- Reduction of major threats as Vietnam withdraws from Cambodia and the Soviet Union from Cam Ranh Bay
- Existence of border and territorial disputes
- Continuation of economic disparities
- Limited military capabilities of the states to assist each other
- Existence of ethnic and religious differences within and between the states
- Different and often competing interests.

Despite these forces working against the likelihood of a defense pact, some less formal bilateral and trilateral cooperation may evolve, but it is not likely to be ASEAN-wide.

In this context, U.S. presence serves several goals. First, it deters aggression by Vietnam, primarily against Thailand through Cambodia. Second, it deters threats to the SLOCs, through which much of U.S., Japanese, ASEAN, and ROC trade flows. Third, it deters threats by Southeast Asian countries to each other. Fourth, it may help decrease the possibility that border and territorial disputes, such as that over the Spratly Islands, will lead to military conflict. Lastly, U.S. presence assures the ASEAN countries from the presence and perceived striving for hegemony by the PRC, India, and Japan. This assurance is meant to prevent arms races and proliferation that could further destabilize the region.

PRESENCE AND REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

Earlier, this study divided U.S. interests in Asia into three categories--military, economic, and political. Having examined the direct contribution of presence to U.S. foreign-policy objectives, it now explores the indirect contribution of presence to those objectives by bolstering stability. For the purposes of this study, "stability" refers to international stability (no major arms races or threats to the territorial integrity of a country), not to domestic stability (threats to the government from demonstrations, movements, or insurgencies).

PRESENCE, STABILITY, AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The U.S. military presence in the Asian-Pacific region has been particularly effective at maintaining stability through the deterrence of threats and the assurance of allies. With regard to the threat of a regional power vacuum, for example, the American presence has deterred efforts by any other power to significantly increase its regional influence. If this were not done, a regional arms race would become a high probability, which would likely retard political and economic development in the region and substantially increase the chances of military conflict. The deterrence of other more specific threats also contributes to regional stability and American interests.

The stabilizing influence of U.S. military presence contributes to U.S. foreign-policy objectives because international stability fosters an environment conducive to political and economic development. Much of U.S. foreign policy--beyond security policy--can be broadly categorized as promoting political and economic development. As a result, stability is important to American interests.

Political development is assisted by stability, because it allows regimes to institute political reforms without the fear of external threats. Instability often leads to a suppression of these reforms in order to maintain domestic control in the face of external threat. This may manifest itself in several policies, including: a "state-of-emergency" declaration, martial law, or direct military rule. Violations of human rights may also go unnoticed with the distraction provided by external threats.

Economic development is also aided by international stability because it encourages open markets, trade, and investment. Instability can drain economic resources due to arms races, damage economic assets in the case of military confrontation, and divert economic or political attention in general. The most successful countries in the Asian-Pacific region, such as the ROC and ROK, attribute their economic development in large part to stable conditions.

The political and economic development of American allies do directly serve U.S. national interests over time because the more advanced countries are likely to be more cooperative politically and useful economically through reciprocal trade and investment. As Japan, the ROC, and the ROK have grown economically, for example, they have been able to serve as important trade partners and sources for capital. They also have been able to take more responsibility for their own defense and contribute to U.S. efforts elsewhere, as they have done financially in the Persian Gulf crisis. Assertions that the U.S. presence serves only the interests of foreign governments, therefore, are shortsighted and misleading. The positive effects of political and economic development for the U.S. should not be underestimated.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FORCE REQUIREMENTS IN ASIA

The political effects of peacetime presence do not provide actual criteria for planning forces and deployments. Rather, they can provide guidelines for *adjusting* force postures to maximize political effectiveness. Planning forces and deployments should continue to be based on factors that are traditionally cited as reasons for presence: (1) deterrence of potential conflicts (the defense of the ROK being the most imminent), (2) timely response to identifiable crises, (3) logistics for operations in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, (4) in-theater training, and (5) intelligence gathering.²⁹

Having planned U.S. forces based on these factors, maximizing the political effects of presence should then be considered. As noted above, the degree of political effectiveness of presence depends in large part on the effectiveness of deterrence. This effectiveness, in turn, depends on the perception of the appropriateness of the forces and deployments. Current forces and deployments are geared mostly toward a Soviet threat to the region. As this threat is considered to be decreasing, however, this force posture may become increasingly inappropriate. This study of the political effects of presence, therefore, leads to three conclusions.

