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Northeast Asia—Cultural Influences  
on the U.S. National Security Strategy

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Larry B. Rogers

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**NORTHEAST ASIA – CULTURAL INFLUENCES  
ON THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

**Larry B. Rogers**

**June 2004**

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## PREFACE

The U.S. Army War College provides an excellent environment for selected military officers and government civilians to reflect and use their career experience to explore a wide range of strategic issues. To assure that the research developed by Army War College students is available to Army and Department of Defense leaders, the Strategic Studies Institute publishes selected papers in its Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy Series.

In this paper, Mr. Larry Rogers discusses the Northeast Asian regional cultures and the current U.S. security strategy in regard to them, and makes recommendations for addressing regional cultural influences to meet U.S. objectives and protect U.S. interests.



ANTULIO J. ECHEVARRIA II  
Director of Research  
Strategic Studies Institute

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LARRY B. ROGERS is currently serving as a Department of the Army Civilian and served 21 years in the U.S. Army, retiring as an Officer in the Field Artillery in 1992. His current assignment is with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, International Army Program. His previous assignments included the Deputy Director of Training for Eighth U.S. Army in the Republic of Korea where he was involved in Army-to-Army training affairs and U.S. Government to Korean Government negotiations concerning live training real estate and infrastructure. Mr. Rogers holds a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Oklahoma and is a 2004 graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

## ABSTRACT

The U.S. core interests and National Security Strategy are founded on Western cultural operatives that assume all nation-states will respond to its influences in a predictable manner. When states do not respond appropriately, we assume they are either recalcitrant or irrational. A decade ago, this approach towards the states of the Northeast Asia region was highly effective as their economic or military dependency upon us, or their fear of both, usually forced them to respond within the scope of our objectives. Today, we no longer have the preponderance of economic or military power in the region, and old tactics will not continue to work effectively. Even within those states considered our allies, tolerance of what is deemed an abrasive U.S. presence is decreasing while anti-Americanism is growing. To continue to maneuver successfully to attain and sustain our interests requires that we carefully consider the perspectives, biases, and influences of these cultures to devise strategies that provide the most effective application of our elements of national power. This paper will discuss the Northeast Asian regional cultures, our current security strategy in regards to them, and recommendations for addressing regional cultural influences to meet our objectives and protect our interests.

## NORTHEAST ASIA—CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The development and implementation of the U.S. core interests and National Security Strategy (NSS) in regards to the Northeast Asia (NEA) region requires careful consideration of the cultures that we are attempting to influence. The effect of Western culturally-based persuasive strategies upon non-Western based cultures can easily lead to serious problems as evidenced by the issues we are facing today in postwar Iraq. Other cultures, even those within our own borders, do not always agree with our perspectives or see a need to adopt our cultural systems over their own. This is true particularly of cultures that existed for thousands of years before our own came into world prominence. To be successful in both the development and subsequent implementation of our security strategies for NEA, we must understand the cultural operatives<sup>1</sup> at work to better apply our strategic influences.

The social sciences have addressed intercultural interaction for many years. Publications abound that address the differences between the cultures of NEA and our own and offer solutions for addressing them. If we rely on might makes right, then the effects of cultural differences are of little concern. Coercive strategies, vice persuasive ones, will obtain the results we want. However, this will not continue in the long run. The key to effecting lasting change within a NEA culture is to recognize its cultural operatives and form persuasive strategies that leverage them.

We accept the importance of knowing our enemy (or opponent) and knowing ourselves. Yet we limit our knowledge of both during intercultural relations as we seek our cognitive comfort zones. Diplomats who negotiate intercultural agreements know diplomacy, not sociology. Fortunately, many are aware of the cultural operatives at play through experience or from information provided by their staffs. Even so, they are still trained in Western diplomacy that is influenced heavily by Western cultural operatives. For example, negotiation can be learned in many Western institutions that focus their course content on how to apply Western psychology to persuade a counterpart. This works fine when negotiating with a Western culture, but applying these tactics and techniques on NEA cultures is not effective and can leave counterparts confused and belligerent.

This paper will discuss and contrast potentially critical cultural operatives that exist within our own and the NEA cultures and describe possible pitfalls that should be avoided during the development and implementation of the U.S. NSS.

### **Western Thought—Eastern Thought.**

What is a culture and why does it drive us to think, behave, and believe the way we do? Culture, as defined by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is the pattern of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. It includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, their religious beliefs, and political and economic systems. Judaeo-Christian doctrine and post-Aristotelian scientific methodologies heavily influence our culture as well. Judaeo-Christian doctrine establishes what is right and wrong, good or bad, moral and immoral, and has been heavily engrained in our consciousness for centuries. These values and beliefs had such

tremendous influence over the creation of our Constitution and laws that even citizens who are not of the Judaeo-Christian faith still live by its tenets. No major values that we espouse are not influenced by it. The Scientific Method establishes our rational system and is just as fully ingrained in our psyche through centuries of education and day-to-day application. We cannot communicate with anyone, even in casual conversation, without the use of such scientifically based concepts as causality, dichotomies, and logic. Although numerous factors influence our culture, understanding that these two factors alone are pervasive and dominate our daily lives helps us to better comprehend our cultural operatives and their strengths and weaknesses.

