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China, the United States, and the East Asian Security Order*

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After the end of the Cold War, East Asia did not enter a period fraught with tension and conflict, but surprisingly maintained a relatively long period of peace. The existing literature on the East Asian security order mainly emphasizes structural or processual factors, but these approaches cannot provide an adequate explanation of the interior dynamics and mechanisms of the East Asian security order. The main reasons for the inherent instability in the current system are still unclear. In this paper, the author presents a functionalist explanation and argues that the United States and China's separate provision of the two most important public goods—security expectations and economic benefits—laid the foundation for the current security order in East Asia. However, with the rise of China and the U.S. pivot toward Asia, supplying these two types of regional public goods becomes more difficult than it was previously, and this new scenario will cause instability in the existing order.

Keywords: China; the United States; East Asia; regional security order; regional public goods.

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論 In the period immediately following the Cold War, the East Asian region aroused widespread concern among scholars of international relations.[1] In the light of the most obvious legacy of the Cold War and complex traditional security problems, many scholars were consistently pessimistic about the security situation in East Asia. They argued that the region would likely enter a period replete with tensions and conflicts.[2] However, these pessimistic predictions have failed to come to true. In contrast, East Asia has remained peaceful for many years, and a number of countries in the region have even proposed the formation of an "East Asian Community."[3] However, with the rapid growth of China's strength in the early twenty-first century, as well as the expansion of the United States' presence and level of intervention in the Asia-Pacific region, obvious adjustments have been made in relationships among the countries of East Asia. Moreover, there are some contradictory trends with respect to East Asian security: on the one hand, interdependence among East Asian countries is strengthening as flows of goods, services, and people keep increasing, and investment and trade relationships are expanded; on the other hand, problems such as traditional conflicts over territory, nuclear proliferation, and an increasingly serious arms

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[1]The term "East Asia" as used in this article refers to five countries in Northeast Asia (China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea) and the ten Southeast Asian members of ASEAN, as well as Timor. Occasionally, the term has been used interchangeably with terms such as Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Asia, and Asia-Pacific. For a useful clarification, see Jong Kun Choi and Chung-in Moon, "Understanding Northeast Asian Regional Dynamics: Inventory Checking and New Discourses on Power, Interest, and Identity," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 10, no. 2 (May 2010): 349-52.

[2]For some related analyses, see Gerald Segal, "East Asia and the Containment of China," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996): 107-35; Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/1994): 5-33; Richard Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/1994): 34-77.

[3]There has been growing interest in the concept of an "East Asian community" in Japan, both in government and academia, since the beginning of the century. See Hitoshi Tanaka and Adam P. Liff, "The Strategic Rationale for East Community Building," in *East Asia at a Crossroads*, ed. Jusuf Wanandi and Tadashi Yamamoto (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2008), 90-104.

race are also present in this region.

Despite the development of these contradictory trends, the East Asian region has remained comparatively stable in terms of security; no serious military conflicts between the major actors have emerged, and crises and potential security problems have remained under control. On what basis is the current security order in East Asia maintained? Which actors play central roles in the construction of this order? What types of problems may affect its stability? How should China address changes in the East Asian security order? This paper attempts to address the above questions by analyzing a central question: what is the fundamental basis on which the security order in East Asia has been maintained? First, the paper provides a critical review of the existing explanations of the East Asian security order. It then turns to an explanation of the basis upon which the security order in East Asia is maintained from the perspective of functionalism and analyses the factors that affect the stability of the East Asian security order. Finally, it briefly discusses the prospects for the regional security order and China's corresponding policies.

Structural Approaches and Processual Approaches: Existing Explanations of the East Asian Security Order

"Order" does not solely mean material power arrangements; it also indicates a type of social arrangement based on the distribution of power and interests among the major actors in the system. In the field of international relations, scholars from different theoretical perspectives have developed distinctive definitions of "order."[4] To simplify the discussion, this paper defines "security order" as follows: in specific historical phases

[4]John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 39; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 4, 16-19.

and in specific geographic spheres, each major actor interacts with other actors based on a certain distribution of power and allocation of interests and guided by specific behavioral rules and norms, resulting in an arrangement in which these actors' behavior can be predicted, and security relationships in the system are relatively stable. In a regional security system, the primary criteria that determine whether and to what extent order exists are the existence of a relatively clear power structure, clear behavioral norms, and predictable behaviors among the actors. Scholars have discussed and hotly debated the bases, types, and features of the East Asian security order from different theoretical perspectives, and they have suggested some core elements that determine regional security order, such as the power structure, international institutions, interdependence, common norms, and so on. They have also formed different views on the type of security order that exists, such as a hegemonic order,[5] a balance-of-power order,[6] or a security community-based order.[7] In general, existing studies can be divided into two relatively broad categories: systemic-structural approaches and systemic-processual approaches.

Systemic-Structural Explanations: Material Structure

Realist scholars of international relations have always maintained that changes in the distribution of power in a system inevitably bring about serious competition and conflicts, as a result of the nature of power politics. For example, some scholars hold that the reason for East Asia's long period of peace is that the United States has become the sole superpower in the international system after the Cold War, establishing a *Pax*

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[5]On hegemonic order, see Michael Mastanduno, "Incomplete Hegemony: The United States and Security Order in Asia," in Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order*, 141-70.

[6]On balance-of-power order, see Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the 21st Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 81-118; Avery Goldstein, "Balance of Power Politics: Consequence for Asian Security Order," in Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order*, 171-209.

[7]On security community-based order, see Amitav Acharya, "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order: Norms, Power, and Prospects for Peaceful Change," in Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order*, 210-40.

Americana. From this perspective, the United States is seen as having formed a "hub and spokes" alliance system based on its preponderant power, which maintains its hegemony in East Asia and the stability of the region.[8] Although U.S. hegemony is a crucial factor in the East Asian security order, I argue that the reality of East Asian security does not fully conform to the assumption of "unipolar stability."[9] The United States' predominant position in the global arena does not mean that it possesses hegemony in regional politics, and the structure of a regional-level system might not match that at the global level.[10] As Barry Buzan notes, some scholars conflate the global and the regional levels in discussions of polarity in East Asia.[11] To some degree, East Asia has the densest distribution of major and middle powers. China and Japan fall just behind the United States in terms of economic aggregates; there are also some Southeast Asian countries that are extremely conscious of traditional sovereignty. Thus, the United States, as a power external to the region, has to seek the support and coordination of local powers in regional affairs. For example,

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[8]According to some scholars, the military presence of the United States mediated the security dilemma in East Asia and kept the peace in the region. See Evelyn Goh, "Hierarchy and the Role of the United States in the East Asian Security Order," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 8, no. 3 (September 2008): 353-54; Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 49-51.

[9]As Christopher Layne observes, William Wohlforth and Stephen Brooks has made "the most forceful defense of unipolar stability and the durability of American hegemony," see William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 5-41. See also Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008). For some critiques of Wohlforth and Brooks' arguments, see Charles L. Glaser, "Why Unipolarity Doesn't Matter (Much)," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (June 2011): 135-47; Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Exit: Beyond the Pax Americana," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (June 2011): 149-64; Charles A. Kupchan, "The False Promise of Unipolarity: Constraints on the Exercise of American Power," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (June 2011): 165-73; Jeffrey W. Legro, "The Mix that Makes Unipolarity: Hegemonic Purpose and International Constraints," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (June 2011): 185-99.