First, the *level* of U.S. forces in Asia is larger than necessary to have the desired political effects. This study on the political effects of presence contends that the desired goals of presence are easier due to decreasing military tensions in key areas, including: Soviet intentions toward the PRC, Japan, and the U.S.; ROK-DPRK relations; and Vietnamese policy with regard to ASEAN, and Thailand in particular. U.S. presence should not be significantly withdrawn, however, because it is the glue that, through deterrence and assurance, inhibits conflict and prevents destabilizing arms races.

Official U.S. policy recognizes these reduced tensions. The Department of Defense official policy statement on U.S. military presence in Asia, *A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century* (also known as the "East Asian Security Initiative")³⁰ envisions a Phase One reduction in forces in the region of 12 percent. Phase Two and Three reductions are also being considered. Even after the 12-percent reduction, a moderate course should be taken with regard to further reductions. Future fiscal constraints are likely to require an overall 25-percent reduction in U.S. forces throughout the world. With the exception of Korea, no foreseeable conflicts are major enough to justify the Pacific theater not reducing its forces by 12 to 25 percent over the next five years. Any cuts greater than that level, however, may lead to the perception in Asia, however wrong or unintentional, of U.S. abandonment, thereby triggering the tensions and arms races that U.S. presence seeks to inhibit in the first place.

Second, the nature of U.S. presence could change due to several factors. As earlier noted, the types of U.S. forces and deployments in the region, previously geared to a large extent on the Soviet threat, are becoming inappropriate. Other threats, such as smaller crises and SLOC control, are of a lower intensity. Also, the partial loss of the bases in the Philippines makes large permanent deployments more difficult. Moreover, there is pressure for withdrawal from the ROK as it sees less of a threat and no longer wants to be in such a subordinate position vis-a-vis the U.S. Finally, there is local, though not national, pressure for a withdrawal from Japan.³¹

These factors lead to the conclusion that U.S. presence will have to rely increasingly on access, as opposed to basing. The basing that does exist will be under pressure to be rotational, as opposed to permanent. Port visits, which show presence but do not have the negative effects of basing, should also increase.³² Most importantly, the Persian Gulf crisis showed that *ad hoc* cooperation with other military forces works well if they have some experience operating together. Joint exercises have been mentioned throughout this paper as an effective, though often overlooked, form of presence. They are a visible display of capability and commitment. The Gulf crisis demonstrated their military utility, thus increasing the perception of their importance. If any changes are made in presence, the most significant one would be an increased emphasis on multinational exercises.

Finally, the *role of perception* with regard to the political effects of military presence must be emphasized. As the main threat moves from aggression by the USSR and its surrogates to a power vacuum and arms races, more attention should be paid to assurance than deterrence. That is, do the countries of Asia feel secure enough so as

not to start destabilizing arms races? Such a judgment is based on their evaluation of the balance of forces and the significance of U.S. presence, not on U.S. judgments. Therefore, to maximize the political effects of military presence, this presence must be appropriate in the eyes of the countries the U.S. is seeking to influence. When asking "how much is enough," the perception of Asian countries should be the focus of attention.

CONCLUSIONS

The exact political effects of peacetime presence are neither tangible nor easily measured. U.S. military presence, however, has very real effects that most governments in Asia believe have a positive impact. As Dr. Yusuf Wanandi, Director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, noted about the U.S. bases in the Philippines:

The political significance of the bases is perhaps of greatest importance to Southeast Asian countries, as they symbolize the presence of the U.S. in the region, which in turn provides some deterrence to intervention by other outside powers.³³

Based on this analysis, Dr. Wanandi argued for a continuation of U.S. presence in the region.

The immediate issue facing ASEAN and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region today is how to prevent a withdrawal of the U.S. from the region in order that a balanced presence of the major powers could be maintained.³⁴

In examining the issues surrounding the political effects of military presence, this study reached six conclusions.