NEA cultures have different roots that date back much further than our own. In these cultures, philosophy was the primary source of learned social behavior and the development of a rational system of thought. The scientific method did not become a part of their culture until less than two centuries ago and is certainly not integral as yet. Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism were the only systems used for thousands of years to determine proper behavior and proper patterns of thought. These philosophies engrained themselves within these cultures and influenced the development of their people. The results are differences that are both subtle yet profound. As an example, consider these value statements regarding moral worth.

- Worth in the Judaeo-Christian view is determined by our choices.
- Worth in the Confucian view is determined by consequences of our choices.

Western cultures assess worth as being good or bad at the origin of the choice. We can chose to act or not act in a manner that is worthy or unworthy and, therefore, the choice itself is the measure.<sup>2</sup> NEA cultures consider worth at the time of choice as well, but cannot be sure of the value of their decision until it produces a worthy consequence. How can this cultural difference play out in an act of intercultural communication? It, along with other operatives, can lead to friction between participants and eventual failure in communication. Assuming a case where we have a negotiator from each culture discussing an important issue, how should we expect their negotiations to proceed? Should they track along the same course during their negotiations?

**United States**

Greater certainty of worth  
 Greater confidence in choice  
 Increased aggressiveness  
 Less patience  
 Appearance of arrogance

Greater confidence in choice  
 Increased aggressiveness  
 Less patience  
 Appearance of arrogance  
 Perceived as demanding

**NEA**

Less certainty of worth  
 Less assurance in choice  
 Reluctance to chose  
 Attempt to compromise  
 Appearance of irresoluteness

Less assurance in choice  
 Reluctance to chose  
 Attempt to compromise  
 Appearance of irresoluteness  
 Not serious or committed

Of course, this is a simplified assessment, but this type scenario has played itself out on several occasions during military negotiations with South Korean counterparts over the past decade. The perceptions of the participants influence their choices as they progress through the scenario and increase misunderstanding. Simple differences such as these, when functioning at a cultural emotional level, can lead to serious misunderstandings and the ultimate failure of U.S. negotiation strategies.

Certain cultural operatives can have significant effects on the development and implementation of the U.S. NSS. Table 1 lists some of these (United States and NEA) and depicts the contrasts between them.<sup>3</sup>

Operative	U.S. Perspective	NEA Perspective
Ideology	World View – Truth is Discovered Pragmatic Separate from Nature Life is short; fear of death Impatience	World – Truth is revealed Spiritual Integral to Nature Life = Death; less fear of death Patience
Rational System	Scientific Low contextual communication Persuasive Rhetoric Time is linear Stress on the future	Experiential / scientific High contextual communication Associative Rhetoric Time is cyclic Stress on past and present
Societal Structure	Heterogeneous Individualistic Egalitarian A nation-state	Homogeneous Collective Hierarchical A culture-state
Interpersonal-Behavior	Independent Competitive Confrontational Egoistic	Interdependent Cooperative Elusive Altruistic

**Table 1. Contrasting Cultural Operatives.**

As a word of caution, at the basic human level, Northeast Asians are very much like us in that they need or want much of the same things we do. They want security, a comfortable life, a safe environment, and to provide for their children. However, when issues arise that threaten these, they will react as their culture has taught them. When dealing with another culture where the result can be serious, all factors of behavior are in play and the ones listed in Table 1 can create some very interesting behaviors. The most significant of these factors, that are somewhat more abstract, are discussed hereafter.

### **World View.**

This is epistemology that, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is a system of generalized views of the surrounding world and man's place in it. It defines the content

of reality, the mode of thinking about reality, and the principles of life itself. Since the writings of Plato, Western science has been influenced by the belief that truth exists, and knowledge of it is gained through active discovery. The scientific method has always been our means of discovery and has influenced our behavior at the most basic levels. We stand apart from Nature, and we discover the truths that it holds even if we have to wrench it out. The NEA cultures were not influenced by the scientific method until only recently in terms of their cultural longevity. Their world view developed from a layering of philosophies that fundamentally established that truth will reveal itself. These philosophies rejected teleology, the proposition that the universe has design and purpose. Truth exists in nature, and one understands it by becoming one with it.