[10]For a discussion on whether the United States is a hegemon in East Asia, see Ross, "The Geography of the Peace," 83.

[11]Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32.

Washington's antiterrorism actions in East Asia may require different types of support, such as intelligence, logistics, and military bases, from the region. Therefore, although the presence of the United States in East Asia has some significant ramifications, it is never an absolute power, and its position has declined and will continue to decline in the context of the rise of China and the persistent influence of the recent financial crisis.

In contrast to the "unipolar stability" argument that maintains that the East Asian security order is dominated by the United States, other scholars contend that East Asia has been evolving toward a "bipolar structure" wherein China and the United States are dominant powers in the regional system, thus resulting in a balance-of-power order. From this perspective, the maintenance of peace and stability in East Asia since the Cold War is a result of this type of bipolar structure. As Robert Ross argued more than a decade ago, "twenty-first-century U.S.-China bipolarity should be relatively stable and peaceful, in part because geography reinforces bipolar tendencies toward stable balancing and great power management of regional order."[12] The essence of Ross's logic is that China is a land power and the United States is a sea power, and they have controlled the land and ocean areas of East Asia respectively, which led to differences in the development of their key military capabilities. For this reason, it would be difficult for either country to interfere in the other's core interests.[13] However, the bipolar balance of power between China and the United States may be a possible future order for East Asia, but the current East Asian order is not a bipolar system. If we use the number of the "poles," or great powers, as the basis for judging the distribution of power in the international system, we are assuming that there are no essential differences between the power and capabilities of these "poles," or that they are roughly equal in strength.[14]

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[12]Ross, "The Geography of the Peace," 97.

[13]For this reason, Robert Ross worries that China's recent naval expansion will lead to instability and conflict in Sino-American relations. See Robert S. Ross, "China's Naval Nationalism," *International Security* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 46-81.

[14]Kenneth Waltz provides the classic definition of a "pole." See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 131.

However, countries considered "poles" are usually not equal in strength, as was the case of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The number of "poles" and whether or not they are comparable in terms of power are quite different things, and they have crucial implications for global and regional peace and stability. Although China's GDP is already ranked second in the world, there is still a large gap between its comprehensive strength and that of the United States, and the sustainability of its development is also debated and has been called into question by many analysts in recent years.[15] According to the World Bank, in 2008, the United States accounted for 23.4 percent of the world economy, rising to 24.5 percent in 2009. By contrast, in 2008 and 2009, China's economy accounted for 7.1 percent and 8.4 percent of the world economy, respectively.[16] So at a time when the financial crisis was at its peak, the United States' percentage of the global economy still increased rather than declined, and China still lagged far behind the United States in terms of the size and quality of its economy. Furthermore, a lack of strategic alliances or partners means that China is isolated when contending with the United States and the U.S.-led alliance system in East Asia. Moreover, although China and the United States have some conflicting interests and strategic aims, they also share a wide array of common interests in the region. Thus, their relationship is characterized by a combination of competition and cooperation, which is largely different from the Soviet-U.S. confrontation during the Cold War. While China's strength is growing rapidly, it has neither become a great power on a par with the United States in the global arena, nor inaugurated a bipolar confrontation with the United States in the East Asian region.

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[15]Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Development Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); Scott Kennedy, "The Myth of the Beijing Consensus," *Journal of Contemporary China* 19, no. 65 (June 2010): 461-77.

[16]These data are available at the World Development Indicators (WDI) online, http: //web .worldbank.org/.

Systemic-Structural Explanations: Normative Structure

Social constructivists analyze the East Asian security order by focusing on the roles of ideas and norms in shaping the interests and behaviors of agents. Mainstream social constructivism, represented by Alexander Wendt, is a type of structural theory, i.e., a structural constructivism, and it emphasizes normative/cultural/ideational structures rather than material structures.[17] Alexander Wendt defines social structures as shared understandings, expectations, and knowledge, which constitute the actors in a situation and the nature of their relationships, whether cooperative or conflictual.[18] From Wendt's perspective, the essence of international politics is the dominant ideas rather than material capabilities. The ideational or cultural structure is the deep structure under the surface of the power structure, and the social structure is what can make the material structure meaningful.[19] In the light of this argument, Amitav Acharya applies a constructivist approach, arguing that the norms shared by the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) make it a nascent security community, which ensures security in Southeast Asia. Acharya regards norms as "standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations."[20] Moreover, he notes that regional institutions help to form these norms, and therefore an East Asian security order can be constructed.[21] However, because of factors such as the heterogeneous politics and culture in East Asia, changes in the distribution of power, interests, and

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[17]Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Various different strands of constructivism have been identified and outlined by many scholars. The dividing lines between the different strands of constructivism are often overstated. However, for the sake of clarity, I endorse the opposition between structural and non-structural constructivism.

[18]Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 73.

[19]Qin Yaqing and Wei Ling, "Structures, Processes, and the Socialization of Power: East Asian Community-building and the Rise of China," in *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008), 115-39.

[20]See Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 24.

[21]Acharya, "Regional Institutions," 210-40.

identities among these countries are widespread, so the regional security system lacks vitality. Additionally, territorial disputes in the region are subject to postcolonial nationalist sentiments,[22] and "many of the East Asian states trust the United States more than they trust each other."[23] Therefore, it will be difficult for East Asia as a whole to come to a common understanding and shared interests in the near future. Moreover, the East Asian countries do not share a common vision, with the exception of a common concern about China's growing economic strength. East Asian countries vary in their cultures and ideologies; hence it is difficult to develop a common culture and norms within a short period of time. Take the two regional powers, China and Japan, as an example. Although the two countries are neighbors, and they have similar cultures, they differ considerably in their political, economic, and ideological systems, and given the substantial mutual distrust between their populations, it would be difficult for them to arrive at a common understanding and shared norms. Because East Asia has yet to develop a clear regional normative structure, as the regional culture still lies somewhere between, in Wendt's terms, the Hobbesian and the Lockeian, normative structure does not provide a reasonable explanation for the relatively limited number of conflicts in East Asia.

Systemic-Processual Explanations: Interdependence and International Institutions

Neoliberal institutionalists tend to argue that, so long as countries are interdependent and share common interests, order and cooperation will occur naturally and operate smoothly as a result of the positive effects of various international institutions.[24] The collapse of the bipolar structure at the end of the Cold War made East Asian countries more

[22]Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance," 49.

[23]Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 176.

[24]See Helen V. Milner and Andrew Moravcsik, eds., *Power, Interdependence and Non-State Actors in World Politics: Research Frontiers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), chap. 1.

interdependent and allowed freer flows of people, goods, and resources in the region. Since 1992, ASEAN has declared itself to be in pursuit of regional economic integration. It is not only enlarging its membership but also extending its functions. Vietnam joined in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999, while over this time ASEAN has transformed itself from a regional security institution primarily focused on solving regional disputes to a comprehensive regional cooperation platform, and cooperation among its members has expanded to political and security affairs, economics and finance, and sociocultural and functional cooperation. The combined volume of trade of ASEAN plus China, Japan, and South Korea ("ASEAN+3") is larger than that of the United States, and "sixty percent of imports of East Asian countries in 2006 came from within the region, and that percentage is growing,"[25] which means that East Asia's dependence on outside markets, especially the United States, has declined in recent years. The enlargement of ASEAN's membership and the extension of its functions have significantly increased the degree of internal interdependence in Southeast Asia, and broad common interests have been formed. Multilateral mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and ASEAN+3 also play a vital role in maintaining the security order of the entire East Asian region and in promoting mutual trust among these countries. Kai He discusses the phenomenon of institutionalization in the Asia-Pacific region after the Cold War and explains it from the perspective of economic interdependence. He argues that as economic interdependence grows in the region, countries will adopt an "institutional balancing" method, meaning that they will counter pressures or threats and pursue security by initiating, utilizing, and dominating multilateral institutions.[26]

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[25]Myron Brilliant et al., "Economic Opportunities and Challenges in East Asia Facing the Obama Administration," 5, http://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/press/0902eastasia.pdf.