First, the political effects of U.S. military presence are based on the communication and perception of U.S. capabilities and commitment. By contributing to these perceptions, peacetime presence can have the following political effects:

- Deters conflict
- Assures allies
- Augments diplomatic influence
- Aids foreign-policy initiatives.

Second, U.S. interests continue to exist in Asia. Military interests center on preventing one dominant power from emerging in the region, protecting the SLOCs, and defending allies. Economic interests concern free trade, foreign investment, and access to natural resources. Political interests focus on the promotion of democracy and human rights. The severity of threats to U.S. interests will be less in the future, but they will also be challenged in different ways.

Third, tensions between major antagonists are decreasing, reducing the chances of military conflict. This change has led to limited disarmament throughout the region, but the underlying sources of conflict in Asia remain and are unlikely to be mitigated through a regional security framework. Furthermore, the potential for a power vacuum in the region is increasing, especially if there is a perceived U.S. disengagement.

Fourth, through these goals, presence directly supports U.S. foreign-policy objectives with regard to Japan, the Korean Peninsula, the Soviet Union, China, and the nations of Southeast Asia.

Fifth, presence indirectly contributes to U.S. policy objectives by bolstering international stability, which promotes political and economic development. Instability dampens political development because governments are less likely to allow dissent, the basis of democratization, when faced with a foreign threat. Instability harms economic development as arms races drain resources, wars damage economic infrastructure, and foreign threats divert attention from economic planning.

Sixth, the level of U.S. forces in Asia can be reduced without losing the desired political effect. The nature of U.S. presence could change to focus more on access rather than basing. More attention should also be devoted to evaluating force requirements for assurance, rather than just deterrence roles.

In sum, U.S. military presence in the Asian-Pacific region seeks to support U.S. foreign-policy objectives by *detering conflict*, *assuring allies*, and *preserving influence*. For the foreseeable future, continued American military presence in the Asian-Pacific region appears to be necessary to pursue and protect U.S. interests. This presence, however, can be of a somewhat lower level and may need to be of a different nature to appropriately deter threats to these interests. Such changes will allow for the maximization of U.S. political influence in the region, thus maintaining a significant U.S. role in Asia in the 1990s.

NOTES

1. James Blaker, *United States Overseas Basing: An Anatomy of the Dilemma*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990.
2. In studying the political effects of military presence, two primary approaches could be used--case studies or a conceptual approach. The case-study approach, in general, can provide tangible evidence and historical fact, but would be problematic in this analysis for a number of reasons. First, all available case studies on this matter may provide a biased sample because they are "colored" by occurring within the context of the Cold War. Whether these cases would hold the same significance or meaning in the post-Cold War era is uncertain. Any conclusions drawn from Cold War cases, therefore, might no longer be appropriate for changing times.

Second, due to the complexity of the issues being considered in these case studies, the number of variables and factors influencing political outcomes are overwhelming. It would be impossible to isolate the effects derived from military presence alone under these circumstances. There will always be the possibility that some other factor (i.e., diplomatic pressures, economics, or leadership personalities) might intervene and lead to a certain outcome.

Third, due to the fluid nature of events in Asia, there might not even be enough cases to isolate military presence from other variables, let alone conclusively prove its effect.

Fourth, based on these problems, a case-study approach would not provide conclusive results. With the complexity and potential for bias involved, some historical trends could be noted, but conclusions as to the actual political effects of military presence could not be appropriately made.

For examples of the conceptual approach to the study of the political effects of peacetime presence and crisis response, see Edward N. Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy: 1919-1979* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981); and James Cable, *Navies in the Violent Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 71-81. For an example of a case-study approach to crisis response, see Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1981).

