

Will Europe's Past Be Asia's Future?

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For the first time in the modern era, Asia is emerging as a distinct regional state system – a cluster of strong, prosperous, independent nations dealing intensively and continuously with one another in diplomatic, strategic and economic matters. Prior to the nineteenth century, geography and technology combined to keep these Asian interactions at a comparatively low level. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the region was largely dominated by outside imperial powers, then divided by the Cold War. As the twenty-first century begins, Asia will, finally, 'stand up' and take its place alongside Europe and North America as a leading centre of wealth and power.

What will be the nature of the relations among the newly empowered nations of this increasingly important region? Is Asia, like Europe before it, destined to endure an interval of interstate rivalry and, perhaps, war? Or will the Asian states move directly to a protracted period of peace, prosperity and stability?

'Realists' versus 'Liberals'

In Western academic circles (and to some extent, albeit less self-consciously, in policy-making circles as well), the discussion of these issues has tended to take the form of a debate between adherents of two distinct schools of thought about the fundamental character of international relations. On the one hand, there are the self-described 'realists'. These are people who believe, in essence, that the absence of some supra-national governing authority all but guarantees that instability and struggle will be the norm in world politics, while periods of stability and peace are exceptional and transitory. All of recorded history, the realists claim (and certainly the last 500 years of European history) bears out this expectation. To believe that Asia will somehow be different is to engage in wishful thinking.

In support of their generally gloomy outlook, realists also make a number of more specific arguments about the character of the emerging Asian system. Some note that intervals of rapid change, like the one through which Asia is

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presently passing, are especially dangerous. Periods of accelerated economic and technological development typically result in dramatic shifts in the international distribution of military power, and these can raise the risks of misperception, mutual fears, miscalculation and confrontation. The domestic social and political turmoil that often accompany dramatic economic development can make matters worse in a variety of ways, most notably by providing leaders with strong incentives to undertake aggressive external policies in order to consolidate their grip on power.

International systems in which one state in particular is rising very rapidly are especially prone to upheaval.¹ Swiftly ascending powers like today's China invariably challenge the legitimacy of treaties, territorial settlements and hierarchies of prestige and deference put in place when they were relatively weak. Not surprisingly, the same policies that a rapidly growing state sees as perfectly reasonable and fully in keeping with its expanding capabilities will often appear disruptive and threatening to its neighbours. As they seek to counterbalance and contain a rising power, however, the defenders of the status quo may end up feeding its sense of grievance and encouraging its more aggressive impulses.

Finally, many realists worry that multipolar systems, in which there are three or more strong states, are especially prone to instability.² Asia was never divided along a single ideological axis in the same way as Europe after the Second World War. Still, the end of the Cold War appears to be accelerating the emergence of a more truly multipolar system, with a cluster of 'big' powers (including Japan, China, India, Russia and, to the extent that it remains engaged, the US) and an assortment of others with substantial wealth, technological competence and potential military power. If the realists are right, it may be as difficult to achieve a stable, lasting peace in a multipolar Asia as it was in Europe in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In short, realists are sceptical of the possibilities for genuine progress in world affairs; they tend to believe that because of the strength of universal, underlying forces that transcend particular places and periods, certain patterns of behaviour occur over and over again.

Liberals are more optimistic. They believe that there are progressive influences at work that are causing old, destructive patterns to be broken and allowing new, more peaceful ones to take their place. Most liberal analysts believe that the industrial and democratic revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries unleashed forces that have been transforming the character of world politics. This process is furthest advanced among the industrial democracies of Europe and North America, but it is already far along in Asia as well. Liberals hope that the same global forces that they believe have allowed the West finally to break its long tradition of fratricide can help the nations of Asia to avoid a similar, and equally wasteful, historical detour.