### **Life and Death.**

Perhaps nothing separates our cultures more at the basic human level of existence than our beliefs concerning life and death. All humans seek an explanation of death and, since we have no means to measure and understand it, we rely on religions or philosophy to do so. Our predominant belief system is founded on Judaeo-Christian doctrine where life and death are separate existences; the latter of which will be eternal and either good or bad. Our short lives, relative to eternity, give us little time to achieve the goodness needed to ensure we attain Heaven. Shortness of life and uncertainty of what will happen after death drive our views on humanitarianism, right to life, the bemoaning of an untimely death, and the somewhat communitarian view that even one life is too high a price to pay. Eastern cultural views are quite different. In Confucianism, immortality is through the fulfillment of your responsibilities to society. If you have done so before you die, then you will be immortal. Confucianism also established that it was socially responsible for an individual to take his or her own life for the good of the whole. Taoism states that life and death are both equal. If you accept that there is no death, then you are immortal. Zen Buddhism states that the fear of death is created through an obsession with the "self." By subordinating the self, one eliminates greed, lust, and other drives that imprison the spirit. Death frees the spirit and is therefore to be anticipated, not dreaded. The Japanese code of Bushido practices this Zen concept where, if one has subordinated everything, including life, to the good of the group, then one can die and become immortal. People of the NEA cultures may often prefer death to life but cling to life in order to fulfill their social obligations. Given these beliefs, why would these cultures place a high value on life, particularly if death satisfies a perceived social obligation? What, then, are their cultural views on humanitarianism, right to life, and the preciousness of life in general? They may agree with our positions on human rights but only as a political expedient. Effecting a fundamental cultural change regarding life and death will not occur until, or if, a new philosophy takes hold (e.g., Christianity).

### **Scientific versus Experiential Learning.**

How we learn has a significant influence over our cognitive process, how we relate to the world, and our view of reality. Professor Seymour Epstein (1991) proposed that there are two basic systems of learning, the Experiential System and the Rational System<sup>4</sup>. The

Experiential System consists of three components: knowledge, activity, and reflection. The Rational System consists of sign systems such as language and mathematics. The most direct contrasts between these two systems of learning are described in Table 2. Experiential learning continues to play a large role in NEA due to only a short period of influence from the Scientific Method. Their philosophies created an Experiential System of learning that has lasted for most of their histories. China was still practicing this in their Confucian-based national testing system less than a century ago. Although the rational system of learning was recently adopted, it will take generations to effect change fully.

Experiential System	Rational System
Holistic responding	Analytic responding
Automatic, effortless processing	Intentional, effortful processing
Emotional Processing	Logical Processing
Associative connections	Logical connections
Reality on concrete images	Reality in abstract symbols
Slower, more difficult change	Rapid, easier change
Crudely integrated, less coherent	More highly integrated and coherent
Siezed by our emotions	Control of thoughts
Seeing is Believing	Need for justification – logic and evidence

**Table 2. Learning Systems.**

### Communication.

Perfect communication between humans is virtually impossible. However, perfection is not required as long as a basic level of mutual understanding can be achieved and the risk of misunderstanding is manageable. Therefore, controlling risk becomes critical and is accomplished through management of the filters that color the communication process. Using Nancy Harper's *Human Communication Theory: The History of Paradigm*<sup>5</sup> and altering it to account for filters, we can see where communication fails (Figure 1). Clearly, miscommunication can occur easily at any point but most significantly in the locations noted. Intracultural communication normally experiences filters during sensory input. Intercultural filters add to this problem and magnify misunderstanding throughout the process. For example, a university professor in Japan once queried his students on their thoughts about a former highly respected United States ambassador who spoke on television the night prior.<sup>6</sup> One female student stated that even though his presentation was excellent, "his wife was not such a good wife. . . the ambassador had dandruff on his shoulder . . . In Japan, the wife is responsible for the husband's appearance and if he is not properly groomed, it is obviously the wife's fault." When asked if the student remembered what the ambassador said, she stated she could not. She could only think about the dandruff. Certainly, cultural filters prevented active communication in this case, and the primary filter at work was contextually based. NEA cultures use high contextual communication that "is one in which most of the information is already in

the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.”<sup>7</sup> The People’s Republic of China (PRC), Korea, and Japan are listed at the top of high contextual communicators. “People are more adept at reading nonverbal behavior and the environment. They also expect others to understand unarticulated communication. Thus, they do not speak as much as people from low-context cultures.”<sup>8</sup> The opposite case may make this clearer. Westerners, with Germany topping the list, rely on highly precise language to code communication as accurately as possible. We say what we mean and mean what we say. But to a Chinese, for example, the context of the message may say something altogether different, coloring the credibility of our statements.