3. Case studies may be examined later to see if they support or disprove this initial hypothesis.

NOTES (Continued)

4. This paper centers on the positive effects of presence; however, the potential for negative effects exist. For example, presence can be seen as an example of U.S. historical imperialism, as some view the bases in the Philippines.
5. Though contemporary understanding of deterrence theory is mostly derived from the study of nuclear deterrence, deterrence theory is used here to focus on extended conventional deterrence--the deterrence by the U.S. of attack on its allies through reliance on the threat of use of nonnuclear weapons. This study draws heavily on many works in deterrence theory. For studies of deterrence theory, in general, see Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983); Alexander L. George and Richard M. Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Bruce M. Russett, "The Calculus of Deterrence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (June 1963), pp. 97-109; and Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). For studies of nuclear deterrence, see Lawrence Freedman, "The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists," in Peter Paret, ed., *The Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 735-778; Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1957); and Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962). For a study of conventional deterrence using the case-method approach, see Paul Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).
6. One problem with perception is the target of deterrence not correctly assessing an opponent. "Groupthink" is the name given to a phenomenon when decision-makers' viewpoints conform to those of the group and ignore alternative assessments. See Irving Janus, *Victims of Groupthink* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972). For a useful perspective on perception, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
7. See Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 7-57. Assurance can have the negative effect of not giving an ally enough incentive to share fairly in the burden of its defense. On the problem of burden-sharing, see the classic work of Mancur Olson and Richard Zechhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 48 (August 1968), pp. 266-74.

NOTES (Continued)

8. There is a severe limitation to this effect. When the perceived threats decline, so does the value of U.S. presence, making the leverage in negotiations slim, at best.
9. Another possible political effect is coercion. This goal, which is often cited as an objective of naval diplomacy, centers on convincing a state to stop doing something it is already engaged in. Deterrence, on the other hand, has as its goal stopping a state from doing something it has not started to do. Coercion would be nearly impossible without a visible change in deployments, thus moving the action from the sphere of peacetime presence, defined as regularly planned deployments, to crisis response.
10. This paper does not make the full argument for the importance of Asia to the U.S. and the relative weight it should be given in U.S. foreign policy. Such a discussion is beyond its scope. Rather, this paper accepts the U.S. Government position that Asia is critical to U.S. interests. It surveys U.S. interests in the region so the reader can better understand how U.S. military presence supports U.S. foreign policy objectives. Without a knowledge of those objectives, presence appears purposeless. For reviews of U.S. interests in Asia, see George C. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1988); U.S. Department of Defense, *A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century*; and Jonathan D. Pollack and James A. Winnefeld, *U.S. Strategic Alternatives in a Changing Pacific* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation (R-3933-USCINCP), June 1990), pp. 6-19.
11. In this paper, the SLOCs refer to the Strait of Malacca and other passages from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean.
12. U.S. Army War College, *New Political-Military Realities in East Asia: An Assessment of U.S. Interests, Threats and Commitments* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 25 June 1990), p. 5.
13. On trends in Asian security issues, see U.S. Department of Defense, *A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1990); Bernard K. Gordon, "The Asian-Pacific Rim: Success at a Price," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/91), pp. 142-159; and Jonathan D. Pollack and James A. Winnefeld.
14. The following major conflicts appear to be thawing: (1) U.S.-Soviet, (2) Sino-Soviet, (3) Soviet-Japanese, (4) The People's Republic of China (PRC)-The Republic of China (ROC), and (5) The Republic of Korea (ROK)-the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