Following Immanuel Kant, most contemporary liberals base their optimism about Asia (and about the world as whole) on the pacifying effects of increased economic interdependence, the spread of democracy and the growth of international institutions. Liberal theorists have always believed that capitalism

and trade would be potent forces for peace. People who are free to pursue their own well-being are likely to be preoccupied with doing so, and disinclined to see their incomes taxed away by governments intent on making war. Nations whose populations benefit from bilateral trade will have a powerful reason to remain at peace. As has already happened in Europe, in Asia the widening acceptance of market mechanisms, and the deepening of regional economic ties, should go a long way towards counterbalancing any residual inclination towards conflict. Countries that are busy trading with one another are far less likely to go to war.³

The spread and strengthening of democracy in Asia will reinforce the effects of increasing economic interdependence. Liberals note that, while democracies may not be intrinsically peaceful (they often make war on non-democratic regimes), they generally show unusual deference and delicacy in dealing with like-minded governments. Over the past 200 years, democracies have seldom, if ever, fought one another.⁴ The implications for international relations are obvious and profound: assuming that democracy continues to spread and the 'democratic peace' continues to hold, the likelihood of war should diminish. As the world's regions fill up with democracies, they will become more peaceful. Europe has already benefited greatly from this evolutionary trend; Asia will soon follow suit.

Finally, liberal analysts place great faith in international institutions. Whatever their precise form, these mechanisms facilitate regular communication, provide forums for discussion, negotiation and dispute-resolution, help to establish rules of acceptable behaviour, and generally promote cooperation between nations. The contribution that organisations like the European Economic Community and European Union have made to easing mistrust among the formerly warring West European states provides powerful evidence of their potential efficacy. In the opinion of most liberal observers, the emergence in recent years of pan-Asian international institutions like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum are enormously hopeful signs.

Asian exceptionalism?

European history is the laboratory from which liberals and realists alike have derived their widely divergent theories of inter-state relations. As numerous observers have pointed out, however, there are important differences between Asia today and the Europe whose experience of war and peace informs our current analytical frameworks.⁵ Whatever their utility in the setting in which they were derived, these frameworks may not be universally applicable. In other words, Asia's future may not resemble Europe's past because Asia is simply a very different place, culturally, geographically and geopolitically. There are at least five variations on this basic theme.

'Natural' hegemony

Modern European history can be told as a story of successive bids for mastery by a single power.⁶ At various times, Spain, France, Germany and Soviet Russia

each sought to impose its will on an entire continent. All of these attempts to gain preponderance ultimately failed, although not without first producing a cycle of costly arms races, shifting alliances, crises and, in all but the most recent case – namely, the Cold War – widespread warfare and destruction.

Why has no single power ever succeeded in gaining dominion over all of Europe? The answer to this question comes in two, inter-related parts. First, while several have come close, no one state has ever been able to assemble sufficient material power simply to conquer all the others in the region. What an aspiring hegemon could not take by force in an initial run of military successes, it was typically unable to extract later through threats and inducements. Those states that remained outside the grasp of the pretender to preponderance eventually banded together to resist it, to balance its power and ultimately to overturn its empire.

Second, the problems for potential conquerors have not had to do solely with an insufficiency of raw power. At least since the decline of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise in the seventeenth century of the Westphalian state system, the principle of hegemony has also lacked legitimacy. Having proclaimed themselves the absolute rulers of their individual domains, European monarchs became increasingly reluctant to submit to the dictates of others. Later, with the emergence of democracy and the concept of national self-determination, modern nation-states were even more resistant to conquest and domination. Over the centuries, opposition to hegemony, and a shared belief that the best guarantee of sovereign independence was the maintenance of a roughly equal balance of international power, thus became essential aspects of the international political culture of Europe.⁷

Some analysts argue that, because of its unique material and cultural characteristics, Asia may be considerably less ‘hegemony-proof’ than Europe; on the contrary, it may be positively ‘hegemony-prone’. China is so much bigger, so much more populous and has so many more natural resources than most of its neighbours that it seems to be a ‘natural’ regional hegemon in a way that no European power could ever hope to be. Although displaced for a time by a combination of internal upheavals and unequal encounters with more advanced outside states, China seems poised to resume its rightful place as Asia’s dominant power. By many raw measures of national might, China is already vastly better endowed than most of its immediate neighbours; if it continues to grow economically, while retaining its political unity, these advantages will increase still further. A modernised China could be as difficult for local powers to balance against as was its ancient counterpart. Surveying the situation in East Asia, the late Gerald Segal concluded that: ‘The only other region in the world where the balance of power is so dominated by a single state is North America. The contrast to the far more balanced European condition is striking.’⁸