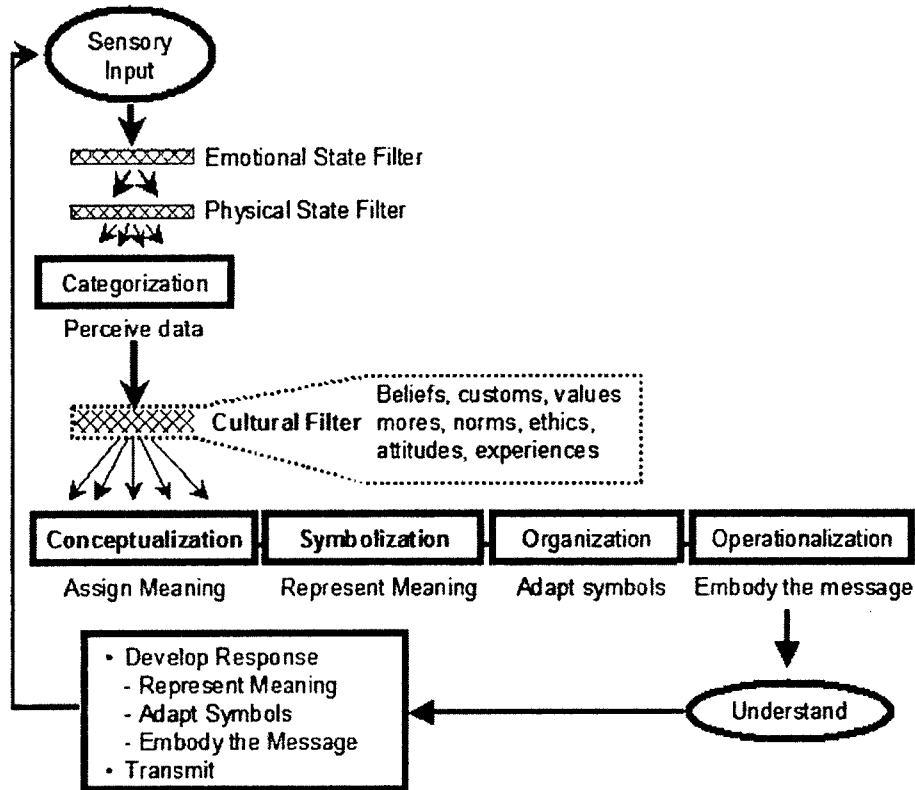


Figure 1. A Communication Paradigm.

### Concept of Time.

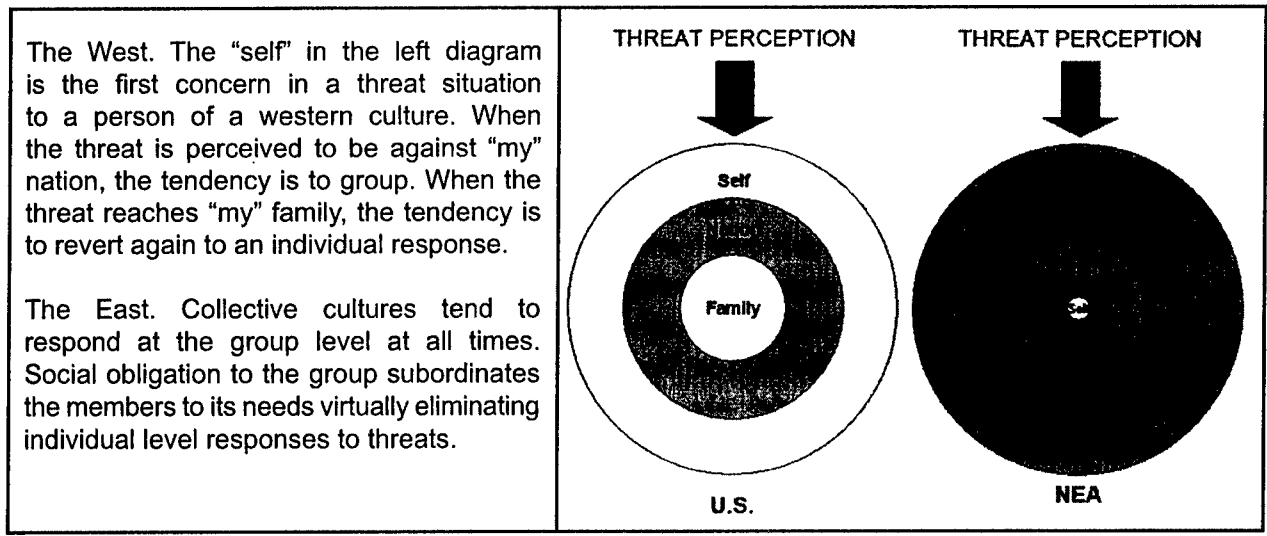
To us, time is of the essence since it is perishable and, under Judaeo-Christian precepts of life, we have only one chance to get it right. The past is important only in the lessons it teaches, and the present is useful primarily as a moment in which to ponder the future. The future is all-important and becomes more so as it closes in on us; driving us to be hurried and not to focus much on lesser important aspects of life. In dealings with others, whether socially or professionally, we appear brusque, impatient, and intolerant. In NEA, the present and the past are considered as the most important. The past establishes the worthiness of one’s actions and is the period where one’s commitment to social obligations is measured. One must always take the time to meet social obligations, and politeness, patience, and tolerance are near culturally mandated traits.