[26]Kai He, *Institutional Balancing in the Asia Pacific: Economic Interdependence and China's Rise* (London: Routledge, 2009).

Although there are many existing cooperative mechanisms and institutions in East Asia, as Amitav Acharya has stressed, the "ASEAN way" that has been expanded to cover East Asian cooperation emphasizes "informality and organizational minimalism."[27] From the perspective of neoliberal institutionalism, instances of ASEAN-led regional cooperation are only loose arrangements with limited restrictions both on their participants and neighboring powers. In many cases, ASEAN has been regarded as no more than a forum in which to communicate information, a platform to coordinate policies, and a locus for bargaining. In fact, what these East Asian countries are practicing is a type of minimal institutionalism, which means regional cooperation is primarily based on informal mechanisms rather than formal institutions and institutionalization.[28] Moreover, since World War II, the United States has been actively promoting its own strategies for the Asia-Pacific and attempting to extend its involvement in and domination of East Asian affairs. The best way for the United States to ensure its domination of this region is for it to advocate regional cooperation—either bilateral or multilateral—rather than supporting East Asian regionalism, which means exclusive regionalism without the United States.[29] Additionally, some important actors in regional security affairs such as North Korea and Taiwan have not been involved in the ASEAN framework of East Asian cooperation, and the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait are among the most sensitive and potentially conflict-prone areas in this region.

Systemic-Processual Explanations: Process-Oriented Constructivism

Some scholars argue that mainstream constructivism is a structural version of constructivism, and its explanatory power is therefore weak for situations such as that in East Asia where a clear cultural structure is lacking. They provide an alternative model of social community construction,

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[27]Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*, 5.

[28]See Qin and Wei, "Structures, Processes, and the Socialization of Power," 129-32.

[29]David Capie, "Rival Regions? East Asian Regionalism and Its Challenge to the Asia Pacific," in *The Asia-Pacific: A Region in Transition*, ed. Jim Rolfe (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2004), 149-65.

i.e., a process-focused model or "process-oriented constructivism," to explain the community-building process in East Asia since the Cold War. According to these authors, although the level of institutionalization in East Asian regionalism remains relatively low, the dynamics of the process itself maintain peace and cooperation in the region.[30] From this point of view, small and medium-sized countries in Southeast Asia hope to bind major regional powers such as China and Japan within the cooperative network and socialize these powers with the norms advocated by small actors to ensure that such powers are not separated from the regional cooperation process. Therefore, maintaining progress in multilateral cooperation in East Asia is not only the means but also the end. However, as we can easily see, despite the fact that the description "process-oriented constructivism" can be applied to the improved dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea, it does not incorporate other key actors such as the United States, Russia, North Korea, and Taiwan into this process. Moreover, the process-oriented model only focuses on the positive aspects of coordination and cooperation, while downplaying or even ignoring the negative aspects of confrontation and conflict. Given the disputes and contradictions between regional powers, and the conflicts between small and medium-sized countries, the process-oriented model seems to be invalid. Even if the cooperative process has played a role in linking Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia in some functional areas such as the economy, trade, and culture, it does little to address the challenges that these subregions have faced in the political and security fields.[31]

As mentioned above, existing explanations of the East Asian security order can be divided into two categories: one based on structural forces, either with a material structure defined by polarity or a normative structure

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[30]Qin and Wei, "Structures, Processes, and the Socialization of Power," 125-26. For a more detailed theoretical discussion of process-oriented constructivism, see Qin Yaqing, "Relationality and Processual Construction: Bringing Chinese Ideas into International Relations Theory," *Social Sciences in China* 30, no. 4 (2009) 5-20; Qin Yaqing, "International Society as a Process: Institutions, Identities, and China's Peaceful Rise," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 129-53.

[31]For a similar discussion, see Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 150.

defined by systemic culture and norms, and the other based on a systemic process defined as interdependence, institutions, and interactions among major actors. In international relations theory, a system consists of three essential elements: structure, process (interaction among units), and units (especially major units).[32] The weakness of the existing explanations lies in the way they ignore the role of major units in the system, especially the functional public goods provided by those major units that maintain the particular systemic structure and the operation of the systemic process. This failure to identify the major actors and recognize their functions leads to inaccurate and incorrect understandings of both the dynamics of the current East Asian security order and the inherent instability underlying this order.

Therefore, this article attempts to fill the gap left by existing explanations of the East Asian security order by using a functionalist approach. What needs to be specified is that the functionalist approach applied here differs from the usual understanding advocated by regional integration theorists. As a theory of regional integration, functionalism argues that cooperation in one functional area spills over into other functional areas. In this article, the functionalist approach stresses the effect of the division of labor in providing public goods in different functional areas, especially in the areas of security and economics, on the formation and maintenance of regional order.

Security Expectations and Economic Benefits: A Functionalist Explanation

The international system exists in a state of anarchy. However, as the major powers can provide key public goods and guarantee the survival

[32]According to Kenneth Waltz's definition, a "system consists of a structure and interacting units." Waltz categorizes the structure at the system level and the interacting units at the unit level. In contrast to his categorization, Joseph S. Nye, Jr. highlights the differences between structure and process in his discussion of system levels, and the "systemic process" refers to how these units interact. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 79; Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Neorealism and Neoliberalism," *World Politics* 40, no. 2 (January 1988): 250.

of other countries and their development needs, the international system is actually an "anarchic but orderly" realm. In international relations, the provision of some primary public goods is essential for the formation and maintenance of the order in both the global and regional systems.[33] Some notable public goods in international relations are the maintenance of a stable balance of power, the promotion of an open international economic system, the preservation of global commons such as freedom of navigation, the maintenance of international legal regimes and institutions, the provision of development assistance, and mediation of international conflicts.[34] With regard to sustaining the regional order, major regional powers are responsible for the provision of related public goods, which directly affect the region's degree of stability.

Where the security order in East Asia is concerned, the most important public goods can be characterized in terms of two dimensions: security and economy.[35] Regional security and prosperity are mutually dependent and complementary, and they both contribute to a stable regional order. Although traditional and nontraditional security issues among regional actors have remained important since the end of the Cold War, there is also a substantial demand for prosperity because most countries across the region are sharply focused on economic development.[36] While there is no absolutely hegemonic power in East Asia that can afford

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[33]For discussions on international public goods and their meanings, see Charles P. Kindleberger, "Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy: Exploitation, Public Goods, and Free Rides," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (January 1981): 242-54; Charles P. Kindleberger, "International Public Goods without International Government," *American Economic Review* 76, no. 1 (March 1986): 1-13; Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 34; Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 74, 86-87.