Differences in political culture may reinforce the effects of these very different material circumstances. According to Singaporean Kishore Mahbubani, ‘Asians accept hierarchy’ and, indeed, they regard a clear ordering of

relations as the key to domestic and international tranquillity.⁹ Such attitudes may well have deep roots in Confucian culture but, in international affairs, they seem also to reflect the raw realities of power. Whereas in Europe the dispersal of strength and the insistence on autonomy went hand in hand, in Asia a heavy concentration of capabilities has encouraged an inclination towards deference and an acceptance of Chinese hegemony. Both 'European-type hegemonic wars' and a European-style balance-of-power system have, according to Samuel Huntington, been absent from Asia. Instead, for 2,000 years before the arrival of the Western powers, 'East Asian international relations were Sinocentric'. Most of the other states in the region have long traditions of either cooperating with, or being subordinate to, China.¹⁰

Huntington suggests that similar patterns may well prevail in the future. With the rapid rise of Chinese power, he predicts, the other Asian states will have to choose between 'power balanced at the price of conflict' and 'peace secured at the price of hegemony'. Western societies might opt for conflict, balance and autonomy. But 'history, culture, and the realities of power strongly suggest that Asia will opt for peace and hegemony'. Instead of joining together to balance the power of a rising China, the nations of Asia will be more likely to hop on the Chinese 'bandwagon'. And, far from repeating European patterns of international politics, Asia is much more likely to replay its own. 'Asia's past', concludes Huntington, 'will be Asia's future'.¹¹

Is China the 'natural' hegemon of Asia? The answer to this question depends in part on how narrowly the region is defined. China's advantage in potential power over the states of South-east Asia is overwhelming, and even the inclusion of Japan and Korea may not be sufficient, in the long run, to right the balance. If India and Russia are added, however, the situation may be less lopsided. And if the US remains a Pacific power, an equal balance in raw capabilities is entirely plausible. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, changes in technology have reduced the slope of the 'power gradient', and made it possible for states to make their presence felt at ever-greater distances from their own frontiers. Whatever the patterns of the past, these changes have expanded Asia's strategic scope, creating more opportunities for balancing coalitions to form and, in all likelihood, making it more difficult for China to recreate anything resembling the pre-modern, Sinocentric tribute system – assuming that it wishes to do so.

Potential power and actual, usable power are, of course, two very different things. For the moment, even some of China's smaller but more economically and technologically advanced neighbours have sufficient military capabilities to give themselves a good chance of resisting coercion, and perhaps even of defending themselves against attack. Through its acquisition of sophisticated defensive systems, even a comparatively small and isolated country like Taiwan has been able to raise substantially the cost of a possible Chinese invasion.¹² Japan certainly has the financial resources and the technological know-how to develop its own, highly capable air, sea and land forces and, if it chose to do so, it might be able quickly to deploy nuclear weapons and

ballistic-missile defences. Australia and, perhaps in the longer run, Indonesia may also be able to build up their military capabilities so as to partially offset, if not entirely to match, those of an expansive, ambitious China. At least for the time being, then, the distribution of power in Asia is not necessarily as favourable to Chinese hegemony as might at first appear to be the case.

What of the culture of hierarchy and deference? The wider circle of Asian powers includes a number of states that have not historically accommodated themselves to Chinese superiority and several, notably Russia and India, that have their own long traditions of playing balance-of-power politics. It cannot simply be assumed that these countries will fall willingly into an expanding Chinese orbit. On the contrary, it appears more likely that one or both will seek to balance China as its power grows. Since the late 1990s, India in particular has taken steps in this direction: testing nuclear weapons, expanding its naval capabilities, and moving towards closer relations with Japan, Vietnam, Australia and the US.