## **Heterogeneous versus Homogeneous.**

We are the melting pot of the world, and we accept and incorporate cultural values on a day-to-day basis, giving us a somewhat mongrel appearance to homogeneous cultures. The PRC and Korea have over 4,000 years of existence as racially oriented cultures (Japan a little over 3,000 years). They do not accept new cultural views easily, and integration of other people into their cultures even less so. No culture that has survived for thousands of years aggressively seeks new and innovative ways to change its society or its racial ethnocentrism. The PRC and Korea have survived over the millennia by bending like the willow when occupied by conquering or colonizing forces in order to either outlast opponents or assimilate them into their own culture. They have continued to emerge as culturally and racially pure. Japan, never conquered or occupied until the end of World War II, has shown this cultural resilience as well. How then do we expect these cultures to react to our intervention in their societies? They yield through compromise and survive in the end, as long as we do not threaten the core of their cultural existence. NEA cultures, regardless of the new global environment, will not be open to radical changes to their societies or political processes.

## **Individualism versus Collectivism.**

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes individualism as a political and social philosophy that places high value on the freedom of the individual and generally stresses the self-directed, self-contained, and comparatively unrestrained individual or ego. It describes collectivism as any of several types of social organizations in which the individual is seen as being subordinate to a social collectivity such as a state, a nation, a race, or a social class. Individualism (I, my, mine) is associated with principles such as inalienable rights, all men are created equal, the pursuit of happiness, as well as life, liberty, and justice. Individuals can join groups but move in and out of them as desired but within the limits of the culture's communitarian influences. Collectivism (we, our, ours) is associated with the principles of sacrifice and subordination of self-interest to the general will of the group. The group defines the self with members who cannot move in and out freely and who sustain membership over a long period. The group and its social obligations and responsibilities drive day-to-day actions and the measure of self-worth. Individuals do not lead these collective cultures even when they are considered despotic. Approach the leader of a NEA culture, and you approach the entire culture. The model in Figure 2 depicts the varying perspectives on the existence of the "self" within individualistic and collectivistic cultures in a general threat environment. Note that to successfully manipulate an individual within a collectivistic culture, the "self" must be migrated towards the outer perimeter of the group. This can only be accomplished by the group to which the person belongs and would entail a difficult information operations campaign to accomplish. Trying to manipulate the individual alone as a single entity will not be successful.



**Figure 2. Individual–Group Model of Threat to "Self."**

**Egalitarian versus Hierarchical.**

All men are created equal, but in NEA, they thereafter are sorted out by varying determinants. A Korean graduate of Columbia University once mentioned that alumni meetings in Korea were always conducted in the English language since the Korean language is socially based and requires the use of numerous honorifics to sort persons by social position. English does not do this, and conversation among the varied alumni members could take place comfortably without having to stratify the party members according to age, graduation date, current job position, and take-home pay. NEA cultures place considerable importance on status and establish rigid rules of behavior accordingly. Even within Korea, where Christian beliefs are now accepted widely, equality remains an interesting concept but only that. Today, the Five Confucian Relationships still dominate these cultures, as seen in Table 3.

<p>King and the subjects          Parents and children          Old and the young          Spouses          Friends</p>	<p>Built upon justice          Love and filial piety          Respect for the old          Differences in roles          Trust</p>
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**Table 3. Confucian Relationships.**

**Nation-state versus Cultural State.**

According to Samuel P. Huntington's hypothesis, nation-states will not be the source of conflict in the future.<sup>9</sup> Civilizations, or cultural groupings that exist across nation-state boundaries, will be the new source. The civilizations he lists include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly

African. Although this proposal is modern and forward thinking, still an underlying flaw in its logic exists. The concept of a nation-state is purely a Western invention. We have assumed that the PRC, Korea, and Japan agreed all along that they were nation-states. In fact, they only accepted this construct as part of their obligation for joining the Western-established and highly-influenced global environment. However, they do not accept it among themselves and, as they have grown within the global environment, the continued application of our nation-state concept has created some degree of resentment on their side. Lastly, thinking of these cultures in terms of a nation-state has prevented us from seeing other perspectives in their behaviors and better understanding their motivations. For example, why does the PRC lay claim to Taiwan when they have never physically owned it for more than 8 years of its history? Two highly feasible culturally based reasons for this exist. First, in China, boundaries are not the defining principal for where their culture resides. The Chinese of Taiwan are of mainland descent and thereby define Taiwan as a part of the whole and subject to the rule of the majority. Second, there has never been closure over who truly rules all Chinese. The Nationalists fled to Taiwan and, until it can be brought under the PRC's control, there will always be a question of who leads their culture.