[34]Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Recovering American Leadership," *Survival* 50, no. 1 (February-March 2008): 64-65.

[35]Francis Fukuyama, "East Asian Political Economy from a Global Perspective" (paper presented to the PRI-SAIS Conference on "The Future Prospect of the East Asian Economy and Its Geopolitical Risk," Tokyo, February 23, 2004), http://www.mof.go.jp/english/others/ots022a.pdf.

[36]T. J. Pempel, "More Pax, Less Americana in Asia," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 10, no. 3 (September 2010): 465-90.

to provide all of the public goods required to ensure regional cooperation and stability, two key public goods—security protection and economic benefits—have been guaranteed and supplied in a stable way, and these two public goods are mainly provided by the United States and China, respectively.[37] Although the distribution of power in East Asia cannot be characterized as a bipolar structure, there is no doubt that the roles that the United States and China have played in maintaining the regional order are of paramount importance.

The United States' Guarantee of Security Expectations

East Asian countries have a long history of suffering from colonial aggression through the modern era, and the region's traditional security challenges remain serious. Because of this, the need for security continues to be one of the top concerns for countries in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, some competitive and complementary security frameworks have emerged in the East Asian security order, such as the regional alliance system led by the United States, the new security concept and regional security cooperation advocated by China,[38] and the ASEAN Regional Forum initiated and dominated by the ASEAN countries. The U.S.-led hub-and-spokes system is doubtlessly the most inflectional among these frameworks.[39] Since the 1990s, by maintaining a moderate military presence in East Asia, supported by bilateral military alliances and quasi-alliances, and supplemented by a regional multilateral security mechanism, the United States has improved the hub-and-spokes regional

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[37]A similar argument is made by John G. Ikenberry, who claims that "economically, most East Asian countries increasingly expect their future economic relations to be tied to China. In terms of security, most of these countries continue to expect to rely on American alliance protection." However, Ikenberry's emphasis is on the role of U.S. hegemony, as the U.S.-dominated "hub-and-spoke" security system remains the "single most important anchor" for regional stability. See G. John Ikenberry, "American Hegemony and East Asian Order," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58, no. 3 (September 2004): 353-54.

[38]Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, "China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept," July 31, 2002, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2612/2614/t15319.htm.

[39]Francis Fukuyama, "The Security Architecture in Asia and American Foreign Policy," in *East Asian Multilateralism: Prospects for Regional Stability*, ed. Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 234.

security network it constructed during the Cold War. This facilitates Washington's involvement in East Asian regional security affairs.

It is worth emphasizing that, regarding the role the United States has played in East Asian security affairs, we should distinguish between "providing a security guarantee/protection" and "stabilizing security expectations." The former refers to the protecting and protected relationship between the security provider and receiver, while the latter does not require this type of relationship between the two sides in the security interaction. Although the United States provides security guarantees to only some countries (namely its allies and security partners) rather than the whole region, it has objectively stabilized the security expectations of most of the countries in the region.

In practice, the security system dominated by the United States has served the function of stabilizing the security situation in East Asia. First, for quite a long period after the Cold War, it pacified Japan, the largest economic power in the region, preventing it from taking the leading role in regional security affairs, and reduced other countries' worries about power competition in the region. To many observers, Japan's reluctance to translate its economic muscle into military power has been primarily determined by some domestic constraints, such as Japan's institutional arrangements and pacifist norms.[40] However, some analysts have emphasized external factors, especially the role played by the United States. The United States has contributed to Japan's postwar pacifism in at least two interrelated ways: on the one hand, given its alliance with Washington, Japan is willing to ride cheaply, if not completely free of charge, on the United States for national security;[41] on the other hand, U.S. protec-

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[40]Richard J. Samuels, *"Rich Nation, Strong Army": National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994); Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policy Responses in a Changing World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993).

[41]I would like to thank one anonymous referee for pointing this out. See also Akitoshi Miyashita, "Where Do Norms Come From? Foundations of Japan's Postwar Pacifism," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 1 (2007): 101; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 34-35.

tion also prevents Japan from remilitarizing, which in turn has helped mitigate the fears of other countries in the region. As Richard J. Samuels, an expert on Japanese domestic politics, has stated, "without the U.S. military as a 'pacifier,' . . . Japan will become a great (and nuclear armed) power."[42] The United States' military presence in East Asia has long won the approval of a number of countries (especially small and medium-sized countries) in the region, as they are worried that Japan and China, the two regional powers, will acquire regional leadership roles. While the United States actively encourages and supports Japan taking additional international responsibility, and even supports Japan becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Washington has restricted Japan's nuclear-weapons development, its attempts to eliminate limits contained in its so-called peace constitution and seek autonomy from the United States, and its desire to play the leading role in Asia.

Second, the United States helps to reduce the worries of other East Asian countries concerning the rapid rise of China. The attitude of many of these countries to the acceleration of China's rise since the 1990s has been extremely complicated. On the one hand, China's neighbors have become increasingly dependent on China's rapidly developing economy, and they seek to benefit from it; on the other hand, because of several complex geopolitical, strategic, and historical factors, a number of conflicts have arisen between China and its East Asian neighbors over territorial disputes, historical problems, ideological differences, etc., which have further intensified these countries' worries about the rise of China. Given this situation, some countries have attempted to improve their political and military relations with the United States, which has provided excuses for the United States to strengthen its political and military power in the region.[43] On the

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[42]Richard J. Samuels, "Wing Walking: The US-Japan Alliance," *Global Asia* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 17; Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarisation* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[43]Evelyn Goh stresses the Southeast Asian countries' need for the U.S. presence in the region, see Evelyn Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 113-57; Goh, "Hierarchy and the Role of the United States," 353-77.

issue of territorial disputes between China and its neighbors, the United States, either explicitly or implicitly, stands with the latter. Take the recent Huangyan Island (also known as Scarborough Shoal) dispute as an example. Although the Americans have reiterated that they "do not take sides on the competing sovereignty claims to land features in the South China Sea," some high level officials have underscored the U.S. commitment to the Philippines under the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) signed in 1951.[44] In addition, with arms sales and joint military exercises, the United States has strengthened its military relationship with the Philippines throughout the dispute. Purposeful ambiguity has also been maintained in the case of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute. As tensions between China and Japan have increased in recent months, the United States has insisted that, while it does not take sides, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan—which commits Washington to protecting territories under the administration of Japan—covers the disputed islands. From a Chinese perspective, the United States does not hold a neutral position on these disputes. M. Taylor Fravel has quite rightly warned that, although the United States does not take sides on the sovereignty claims, its recent effort to reduce tensions "has run the risk that some claimants might be emboldened and that the United States might become unwittingly entrapped."[45] China's development is crucial to the maintenance of stability in East Asia and provides an impetus for the economic development of countries in the region. However, as East Asian countries lack mutual trust, some of them may not be confident that China's rise will be a peaceful one, and may attempt to hedge against China by strengthening their relations with the United States.

Finally, the United States has also prevented the escalation of crises and the spread of conflicts in the region. There are several complex po-

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[44]Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Philippines Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario, and Philippines Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin after Their Meeting" (remarks, Washington, D.C., April 30, 2012), http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/04/188982.htm.