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15. Tai Ming Cheung, Susumu Awanohara, Shim Jae Hoon and James Clad, "The New Disorder," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 December 1990, pp. 25-26. Many of the trends noted in this section of the study are controversial. They are viewed positively here, though with caution, because this appears to be the view of most Asians.
16. "'New Austerity' in Defense Spending Outlined," *FBIS-EAS*, (90-248), 26 December 1990, p. 5.
17. Such frameworks might be similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In Asia, they could be region-wide or sub-regional. Possible frameworks include the following: Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA), Concert of Asia, North Pacific Rim or Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation, ASEAN, ANZUS, and South Pacific Forum.
18. Some also note that such a system is unlikely because the region consists of countries that are diverse in their cultural, ideological, and historical experiences.
19. The scope of this project does not permit an in-depth examination of the trends; therefore, their examination will be cursory. Their review is necessary, however, to set the context for appreciating the forces driving the political effects of presence. Extensive references are given should the reader wish to scrutinize Asian politics in greater detail.
20. "New Defense Agency Head on Reduced Soviet Threat," *FBIS-EAS* (90-251), 31 December 1990, p. 9.
21. Japan repelled a boat of Taiwanese heading for the islands whose possession is disputed by both countries. See "A Sporting Effort," *The Economist*, 27 October 1990, pp. 37-38.
22. On U.S.-Japanese relations, see The Center for Naval Analyses, *The Outlook for U.S.-Japanese Security Relations*, Patrick M. Cronin and Jonathan T. Dworken, Rapporteurs, November 1989; Norman D. Levin, *Japan's Changing Defense Posture* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation (N-2739-OSD), June 1988); I. M. Destler and Michael Nacht, "Beyond Mutual Recrimination: Building a Solid U.S.-Japan Relationship in the 1990s," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 92-119; Karel van Wolferen, "The Japan Problem Revisited," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Fall 1990), pp. 42-55; Toshiki Kaifu, "Japan's Vision," *Foreign Policy*, No. 80 (Fall 1990), pp. 28-39; Kan Ito, "Trans-Pacific Anger," *Foreign Policy*, Number 78 (Spring 1990), pp. 131-152; and Jeffrey E. Garten, "Japan and Germany: American Concerns," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 68, No. 5 (Winter 1989/90), pp. 84-101.

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23. For a Korean view on these issues, see Young Koo Cha, *Northeast Asian Security: A Korean Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1988). A dated, but good review of Korean politics and U.S.-ROK relations can be found in William H. Gleysteen, Jr. and Alan D. Romberg, "Korea: Asian Paradox," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 5 (Summer 1987), pp. 1037-1054. For a more recent review of ROK-DPRK relations, and their connection to U.S., PRC and Soviet foreign policies, see Gordon, pp. 147-150.
24. The ROK is also improving relations with the USSR and the PRC to balance Japanese influence. Of course, further isolation of the DPRK could also lead to that country to a harder line with the ROK, but isolation would decrease the support by the USSR and PRC that they would need for military action.
25. The Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 82. For a review of the trends affecting Soviet-Asian relations, see Gordon, pp. 147-150; Rajan Menon, "New Thinking and Northeast Asian Security," *Problems of Communism*, March-June 1989, pp. 1-29; and Harry Gelman, *The Soviet Military Leadership and the Question of Soviet Deployment Retreats* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation (R-3664-AF), November 1988).
26. Other effects of peacetime presence might include the following: (1) impress the Soviet military with U.S. professionalism to increase Soviet respect for U.S. military capabilities, (2) influence the Soviet military debate so they may become more professional, and (3) support Gorbachev from conservative criticism about letting the military decline by demonstrating to the Soviets that their military has status equal to that of the U.S.
27. PRC conflict with India or a brutal and/or opposed crackdown on Hong Kong could initiate larger conflicts, though it is unlikely. On Chinese politics in general, see Lucian W. Pye, "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Fall 1990), pp. 56-74; and Judy Palumbaum, "Dateline China: The People's Malaise," *Foreign Policy*, No. 81 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 163-181. On U.S.-PRC relations, see Winston Lord, "China and America: Beyond the Big Chill," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 1-26.
28. The discussion of ASEAN trends is based on Center for Naval Analyses Professional Paper, *U.S. Interests and Future Military Presence in Southeast Asia (U)*, by Sheldon Simon.
29. These factors all increase capabilities and therefore contribute to deterrence.

NOTES (Continued)

30. U.S. Department of Defense, *A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century*.
31. See, for example, "Okinawans Demand Return of Land Leased to U.S.," *FBIS-EAS* (90-226), 23 November 1990, p. 1; and "Okinawa Governor Planning Feb Visit," *FBIS-EAS* (91-011), 16 January 1991.
32. Visible U.S. presence, such as permanent basing, also has negative effects, such as the establishment of bars and prostitution near the ports.
33. "ASEAN Defense Link Said To Need More Time," *FBIS-EAS* (90-230), 29 November 1990, p. 1.
34. *Ibid*, p. 1.