## **NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE NSS IN NORTHEAST ASIA**

Our cultural operatives are firmly embedded in the development of our national interests and subsequently, within the NSS. Understanding the cultural operatives at work during the formulation of these interests and strategies can be a critical part of their successful implementation. What cultural operatives influenced our thinking in developing our interests and strategies? Will they inherently create conflict with the cultures we are trying to influence during implementation? If so, how do we mitigate this conflict? This section will discuss how the cultural differences discussed previously can affect our national security development and implementation and pose risks to its success.

According to the NSS of 2002, our core national interests consist of the security of the homeland, economic well-being, and the promotion of our values.<sup>10</sup> The first two core interests are basic to human nature and do not differ much among cultures or states. However, the promotion of our values is a different case and is heavily culturally oriented. Promotion, as an active process, is viewed by some as an intrusive attempt to eliminate or alter their cultures. This is arguably where we encounter the most resistance to our strategies. What gives us the right to force our values on others? All cultures have some room to compromise but few will do so when it threatens their cultural values, the heart of who they are. Thus at the outset, one of our basic interests is in conflict with many other cultures and, as such, so are the strategies we developed to support that interest. Those strategies for the NEA that are somewhat more contentious are discussed below, along with the Western cultural operatives that influenced their development and will influence their implementation.

Strategy: "Defend the peace, preserve the peace, and extend the peace." In Western cultures, the foremost definition of peace is a lack of conflict, disturbance, or war and, concomitantly, the loss of life. Western cultural operatives underlying this strategy

are ideology, rational system, and societal structure. Pragmatism, fear of death, future orientation, individualism, and our egalitarian ideals are the key factors.

Strategy: "Require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. forces." This is a product of our geo-political analysis of NEA as well as the entire Pacific littoral. We require bases and stations to project power to ensure our interests along the NEA littoral and within the Eurasian land mass. Western cultural operatives underlying this strategy are ideology, rational system, and societal structure. Pragmatism, scientific methodology, future orientation, nation-state, and independent nature are the key factors.

Strategy: "Maintain forces in the region that reflect our commitments to our allies, . . . and build on stability provided by these alliances . . ." This is also a product of our geo-political analysis of the NEA. The belief is that the presence or threat of military force is the primary means of achieving stability that then creates better opportunities for us. This tends to be the bottom line, and NEA cultures are aware of where our loyalties lie. Western cultural operatives underlying this strategy are ideology, rational system, societal structure, and interpersonal behavior. Pragmatism, fear of death, impatience, scientific methodology, stress on the future, nation-state, and confrontation are the key factors.

Strategy: "Look to Japan to continue forging a leading role in regional and global affairs based on our common interests, our common values, and our close defense and diplomatic cooperation." The assumption is that Japan shares common interests and values with us. When viewed as part of the international environment, the Japanese certainly appear to act in concert with Western values. However, internally, their interests and values are culturally centric and not necessarily aligned with our own. The assumption that Japan could become another Great Britain in its ties with the United States is rather far reaching. Regionally, friction still exists among the other cultures, and Japan and its interests are still viewed as aggressive and potentially harmful to their existence. Western cultural operatives underlying this strategy are rational system and societal structure. Scientific methodology, control of nature, persuasive rhetoric, future orientation, egalitarianism, and nation-state are the key factors.

Strategy: "The U.S. relationship with the PRC is an important part of our strategy to promote a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region." This is predicated on the belief that the PRC will develop as the regional economic power with first order influence over the NEA states and, eventually, the United States will need to manage the PRC's power among the other cultures in the region. Korea and Japan will not accept the PRC as a "cultural" superior, and friction will arise requiring actions on our part to manage that friction. Western cultural operatives underlying this strategy are ideology, rational system, and societal structure. Separate from nature, scientific methodology, egalitarianism, and nation-state are the key factors.

## **CULTURAL LEVERAGES AND STRATEGY ADJUSTMENTS**

Central to the success of our objectives is the recognition of where high risks are present and mitigating the effects of the operatives that could create conflict. Of all

the strategies listed, those targeting the PRC are arguably the most sensitive and the most likely sources of cultural conflict. Dealing with this culture is a pivotal issue and, therefore, a discussion on possible intercultural friction is in order.