Within East Asia more narrowly defined, Indonesia and Vietnam have repeatedly demonstrated an inclination to balance and contain China, rather than 'bandwagoning' along with it.¹³ Most important in the long run is the question of how Japan will respond to China's re-emergence. Japan accepted Chinese preponderance in the distant past, and it has shown an inclination in this century to side with other predominant powers (including Britain at the turn of the century, and the US during the Cold War). Still, there are reasons to doubt that Japan will ever again accept subordination to China. Because of the limits of existing technology, the pre-modern tribute system did not involve high levels of continuous interaction between China and the political entities beyond its immediate frontiers. A China that has the capacity to oversee and to intrude actively into the affairs of its neighbours may be less appealing as a regional hegemon than its comparatively unobtrusive ancient ancestor. Japan's past practice of throwing in its lot with Britain and the US, both of which were distant and largely unthreatening liberal-democratic powers, may also not provide an accurate indication of its future policies toward a much closer and potentially more menacing China. Finally, the history of the past century, during which Japan has twice attacked China, may make it more difficult for Japan to enter easily into a new, subordinate relationship with its former victim. States, like people, are usually wary about placing their fates in the hands of those whom they have wronged.

Informal institutions

Liberals and realists have debated the role of international institutions in promoting peace and stability in Asia. Most of the discussion on this point, however, has focused on the possible role of formal, European-style international organisations comparable to the European Union or the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. However, in using Europe as their standard, and Eurocentric concepts as their guide, Western analysts may have overlooked some characteristically Asian ways of doing business. Less highly

structured, bureaucratic and visible than their European counterparts, Asian institutions may nevertheless turn out to be equally effective in achieving their objectives, and perhaps even more so.

Mahbubani points out that while 'the Atlantic believes in building strong institutions ... the Pacific ... is creating networks instead'. These rely heavily on 'personal contacts and trust-building', a style that reflects a characteristically Asian 'behavioral culture' in which 'direct confrontation is avoided [and] face must not be lost'.¹⁴ Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed is typically blunt and proud in describing the process of Asian institution-building. As compared to Europe, he maintains, the goal is to 'build a Pacific *Gemeinschaft*, a Pacific village or family or group of friends, not an artificial, Cartesian construct – over-legalistic, over-structured and over-institutionalized'.¹⁵ Other residents of the region have also criticised outsiders for failing to 'take account of implicit and informal networks' and the 'widely shared Asian preference for proceeding gradually, relying on informal understandings rather than formal rules and institutions'.¹⁶

Is there a uniquely Asian, culturally rooted, informal style of conciliation and conflict-resolution? Barry Buzan and Segal have dismissed claims to this effect as 'a little like the trendy talk of Confucian social values'.¹⁷ If such mechanisms do exist, they have certainly not been much in evidence over the course of most of the twentieth century. Like their European counterparts, the nations of Asia have in recent decades shown an ample capacity for violence – and, on many occasions, for extreme brutality – in their dealings with one another. Many Asian countries, including China, Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam, have also been ravaged by extraordinarily bitter and bloody internal struggles. The culture of conciliation and conflict avoidance, if one exists, has not been sufficient in recent decades to prevent numerous civil and inter-state wars. In all, concluded Buzan and Segal, 'it takes a huge dose of amnesia to forget the ways in which Pacific Asian culture settled disputes not too long ago'.¹⁸

Even if a sub-set of Asian countries has lately developed some distinctive and effective mechanisms for managing disputes, there are still questions about how well these techniques will 'travel', and whether they will work in other, wider settings. The optimism about informal consultation expressed by Mahbubani and Mahathir clearly reflects the recent experience of their countries in ASEAN, and their initial success in persuading other states to participate in the ASEAN-sponsored Regional Forum. But, if ASEAN's ability to promote cooperation among its members has truly been due to the existence of common elements in their cultures, then bringing other, very different, countries into the mix would seem to be a formula for failure.