[45]M. Taylor Fravel, "The United States in the South China Sea Disputes" (paper presented at the 6th Berlin Conference on Asian Security, Berlin, June 2012).

litical, economic, and security issues in East Asia, some of which have escalated into serious crises and conflicts at various times. Out of concern for its own strategic interests, the United States is reluctant to permit disorder in the East Asian security situation and thus attempts to bring some security conflicts under control. For example, from 2003 to 2004, when President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan and his supporters were agitating forcefully on behalf of Taiwan independence and were attempting to change the status quo regarding Taiwan, the George W. Bush administration repeatedly sent envoys to Taiwan and adopted punitive measures to prevent an escalation of tension in the Taiwan Strait.[46] President George W. Bush even publicly rebuked the Taiwanese president, stating "the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose."[47] This took place because, as Robert Ross noted, "Washington has long considered Taiwan's moves toward independence a threat to U.S. security because they could lead to war."[48] Apart from Taiwan, the U.S. presence in the region has also been seen as a stabilizing force on the Korean peninsula and other conflict-prone areas.

China's Supply of Economic Benefits

The expectation of a relatively stable security environment is only one of the fundamental components of the East Asian security order. Economic development and growth is another important demand of East Asian countries, both for domestic and international reasons. Thus, while the United States' involvement in the region has stabilized most of these countries' security expectations, alone it is not sufficient to satisfy these countries' demands for wealth and power.[49]

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[46]Robert Sutter, "The Taiwan Problem in the Second George W. Bush Administration," *Journal of Contemporary China* 15, no. 48 (August 2006): 417-41.

[47]Quoted in Michael D. Swaine, "Trouble in Taiwan," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (March-April 2004): 39.

[48]Robert Ross, "Taiwan's Fading Independence Movement," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (March-April 2006): 148.

[49]David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," *In-*

In the economic dimension, China is committed to developing its own economy and contributes economic benefits to countries in the region, which is indispensable for the maintenance of regional stability and prosperity. Since the reform and opening up that took place in 1978, China's economy has developed rapidly, and its economic growth has made positive contributions to both the regional and global economies. With their geographical proximity and cultural similarity, East Asian countries have obtained a significant number of business opportunities and a huge market in China, and these economic benefits have in turn aided their economic development and social stability. Although deepening economic cooperation and interdependence among countries will not necessarily lead to improvements and progress in their security relationships, the former will nonetheless have a positive impact on the latter, especially because most East Asian countries list economic development as one of their primary goals.

China has become an "economic powerhouse" and the most powerful engine for growth in the East Asian region.[50] In the1990s, Japan's economic bubble burst, and it fell into a long-term recession and downturn. During that period, the volume of Japan's trade with East Asian countries shrank. This particularly reduced import growth, which has a significant boosting effect on regional economic growth, and Japan's economic position in the region fell. Compared to Japan's faltering leadership in East Asian economic development, China's economic growth rate is consistently high. In the last two decades, China's average annual GDP growth has remained at around 9 percent, and the total size of its economy has increased, surpassing France in 2005, the United Kingdom in 2006, Germany in 2007, and Japan in 2010. It is currently the second largest economy in the world. Despite the economic decline of Japan, East Asia is still the region with the most rapid economic development in the world, and China's

ternational Security 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 82; Lawrence C. Reardon, "The Economic Dimension of the Asian Security Order," *Issues & Studies* 41, no. 1 (March 2005): 236.

[50]Tilak Abeysinghe and Ding Lu, "China as an Economic Powerhouse: Implications on Its Neighbors," *China Economic Review* 14, no. 2 (2003): 164-85.

powerful economic development and its sizable market have clearly played a positive role in promoting development throughout the region. In 2009, China accounted for 10.1 percent of ASEAN's exports, 13.3 percent of its imports, and 11.6 percent of its general trade (compared to Japan's shares of 9.6 percent, 11.4 percent, and 10.5 percent).[51] Japan's trade with China is growing consistently, and it is increasingly dependent on China. In 2009, China accounted for 22.2 percent of Japan's total imports and 18.9 percent of its exports (compared to the United States' shares of 10.7 percent and 16.1 percent).[52] In 2011, the value of China's trade with other Asian countries topped US$1 trillion. China's investments in Asia approached US$20 billion.[53] These statistics demonstrate that China has become the largest trading partner of the majority of its neighbors.

China has also gradually become an advocate for and facilitator of East Asian economic cooperation. China has negotiated and signed free trade agreements with its neighbors—for example, China was the first to establish a strategic partnership and a free trade area with ASEAN. What is more, China has consistently provided active support to any East Asian countries suffering from the impact of financial crises, major natural disasters, epidemics, etc. During the East Asian financial crisis of 1997, for example, when developed countries such as the United States and the European countries evaded their responsibilities and delayed coming to the rescue, the Chinese government promised not to devalue its currency and actively participated in regional financial and economic recovery programs. The Chinese government made clear contributions to the prevention of regional financial fluctuations and avoided any possible deterioration in the regional political and security situation resulting from the crisis.

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[51]Available on the ASEAN website, http: //www.asean.org/stat/Table19.xls.

[52]Available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/pds/gjhdq/gj/yz/1206_25/.

[53]"Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi Answers Questions from Domestic and Overseas Journalists on China's Foreign Policy and External Relations," http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t911854.htm.

As East Asian economic cooperation has intensified, the ASEAN countries' economic dependence on China has increased. According to the General Administration of Customs of China, China's foreign trade (both imports and exports) was worth US$2,972.76 billion in 2010, an increase of 34.7 percent over 2009. Moreover, the ratio of China's trade surplus to the total value of its imports and exports decreased from 11.6 percent in 2008 to 8.9 percent in 2009 and to 6.2 percent in 2010.[54] In addition to the overall growth in its foreign trade, China has become a major export market and source of trade surplus for countries and regions such as ASEAN and Japan. In 2010, the total value of bilateral trade between China and Japan was US$297.77 billion, an increase of 30.2 percent, and its trade surplus with Japan was US$55.65 billion, an increase of 68.5 percent, and China became Japan's largest market again after 2009.[55] Since 2003, China has replaced the United States as the largest goods export market for South Korea. Moreover, since 2002 when China and ASEAN launched negotiations to establish a free trade zone, China has gradually become the main trading partner of the ASEAN countries. In 2009, China was Vietnam's largest trading partner, Malaysia's second largest export market, Thailand's second largest trading partner, and the Philippines' third largest trading partner. Since 2009, China has been the largest trading partner of ASEAN. In 2010, the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area was established, and more than 90 percent of the products traded between China and ASEAN's six senior members (Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore) have no tariffs, while China's average tariff on goods from ASEAN decreased from 9.8 percent to 0.1 percent.[56] In 2011, total bilateral trade between China and ASEAN coun-

[54]Available on the website of the General Administration of Customs of China, http://www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab1/info281211.htm

[55]Available on the website of the China Foreign Trade Centre (under the Chinese Ministry of Commerce), "Zhongguo 2010 nian jinchukou zongzhi da jin 3 wanyi meiyuan, 12 yue waimao chuang xingao" (China's total import and export value achieves nearly US$3 trillion, and foreign trade in December creates a new high), news release, January 11, 2011, http://www.cftc.org.cn/cn/News/NewsShow.asp?id=4523

[56]These figures can be found in a report released by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

tries amounted to US$362 billion. As of the first half of 2012, this figure reached US$187.82 billion, a 9.8 percent increase over the same period in 2011.[57]

Because of the rapid development of China's economy and its geographical proximity to the ASEAN countries, China's contributions to East Asian economic development have surpassed those of the United States. China accounted for 10.1 percent of ASEAN's exports, 13.3 percent of its imports, and 11.6 percent of its total trade in 2009, while the United States' shares were 10.1 percent, 9.3 percent, and 9.4 percent, respectively.[58] China has been ASEAN's largest trade partner for three years in a row, and ASEAN has already overtaken Japan as China's third largest trading partner. Although trade is not the only indicator of economic influence, it is the most direct measure of economic ties and interdependence among nations. The import and export figures of the major East Asian economies, as shown in tables 1 and 2, suggest that economic interdependence with China is deepening for most countries, and their direct economic ties with the United States and Japan are decreasing. However, it is only fair to say that the United States and Japan have also played important roles in East Asian economic development and integration, particularly in such areas as investment, foreign aid, and technology. The expansion and enhancement of trade ties between China and the ASEAN economies has not only contributed to East Asian economic development but also intensified cooperation among those economies.