Our relationship with the PRC is not satisfactory enough to promote a Western vision of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. Even assuming we can come to terms with China's Marxist government, we still have the very basic and sensitive issue of human rights to overcome before our relations support our objectives. Altering the beliefs of the Chinese leadership on this issue is not enough. The beliefs of the entire culture have to be altered to effect true change. Given their philosophical nature, human rights are simply not a serious factor in their day-to-day lives. Changing the culture will take years of indoctrination in Western beliefs, normally accomplished through the infusion of Christian doctrine. If we want a faster solution, we will have to accept a less than optimal result and use their cultural traits to obtain it. Consensus and compromise are the key. Consider a quote from Deng Xiaoping when commenting on the reunification of the mainland and Taiwan. "We should take the method of 'one country, two systems'. . . . By doing so, we would be able to give an explanation to the people."<sup>11</sup> Collectivism provides an answer that can satisfy the whole through short-term compromises that achieve a "first step" political answer, coupled with a long-term solution. This approach would be far more acceptable to the PRC and provide at least a political solution to the West. This demonstrates a respect for their interdependent nature and our recognition of their cultural principles. Patience is required, as we must approach the total solution over the long term. The PRC's cultural operatives that can be leveraged to achieve our strategies and methods for mitigating our own embedded cultural operatives are discussed below.

### **Life and Death.**

Peace and stability are our aims and are not incongruent with those of the PRC. However, their culture views these aims differently than ours, and we need to target the value they assign them to achieve our strategy. Peace and stability are viewed by the PRC culture as lofty goals that will provide social harmony and prosperity. Neither are highly valued for their ability to protect and preserve human life. As such, we must avoid using life as the measure of peace and stability. As well, we cannot assign deadlines, milestones, or impart a sense of urgency on our part to come to an agreement. We should approach it as a 20-30 year effort, taking it step-by-step and working pieces of the issue year-by-year. Cultural change is acceptable if it is viewed as an interdependent process in harmony with their vision and undertaken in a slow and controlled process.

### **Scientific Methodology.**

In the development of our strategic analysis of the PRC, we employ Western scientific methodology to assess their actions and determine causality-based responses. When dealing with Western-based cultures similar to ourselves, this is effective. With the PRC, this approach is doubtful at best. We cannot use logic or causality statements to predict or influence their actions. They are experiential based, and action to consequence logic

doesn't carry weight. Approaching the PRC experientially and leveraging their view that nature will produce the right result over time will improve the chances of our success. Referring to the PRC's experience with the "unequal treaties" of the 19th century and approaching a solution from an interdependency approach will achieve greater openness on their part. Avoiding future orientation, nation-state references, and persuasive rhetoric during negotiations or interpersonal relationships is key.

### **Communication.**

We must consider that our communication style tends to label us as arrogant, impatient, intolerant, and brusque. Their high contextual communication style can be leveraged using their most relevant experiential learning base such as Confucian writings or analogies from recent history. We must avoid highly complex legal approaches and deal almost at the interpersonal level of trust as their culture places greater importance on the spirit of an agreement rather than on the letter. During interpersonal sessions, speaking clearly, slowly, and avoiding complex adjectives and adverbs will reduce the high contextual level of our language. A study of their cultural habits in social situations can help to avoid missteps with overt gestures or culturally based taboos (e.g., the ambassador's dandruff). Reducing intercultural communication filters is an absolute requirement as we step lightly around the culturally loaded issues of the region.

### **Concept of Time.**

Patience and tolerance are highly valued traits within the PRC culture. Our strategies with them and others in the region must be in terms of one or two generations to effect change. Human rights are not a nation-state issue with the PRC, but a cultural one that will take time to change. This strategy will also be very effective in dealing with the Taiwan issue. Both territories will become unified, given time and cultural similarities, as long as we work to control Taiwan's current tendencies towards independence. Time is not essential to the PRC, and we must practice this trait, as well, to be successful.

### **Individualism versus Collectivism (I, Me, Mine versus We, Our, and Ours).**

Any opportunity we seize to create greater interdependency between the PRC and ourselves will be viewed as culturally favorable. Addressing issues with them from the perspective of individual interests will not. Group consensus building is paramount in their culture, and this means a high level of compromise that ultimately reduces specificity in the content of an agreement. As well, the PRC will expect us culturally to subordinate our individual interests to the needs of our bilateral "group." Even the appearance of the subordination of our interests to our bilateral group will be satisfactory in their eyes. Additionally, we must avoid employing confrontational tactics and espousing egalitarian virtues as these create a negative environment during negotiations and detract from the interdependent social context that their culture automatically tries to create within interpersonal relationships.