It may be that ASEAN's success to date owes less to the common culture of its members, and more to their convergent interests and comparatively limited, and roughly equal, strength. Informal institutions and 'quiet' dispute resolution may work best when none of the participants believes that it has any real alternatives and, in particular, when none has any expectation of being

able to impose its will on the others. Comparatively strong countries, like China or the US, may be willing to play along with their weaker counterparts if the costs of doing so are not very high. But, if only because they have the option of doing so, they are more likely to defect and to act unilaterally when their interests are truly challenged.

In short, the prevalence of informal institutions and networks makes Asia different from some other regions of the world; whether they will make it more peaceful remains to be seen.

Geography

A number of analysts have suggested that Asia's distinctive geography may help it to avoid the bitter rivalries that have characterised so much of European history. Europe is comparatively small; its central regions are not divided by impassable mountain ranges, large bodies of water or harsh wilderness; and virtually all of its major powers, with the exception of Britain, have extensive land frontiers. These features have made conquest comparatively easy, and have compelled states that wished to preserve their independence to maintain large, standing armies poised at their borders. Even where their purpose truly was defensive, such forces have often appeared threatening to neighbouring countries, stimulating them to increase their own capabilities. European geography is thus particularly conducive to situations in which military preparations lead to mutual suspicion, arms races and, sometimes, to war and rapid conquest. It is no wonder that the problem of the 'security dilemma' has so preoccupied European, and Eurocentric, strategic theorists.

Asia is strikingly different. Whether it is defined extensively or more narrowly, the region is extremely large: 'Distances between the major capitals are far greater than in Europe, and the powers do not jostle against one another in the same way.'¹⁹ In addition, 'the maritime security focus of many regional states also distinguishes the region from Europe'. Many countries are surrounded by water and share no land borders with their neighbours.²⁰ Some (like China and India) share land frontiers, but are shielded from one another by vast mountain ranges. Others (like China and Russia or Laos and Vietnam) have long common borders, but these are extremely difficult to traverse because of the harsh prevailing climate and topographical conditions. The combination of these natural factors may help to hold the Asian powers apart, reducing their mutual security anxieties and making it easier for them to cooperate with one another.²¹

Unfortunately, the same changes in technology that could be conducive to stability (because they permit the construction of more widely dispersed balancing coalitions) may also have some contrary, destabilising influences. The increasing range and accuracy of military delivery systems reduce the buffering effects of distance and geography and can bring once-remote countries into intense, continuous and threatening strategic contact. When India and China could only get at one another by sending troops across the Himalayas, their military rivalry was necessarily muted. As they have

developed aircraft, ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, the possibility of a genuine arms race between them has grown. Similarly, the development and deployment of modern long-range aircraft, surface ships and submarines increase the odds of naval competitions in both North and South-east Asia.

Weapons systems that travel through air and space or over water, instead of on land, may appear to be readily usable against a variety of potential foes. This is likely to increase uncertainty, reduce security and fuel multi-sided arms races that will be especially costly and difficult to control. Because they are hard to move, one nation's ground forces generally appear threatening primarily to those with which it shares land frontiers. For this reason, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, France worried most about Germany, and not about Russia, while Russia feared Germany, but not France.

Air and seaborne weapons, by contrast, can more easily be brought to bear in a number of different directions. Even if the country acquiring them has a particular opponent in mind, its capabilities can appear threatening to several other states, each of which may then feel obliged to respond in kind. Such dynamics have already been at work in Asia, and they may become even more evident in the future. China's acquisition of nuclear weapons in the mid-1960s may have been intended primarily to deter the US, and perhaps also the Soviet Union, but it also played a role in stimulating India's nuclear-development programme. While New Delhi's actions may have been directed initially against China, they were also menacing to Pakistan, and helped to promote a nuclear arms race on the subcontinent. Similarly, South Korea's efforts to improve its navy may be directed primarily at China, but they have aroused anxiety in Japan. Much of China's interest in acquiring advanced power-projection capabilities may be related to its desire eventually to absorb Taiwan. But the same forces necessary to achieve this goal could also be used to sever the sea-lanes through which oil passes to Japan, or to enforce Chinese claims to territory and resources in the South China Sea also claimed by Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Uncertainty about China's intentions makes her growing, omni-directional air and sea forces worrying to an array of potential competitors. And, of course, China's acquisition of such forces cannot help but feed concern about her intentions.