While I am emphasizing the roles of China and the United States in the supply of public goods in the economic and security areas respectively, I want to make it clear that I do not dismiss these countries' contributions in other fields. For example, the global free trade system built under the

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2011. See "China-ASEAN Cooperation: 1991-2011," *China Daily*, November 16, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2011-11/16/content_14101968.htm.

[57]These figures were recently announced by China's vice minister of commerce, Gao Hucheng. See "China's Investment in ASEAN Maintains Rapid Growth," *Chinese Government's Official Web Portal (Gov.cn)*, August 10, 2012, http://english.gov.cn/2012-08/10/content_2202062.htm.

[58]Available on the ASEAN website, http: //www.asean.org/stat/Table19.xls.

Table 1
East Asian Economies' Exports to China, U.S., and Japan as a Percentage of Total Exports

	Year	Indonesia	South Korea	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
China	1999	4.1	9.5	2.7	1.6	n.a.	3.2	6.5
	2005	7.8	21.7	6.6	9.9	8.6	8.3	9.9
	2011	11.3	23.8	17.9	21.2	10.4	12.0	11.5
U.S.	1999	14.2	20.5	21.9	29.6	n.a.	21.7	4.4
	2005	11.5	14.5	19.7	18.0	10.4	15.4	18.3
	2011	8.1	10.0	8.6	13.8	5.4	9.6	19.1
Japan	1999	21.4	11	11.6	13.1	n.a.	14.1	15.4
	2005	21.1	8.4	9.3	17.5	5.5	13.6	13.4
	2011	16.6	7.0	10.6	14.0	4.5	10.5	12.0

Source: Calculated using data from ADB, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2012.

Table 2
East Asian Economies' Imports from China, U.S., and Japan as a Percentage of Total Imports

	Year	Indonesia	South Korea	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
China	1999	5.2	7.4	3.3	3.4	n.a.	5.0	5.7
	2005	10.1	14.8	11.6	6.3	10.1	9.4	16.0
	2011	14.8	16.5	13.7	14.6	10.4	13.4	25.5
U.S.	1999	11.8	20.8	17.4	20.7	n.a.	12.8	2.8
	2005	6.7	11.8	13.0	19.2	11.7	7.4	2.3
	2011	6.1	8.5	7.9	9.4	10.8	5.9	3.8
Japan	1999	12.1	20.2	20.8	20.0	n.a.	24.3	13.8
	2005	12.0	18.5	14.6	17.0	9.6	22.0	11.1
	2011	11.0	13.0	10.0	12.3	7.2	18.4	8.4

Source: Calculated using data from ADB, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2012.

hegemony of the United States after World War II continues to operate on both the global and regional levels, and the international economic system dominated by the United States has provided East Asian economies with public goods such as free trade, a global currency, financial credit, and development assistance. However, as its power declines, the United States

is unwilling to sustain and strengthen the supply of public goods in many areas in this region and is exhibiting an increasing inclination to obtain its own benefits. Where China's contributions in the security area are concerned, Beijing is involved in a number of actual and potential disputes over territory, territorial waters, and maritime rights in the region.[59] Over the past two decades, for the purpose of creating a peaceful and stable regional environment for its own economic development, China has pursued a strategy of self-restraint and accommodation and adopted the guiding principle of "shelving differences and seeking joint development" in disputes over territorial waters and maritime rights with neighboring countries, even when these differences and disputes impact upon its core national interests. But in recent disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea, China seems to be increasingly assertive. Although there are different rationales for and explanations of China's new assertive diplomacy, it will undoubtedly trigger more unease among China's neighbors and contribute to the emerging instability in the region, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The United States' allies and security partners in East Asia have established very close economic ties with China (see figure 1). Generally speaking, the security guarantees offered by the United States have enabled these U.S. allies to enjoy the economic benefits provided by China's rapid development without fearing that their security will be jeopardized. Moreover, China has continued to cooperate with other East Asian countries and has attempted to alleviate their concerns surrounding China's increasing economic, diplomatic, and military clout in the region.[60] As

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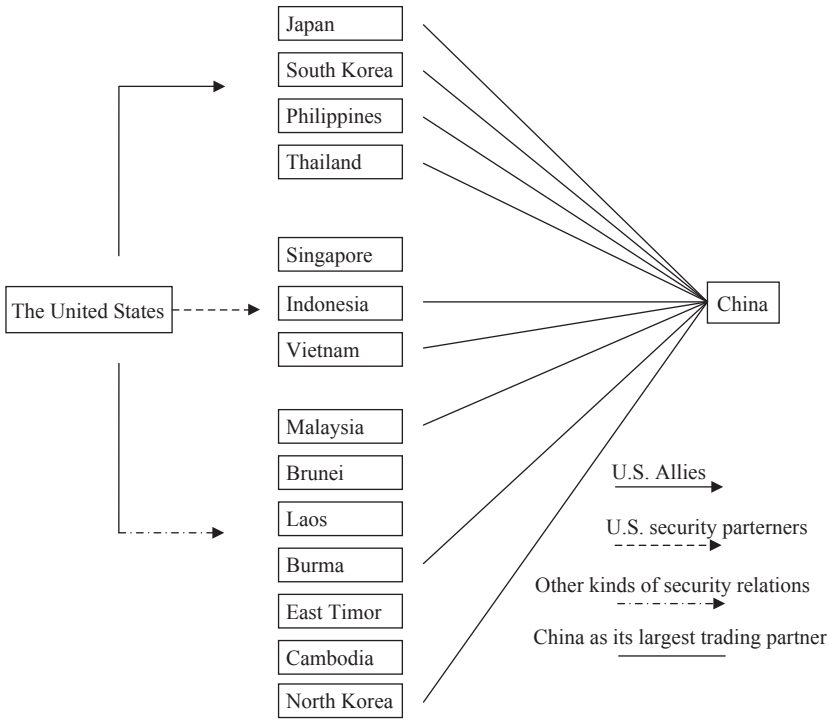
[59]Jianwei Wang, "Territorial Disputes and Asian Security: Sources, Management, and Prospects," in Alagappa ed., *Asian Security Order*, 384.