## **Egalitarian versus Hierarchical.**

Marxism has not erased thousands of years of cultural influences, and hierarchy continues to exist socially and politically. People of the PRC consider themselves culturally superior to others even at the lowest level of their social order. However, they can accept our being culturally equal to them as long as we are willing to play along. Alluding to cultural superiority over them will alienate them immediately. Attempting to embarrass them culturally by comparing them to others or facing them with world opinion will amount to the same thing; painting them as culturally inferior. However, regional comparison is another matter. This would leverage cultural tensions that have existed among the NEA players for thousands of years. Although they all enjoy a certain amount of shared cultural identity, they are at odds with each other in terms of social cultural primacy. A comparison of one to another (e.g., the PRC to Japan), where Japan is seen in a more favorable light by other members of the world, consistently will invoke a need for the PRC to exceed Japanese accomplishments so as to subordinate them culturally. Where feasible, subtle comparisons of the PRC's lack of accomplishments to the greater ones of South Korea or Japan could be very effective. Comparisons between the PRC and Taiwan most certainly are not recommended.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our strategies in dealing with the cultures of Northeast Asia must include a consideration of the differences in how they think, view the world, and view themselves. Failing to consider these differences is similar to ignoring battlefield intelligence prior to conducting combat operations; we go in blind. Without assessing the psychology and behavior of people from the NEA region, we have only the patterns of Western psychology and behavior to rely upon. As this paper has pointed out, this will not result in a successful strategy. The cultural operatives resident in the NEA region are well-known after years of study along with insights into their cultures and strategies for successfully interacting with them. Given the growth of the cultures of the NEA and their importance to both regional and world stability, it is imperative that we employ and integrate as much knowledge of their cultural operatives into the development and implementation of our NSS as possible. It is apparent that the PRC has done this for quite some time. After all, they and the other cultures of the NEA have joined our "western" world order and have proven that they know how to operate within it as well as influence it. Their study of our cultural operatives appears to be far better than ours has been. Lastly, in dealing with these hierarchal and ancient cultures, we should be careful in how we couch our national interests so that we are not hobbled before we even begin to develop and implement our subsequent strategies. Our values and system of governance should be promoted, but proclaiming our intent beforehand only incites these ancient cultures to resist all of our advances and influences as a survival reflex. Thus, we are failing before we even begin.

## ENDNOTES

1. Cultural Operative: cultural factors at work within an individual that strongly influence personal and interpersonal behavior. These factors are derivative of a complex layering of language, beliefs, values, morals, customs, codes, rituals, and ceremonies within a person's psyche. These factors, whether exhibited within an intra or intercultural setting, will govern to a large degree how any social interaction will progress. The strongest of these factors, generally beliefs and values, operate at both the subconscious and basic conscious levels to govern social and psychological behavior. Every culture has operatives that are similar to others, but the importance given to each is distinctly varied.

2. The concept of measuring the worth of a decision during choice is found within Deontology (the study of moral necessity, duty, or obligation). Deontological theory sets forth that the concept of moral worth is intrinsic in human nature and an integral part of our actions. Rules Deontology is defined by formally established and accepted rules of conduct (e.g., Christian moral values, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, or Federal Law). These rules then become the measure against which moral worth is judged during a choice and subsequent to an action. However, moral philosophers such as Immanuel Kant stated that in determining or measuring moral worth, moral considerations in themselves are the conclusive reasons for guiding behavior or actions. Kant stressed that the test of moral worth rested upon the intent to meet one's moral obligations (duty) and did not require any reference to the consequences that a choice may have caused. The intent behind the choice, if morally based, was the true measure of the worth of the choice regardless of the consequences. More information on this subject may be obtained at:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/>;  
<http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/ross.html>;  
<http://www.acton.org/publicat/randl/liberal.php?id=330>;  
<http://www.routledge-ny.com/ethics/entries/deontology.pdf>;  
<http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/d2.htm#deon>.

3. Jacque Segars Behrens and William F. Bennet, Sr., eds., Nancy M. Hood, Tech Ed., *Looking Forward, Looking Backward*, Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University, 1986, quoted in Esther Kuntjara, "East is East, West is West, and the Twain Shall Meet," available from <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/8229/eiewiwattsm.html>, Internet, accessed on December 9, 2003.

4. Seymour Epstein, "Cognitive-Experiential Self-theory," available from <http://www.wheaton.edu/psychology/faculty/mrm/Documents/Talks/APU/Talk%203%20PowerPoint.pdf>, Internet, accessed on February 14, 2004.

5. Nancy Harper, *Human Communication Theory: The History of a Paradigm*, Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, 1979.

6. John C. Condon and Fathi S. Yousef, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986.

7. Esther Kuntjara, "Intercultural Communication in High Contextual Cultures," 1995; available from <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/8229/ichcc.html>, Internet, accessed on December 9, 2003.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," Summer 1993, available from <http://www.alamut.com/subj/economics/misc/clash.html>, Internet, accessed on December 9, 2003.

10. George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002.

11. Michael Pillsbury, ed., *Chinese Views of Future Warfare*, September 1998, available from [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/Book\\_titles.htm](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/Book_titles.htm), Internet, accessed on December 4, 2003.

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Ms. Gretchen S. Smith**