In sum, great distances and vast expanses of ocean are no longer the restraints on strategic competition that they once were. While Asia's unique geography may have made it less prone to conflict in the past, the interaction of geography with modern military technology could make it much more so in the future.²²

Geopolitics

For as long as the European state system remained a world unto itself, the region was wracked by war. The structure of the European system, its fragmentation into a cluster of leading states whose relative power was constantly shifting, but which remained, nevertheless, approximately equal in capabilities, was not conducive to long-term stability. It was only the rise of

extra-European power centres (Russia, in part, but especially the US) that permitted the eventual stabilisation of European politics. Until the New World could be called in to redress the balance of the Old, no lasting equilibrium could be achieved.

The emerging Asian state system, by contrast, is already highly integrated into the larger world economy and, to the extent that such a thing can be said to exist in the wake of the Cold War, into the global strategic balance. Non-Asian powers have a strong interest in the preservation of regional peace. This 'interdependence of regional and global security dynamics' is, according to some observers, another reason for believing that Asia's future will be more stable and less conflictual than Europe's past.²³

Strategically, the one critical outside player and, indeed, the only truly global power, is the US. Continued American engagement will therefore probably be crucial in determining whether China's increasing strength can be offset and a stable, but not grossly lopsided, Asian balance of power maintained. Two important caveats are in order here. First, and perhaps most obviously, continuing American strategic engagement in Asia cannot simply be assumed into the indefinite future. Whether separately or in combination, a variety of factors could produce sudden and dramatic changes in the present US posture. These include budgetary pressures leading to further sharp cutbacks in defence spending; renewed trade disputes with key allies; a resurgence of isolationist sentiment; effective Chinese economic and diplomatic inducements to other Asian powers designed to encourage them to cut their security ties to the US; regional crises that reveal sharp divergences of strategy and interest between the US and its allies (such as a violent confrontation between Taiwan and China); and possible domestic political changes in a handful of Asian countries. As the history of the past decade should suggest, political arrangements that appear fixed and unshakeable today can disappear almost overnight.

While it may ensure a measure of balance in the long run, continued American engagement in Asia could also lead to conflict between the US and China. If the US draws back, and the other Asian powers 'bandwagon' with China instead of balancing it, the region could become quite peaceful, even if (or precisely because) its residents have surrendered a measure of autonomy. On the other hand, if the US stays engaged and preserves its present alliance ties, the stage may be set for a protracted period of competition, and perhaps a series of confrontations, with China.

Balance-of-power politics are seldom pretty, and they can be dangerous. Despite its protestations to the contrary, the US is already taking steps that many Chinese perceive to be aimed at containing their country's rising power. These include intervening in the 1996 Taiwan Straits crisis, strengthening the alliance with Japan and discussing the possibility of developing a wide-ranging theatre-missile-defence system. American decision-makers regard these measures as defensive, and as responses to increasing Chinese power and assertiveness. Chinese strategists see American actions as aggressive, and may

well respond in ways that serve only to heighten American anxieties.²⁴ These mutual perceptions are, of course, the ingredients of a classic security dilemma.

Conclusion: Learning from History

A final, hopeful possibility deserves mention. Perhaps Asia's future will be peaceful precisely because Europe's past was not. Mahbubani described the region a few years ago as being engulfed by a great 'tidal wave of common sense and confidence'. Among other things, these feelings reflect the belief that Asia can learn from Europe's mistakes, and so avoid repeating them. Having risen to the pinnacle of world power, the nations of Europe squandered their advantages and came close to destroying themselves. Europe today is 'exhausted', in large part because of the lingering effects of a century of costly competition and fratricidal warfare. As they grow richer and stronger, there is no reason for the societies of Asia to follow suit. On the contrary, 'the most foolish thing' for them to do would be to follow in the footsteps of their European counterparts and 'engage in traditional military rivalries'.²⁵

There is, of course, every reason to hope that Mahbubani is right. But there are also reasons to be wary of placing too much faith in the collective human capacity for learning, still less common sense. At the turn of this century, many sensible Europeans believed that war was idiotic, outmoded, even obsolete, and were optimistic about the enormous benefits to be gained from permanent peace. Their good sense and sound judgement on this question were not enough to stamp out the anxieties, jealousies and hatreds that issued eventually in the First World War. Twenty-five years later, with the evidence of war's folly still fresh before them, the European powers were unable to prevent another catastrophe.