[60]Avery Goldstein calls China's grand strategy a "neo-Bismarckian turn." By this he means that Chinese leaders have emulated Bismarck who eased the European leaders' concerns about a united Germany. See Avery Goldstein, "China's Emerging Grand Strategy: A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?" in *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, ed. G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 57-106. China' strategy has also been described as one of reassurance. For some related discussions, see Jia Qinguo, "Peaceful Development: China's Policy of Reassurance," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 59, no. 4 (December 2005): 493-507; Xuefeng

Figure 1
U.S. Security Networks and China's Economic Relations in East Asia



Source: Adapted from Zhou Fangyin, "Zhongguo jueqi, dongya geju bianqian yu dongya zhixu de fazhan fangxiang" (China's rise, the transformation of East Asian structure and directions of the development of the East Asian order), *Dangdai yatai* (Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies) (Beijing), 2012, no. 5:8.

stated above, although the countries of East Asia share only a few common understandings, a belief that "military-political stability . . . [is] a necessary foundation for the successful economic development that would underpin regime legitimacy" is one of them.[61] To some degree, success-

Sun, "Why Does China Reassure South-East Asia?" *Pacific Focus* 24, no. 3 (December 2009): 298-316.

[61]Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 162.

ful economic development is more likely to encourage these countries to maintain peace and stability in the region.

The Emerging Instability of the East Asian Security Order

Over the past three decades, East Asia has enjoyed relative peace and stability, something which has been mainly dependent on the fulfillment of security expectations and the stable provision of economic benefits. However, as China's strength continues to grow and the regional power structure shifts, the East Asian security order is becoming unstable and more uncertain. According to the theoretical explanations articulated in this paper, the reason for the instability of the current security order is the gap that exists between the supply of regional public goods by the United States and China. In the context of China's rise and the United States' "return" to East Asia, it is only necessary for a serious dispute or conflict to occur between these two powers for both security expectations and economic benefits to decline simultaneously.

There are many actual or potential security problems in East Asia, and most of them are in the issue-area of traditional security. As the regional distribution of power changes, some traditional security problems may get worse and lead to conflicts. These problems can generally be divided into three types: (1) competition for regional leadership among regional powers such as China, Japan, and the United States; (2) the struggle for national reunification across the Taiwan Strait and on the Korean peninsula; and (3) disputes over territory, territorial waters, and maritime rights, particularly with China. Although in order to safeguard their economic development, the countries involved are unlikely to intensify these conflicts for the time being, the difficulty of resolving them will always present a dilemma for East Asian security. Moreover, there is always the danger that some minor event could spark a massive conflict.[62]

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[62]Barry Buzan argues that the conflicts in East Asia will not lead to a war among the powers,

In the security dimension, while the United States has provided some countries in East Asia with security guarantees by maintaining bilateral military alliances and security partnerships, and fulfilled the security expectations of the entire region, it has not been actively involved in many of East Asia's traditional security problems and has instead adopted a hands-off attitude. However, in recent years, the United States has clearly enhanced its presence in East Asia in an attempt to preserve is central role in the Asia-Pacific region. This makes it more likely that Washington will get involved in regional security affairs. To some degree, competition among East Asian countries will increase the significance of the U.S. presence and enhance the U.S. alliance system in the region. Under the Obama administration, the United States has made a high-profile declaration of its intention to "pivot toward Asia," and it has enhanced its strategic position and influence in the region by expanding military deployment, holding frequent joint military exercises, strengthening military and defense cooperation with China's neighbors, and becoming increasingly involved in the South China Sea and East China Sea territorial disputes between China and other Asian countries.

The U.S. pivot toward Asia has emerged in the context of a shift in the global balance of power, a weak U.S. economic recovery, the end of the global war on terror, and China's rapid rise. Although the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent war on terror did shift the strategic focus of the United States and China has become an essential participant and stakeholder in the existing United States-led order, there is no "win-win solution" to the structural competition between them. The eight-year-long war on terror, especially the two major wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, seriously depleted Washington's energy and resources for fighting a nontraditional enemy. The 2008-09 economic recession had a serious impact on the U.S. economy, but China had benefitted a lot from the war on terror, which, in the words of one of China's leaders, was "a period of strategic opportunity"

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but it is quite possible that there will be additional regional and local conflicts on the Korean peninsula, in the Taiwan Strait, and in the South China Sea. See Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 131.

(戰略機遇期) for China. It is not surprising that once the United States sensed how China's rise was threatening its global dominance, it shifted its strategic focus back to Asia. According to one U.S. analyst, there is no doubt that "the pivot was motivated by concerns over China's behavior and its growing power and influence in the Asia-Pacific,"[63] even though it was not "aimed at containing, encircling, or counterbalancing China."[64]

In the context of the U.S. pivot toward Asia, Washington and Beijing have experienced a more strained relationship over the last two years. Unlike the periods of confrontation and tension between the two countries in the past, over such issues as Taiwan, Tibet, human rights, and trade, the situation that has developed in their bilateral relationship in these two years is unprecedented since the end of the Cold War. As the China specialist David Shambaugh argues, the main feature of current Sino-U.S. relations is that "the competitive elements in the relationship are growing and becoming primary, while the cooperative ones are secondary and declining."[65]

China must also bear some responsibility for the emerging instability of the region, since China's rise in itself is a source of uncertainty and unease for some of its neighbors. Growing power brings expanding interests, and over the past two years, Beijing has been criticized for its increasing assertiveness, especially where territorial disputes are concerned.[66] From

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[63]Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 38 (Summer 2012): 3.

[64]Bonnie Glaser and Brittany Billingsley, "U.S.-China Relations: U.S. Pivot to Asia Leaves China off Balance," *Comparative Connections* 13, no. 3 (January 2012): 29-42.

[65]David Shambaugh, ed., *Tangled Titans: The United States and China* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 5.

[66]This seems to be the general consensus among various specialists. See Thomas J. Christensen, "The Advantages of an Assertive China: Responding to Beijing's Abrasive Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (March-April 2011): 54-67; Michael D. Swaine and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Assertive Behavior—Part Two: The Maritime Periphery," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 35 (Summer 2011): 1-29. According to the U.S. Department of Defense's 2011 report to Congress on Chinese military activities, "in recent years China has demonstrated occasional signs of assertiveness in Asia, particularly in the maritime domain." U.S. Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011), 55.

a Chinese perspective, its so-called assertive diplomacy is no more than a rational and reasonable reaction to external challenges, especially when sovereignty is at stake. When China behaved in this way in the past it was simply because it "did not have the capabilities to protect its interests when it was economically and militarily weak."[67] Considering certain external and domestic factors, it is hardly surprising that China is becoming more confident and even assertive. However, China's expanding interests and increasingly assertive actions will definitely arouse suspicions and concerns among other countries in the region. If China were to maintain a low profile and exercise restraint and patience as it did in the past, we would expect its relations with its neighbors to remain relatively stable and peaceful. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that China will become more and more proactive in regional affairs, especially in the maritime domain. If it increasingly uses its economic strength in a negative way (as a punishment tool) rather than in a positive way (as a tool of reward), China will make its neighbors feel more uneasy than they did before.

Turning to the economic domain, China may not be able to provide sufficient economic benefits to other East Asian countries in the future. First, while China has enjoyed many years of stable and rapid economic development and has become the second largest economy in the world, it remains a developing country focused on serving its own economic interests. This focus will constrain China's ability and willingness to provide public goods for its neighbors in East Asia. Second, its relationship with other East Asian economies is more competitive than complementary, as these countries have similar industrial structures to that of China and they compete with China for export markets among the developed countries. They are also competitors for foreign direct investment and for building production and manufacturing bases. China's economic development model is unlikely to change any time soon, so its competition with the

[67]Kai He and Huiyun Feng, "Debating China's Assertiveness: Taking China's Power and Interests Seriously," *International Politics* 49, no. 5 (September 2012): 637.

countries of Southeast Asia that are also industrializing will certainly increase. Finally, the United States is not only strengthening its political and security influence in East Asia but is also attempting to revive its economic influence in the region in competition with China. As East Asian economic integration intensifies, the United States is actively participating in and attempting to dominate the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP). Washington is also seeking to persuade more East Asian countries to participate in the TPP negotiations, which are aimed at building an Asia-Pacific economic cooperation mechanism dominated by the United States and at restricting the roles of China and Japan in the East Asian regional integration process.

Additionally, as China and the United States seek to play more important roles in sustaining the East Asian security order, interactions between these two key actors will also influence the future development of the East Asian security situation. Although China will continue to rise, the U.S. presence in East Asia is unlikely to fade away and may even be further strengthened, as although the countries of the region may depend on China economically, they do not consider China to be a reliable security partner or a strategic substitute for the United States. Although many countries in East Asia hope to expand their economic relations and cooperation with China, they are still skeptical of China's strategic intentions. A reasonable choice for them is to offset the pressure from China's rising power and uncertain intentions by strengthening their security cooperation with the United States, as the U.S. security guarantee will give them the confidence to benefit from developing their economic ties with China. That is why most East Asian countries have adopted strategies of accommodation rather than balancing toward China since the end of the 1990s.[68]

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[68]Opinions differ as to whether the East Asian countries have adopted a balancing strategy toward China. For a recent survey of opinions on the question, see Steve Chan, "An Odd Thing Happened on the Way to Balancing: East Asian States' Reactions to China's Rise," *International Studies Review* 12, no. 3 (September 2010): 387-412. John F. Fei has made a careful assessment of some Asian countries' security and economic policy responses to China between 1992 and 2008. See John F. Fei, *Beyond Rivalry and Camaraderie: Explaining Varying Asian Responses to China* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2011).

Clearly, Washington's allies and security partners in the region also hope to gain room to maneuver, either to obtain benefits from the regional competition between China and the United States or at least to avoid being damaged by the conflict. Thus, the rise of China will strengthen the presence of the United States in East Asia and the dependence of countries in the region on the United States for their security. This situation may present a problem for Chinese decision makers.

Neither China nor the United States is likely to become the sole and absolute hegemon in East Asia in the near future, so neither of them can or will become the provider of both of the two basic public goods—security protection and economic benefits. Given its slow growth since the 1990s, and particularly after the downturn in its economy in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the United States is unable to provide additional economic benefits to the region. While China consistently adheres to a non-aligned policy, it is unlikely to be able to provide definite security guarantees to other countries in the region. This situation will lead to an insufficient supply of these public goods, and may become a substantial cause of future turmoil in the East Asian security situation.

Faced with the inherent instability of the existing East Asian security order, China also needs to adjust its strategy of relying excessively on economic instruments to stabilize the security environment. Since the end of the Cold War, China has pursued a policy of befriending its neighbors and has tried to develop a friendly, tranquil, and prosperous neighborhood in East Asia through strategies that are mutually beneficial or that even risk sacrificing some of its own interests. As noted above, self-restraint is at the core of China's policy toward its neighbors, and this policy has definitely had a positive impact on China's economic development. However, if other countries do not reciprocate, China's core interests will be damaged.

Over the past two decades, there has been continuous debate over the likelihood of a serious rivalry between China and the United States. Proponents of classic theories of international relations, such as the security dilemma theory and the power transition theory, have already concluded that the combination of Washington's ambition to maintain its domination

and China's rapidly rising power makes confrontation between these two countries inevitable. The United States is seeking to maintain its dominant role in the international system and it fears that the growing power of China will challenge this ambition. Maintaining hegemony has been the foremost strategic aim put forward in almost every U.S. national security strategy report since the end of the Cold War, and we can deduce that China's rise naturally constitutes a threat to U.S. hegemony, regardless of whether China is a status quo state or a revisionist state.[69]

Traditional theories such as the security dilemma theory and the power transition theory have identified the fundamental cause of instability in the international system as competition for power and status among the great powers. However, when applying these theories at a regional level, we need to take into consideration some basic mechanisms by which the fundamental cause is translated into the outcome of regional order, i.e. stability or instability. A functionalist explanation provides us with such a mechanism: when the security needs and economic needs of most countries have been satisfied by the United States and China, the region will be stable and prosperous; in contrast, if these needs cannot be satisfied because of increasing competition between their providers, the region will be prone to increased tensions and conflicts.

Conclusions

Since the late 1990s, East Asia's relative peace and stability has primarily been due to two key actors—the United States and China—which provide separate public goods for the region. Generally speaking, the United States guarantees the security of most of the countries in region,

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[69]Xuetong Yan, "The Instability of China-US Relations," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 2010): 263-92; Aaron L. Friedberg, "Hegemony with Chinese Characteristics," *National Interest*, no. 114 (July-August 2011): 18-27; Aaron Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

while China generates economic benefits for them, although there is some overlap in this provision of benefits. The issues that require attention are that neither China nor the United States has managed to develop a balanced situation in East Asia, nor do they belong to a hegemonic group, and their division of labor in supplying regional public goods is unintentional and stems from their respective strengths in different fields and their different strategies for development and competition.

The United States provides security protection for a number of East Asian countries and thus creates a comparatively hierarchical relationship, while the economic cooperation between China and countries in the region is more likely to be a mutually beneficial relationship characterized by equal exchanges. East Asia is unlikely to have an absolute hegemon any time soon. Therefore, to a large extent, peace and stability in the region will be determined by the interaction between the United States and China, and the influence they generate by supplying two of the most important types of public goods in the region.

In the reality of East Asian security, the influence of China's rapid economic development is contradictory: on the one hand, China's economic rise provides enormous economic benefits for countries in the region, and this has had a positive effect on regional stability; on the other hand, many countries in the region are concerned about China's power and intentions and the potential competition and conflict induced by U.S. involvement and intervention that may disturb regional stability in the future. To resolve this dilemma, China has to make these countries feel that China's economic growth is "an opportunity for the region rather than a threat."[70]

Obviously, if China can only provide economic goods to the region and if it fails to employ other crucial instruments of national power and make positive contributions in other areas, it will not be a true great

[70]Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, "China's Regional Strategy," in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 51.

power, whether regionally or globally.[71] Moreover, economic tools alone are not sufficient to allay the fears of countries in the region about China's rapid economic development and accumulation of power. To encourage the region to participate in China's development and share in China's growing opportunities, the country also needs to take more active political and military measures to reduce the dependence of countries in the region (at least some countries) on the United States for their security needs, and to increase their trust in and reliance on China, thereby constructing a new foundation for the East Asian security order in both the economic and security dimensions.

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[71] In a recent commentary, Joseph S. Nye asked the question: "has economic power replaced military might?" He made a reasonable argument that China's economic power cannot compete with American military might, but we should not always consider China as an economic power. It should and will translate its economic power into the other forms of power essential for great power status. Nye's comments on China's weakness can be found in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Has Economic Power Replaced Military Might?" *CNN.com*, June 6, 2011.

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