Looking back, it seems clear that it was the very eagerness of the liberal-democratic powers to learn the lessons of the past that caused them to stumble again into war. Had they been more attentive to the realities of power, more alert to the dangers of aggression by ambitious states, and less convinced of the pacifying effects of trade, institutions and conciliatory diplomacy, they might have done better at securing their interests and preserving the peace.

Notes

¹ The disruptive effects of shifts in the distribution of international power are discussed in Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

² On the instability of multipolar systems, see Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World', *Daedalus*, vol. 93, no. 9, Summer 1964, pp. 881–909; John Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', *International Security*, vol. 15, no. 1, Summer 1990, pp. 13–18.

³ For arguments along these lines, see James L. Richardson, 'Asia-Pacific: The Case for Geopolitical Optimism', *The National Interest*, no. 38, Winter 1994–95, pp. 28–39. See also Ralph A. Cossa and Jane Khanna, 'East Asia: Economic Interdependence and Regional Security', *International Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2, April 1997, pp. 219–234.

⁴ On the 'democratic peace', see Michael W. Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 1', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 12, no. 3, Summer 1983, pp. 205–35.

⁵ Nicola Baker and Leonard C. Sebastian, 'The Problem with Parachuting: Strategic Studies and Security in the Asia/Pacific Region', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, September 1995, p. 15.

⁶ See A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). For accounts that extend this basic theme across all of modern European history, see Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle* (New York: Vintage, 1962); and Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

⁷ The movement from 'universality' to 'equilibrium' is analysed in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone, 1994), pp. 56–77.

⁸ Gerald Segal, 'East Asia and the

"Constrainment" of China', *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4, Spring 1996, especially pp. 116–35.

⁹ Kishore Mahbubani, 'The Pacific Impulse', *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 1, Spring 1995, p. 117.

¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 234.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹² See, for example, 'Taiwan's Military: Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses', IISS, *Strategic Comments*, vol. 6, no. 4, May 2000.

¹³ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, p. 235.

¹⁴ Mahbubani, 'The Pacific Impulse', pp. 117–18.

¹⁵ Mahathir, quoted in Pauline Kerr, 'The Security Dialogue in the Asia-Pacific', *The Pacific Review*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1994, pp. 407–408.

¹⁶ See Richardson, 'Asia-Pacific', p. 30.

¹⁷ Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, 'Asia: Skepticism about Optimism', *The National Interest*, no. 39, Spring 1995, p. 82.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* For other expressions of scepticism about the existence of a unique, common, peace-promoting Asian culture, see Alan Dupont, 'Is There an "Asian Way"?', *Survival* vol. 38, no. 2, Summer 1996, pp. 13–33; and Gerald Segal, "'Asianism" and Asian Security', *The National Interest*, no. 42, Winter 1995–96, pp. 58–65.

¹⁹ Richardson, 'Asia Pacific', p. 32.

²⁰ Baker and Sebastian, 'The Problem with Parachuting', p. 24.

²¹ For the argument that their different geographical positions will tend to mitigate any tendency towards conflict between the US and China, see Robert Ross, 'The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century', *International Security*, vol. 23, no. 4, Spring 1999, pp. 81–118.

²² On the implications of the spread of

long-range delivery systems in Asia, see Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999).

²³ Baker and Sebastian, 'The Problem with Parachuting', p. 20.

²⁴ For insightful analyses of Chinese perceptions, see Allen S. Whiting, 'The PLA and China's Threat Perceptions',

The China Quarterly, no. 146, June 1996, pp. 596–615; and David Shambaugh, 'China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security', *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 3, Winter 1999–2000, pp. 52–79.

²⁵ Mahbubani, 'The Pacific Impulse', pp. 106, 108.

