

## **The New Role of the US in the Asia-Pacific\***

**Charles Morrison**

The East-West Center is a US national institution. It promotes relations between and understanding among the people of the US and those of the Asia-Pacific region. Even though it is located in the US and was created under US law, its staff is from the Asia-Pacific. We provide student scholarships for students from both the US and the Asia-Pacific. Most importantly, our board of governors is international. We have always had a very distinguished Korean member of the board, as with other countries.

The East-West Center receives about half its funding from the US national government. But it is not a government organization. When I speak to you, I speak as an individual. I am not a government official.

The East-West Center is not an organization that works solely with scholars. We work with businesses, and particularly with journalists. Journalists and politicians are very important as shapers of public views. Scholars and teachers are important because they are a bridge to the younger generations. Their views are often reflected in the international media.

We also tend not to work on single countries alone. We don't have, say, a "China center" or an "Indonesia center". We look at broad issues in their regional or sub-regional context. Finally, our think-tank is not a place where the US looks at Asia. It's a place where the US and Asians work together on issues that we regard as common issues.

Today I will talk about security. For about six years now, I have been annually editing the "Asia-Pacific Security Outlook". This report is not published by the East-West Center. One individual or one small group does not write the entire security outlook. We have a Korean national write the chapter on the Korean security outlook, a Chinese national to write on Chinese security, a Thai to write on Thailand, etc. I help set the framework for the national analysts, and then write an overview.

This year's edition just came out. So this morning I will go over some of the conclusions. I will turn to the question of the US and where the US is going. I will speak as a very distant observer of Washington, DC. The East-West Center is located in Honolulu. Finally, I will say something about the US in South Korea and how it relates to our North Korean outlook.

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The “Asia-Pacific Security Outlook” was prepared in late 2002. The final draft was written in February 2003. That was before the US’ war against Iraq. So though it is new, it is not totally up to date.

In spring 1997 when we first published this book, it painted an optimistic picture of the Asia-Pacific region. We said security issues looked as positive in the 1990s as they had looked any time in recent memory. Joseph Nye, then a US Defense Department official and now head of Harvard’s school of government, said at that time that security was like oxygen: it was prolific and in such abundance that no one paid attention to it.

Just after we published the first edition, the financial crisis began. That affected people’s confidence in government. Within two years, many countries’ leaders were being threatened politically. Only one—Indonesia’s Suharto—actually disappeared as a direct result of the financial crisis. There were changes in government in most other countries as well, some by natural election cycles as in the Korean case and some by more robust political means. Since then, terrorism has come to the fore. Our “Security Outlook” today does not look nearly as benign as it did six years ago.

Terrorism is a trend our group of analysts first noted in 2002. Since September 2001, terrorism across the region has been seen as a US problem. In fact in the preceding edition, our group of analysts said the US was over-reacting. Southeast Asians in particular stressed this point. Even Australians and New Zealanders felt the US was over-reacting to the terrorist threat.

This year’s edition is vastly different. Southeast Asians, Australians and New Zealanders have become very aware of the terrorist problem. This was a consequence of, first, “cells” that were discovered in Singapore, and second, the bomb in Bali on October 12, 2002. Many Indonesians, Australians and other nationals were killed that day, over 200 people. Our meetings for this edition occurred within two months of that day. Timing may have affected our outlook. But the basic point is that in both the US/Canadian part and the Southeast Asia/Oceania part of the Asia-Pacific, terrorism has become perceived as a number one threat. Northeast Asia is a little different, but in that region there is still concern.

Another interesting finding over the years has been the emergence of China. China is now regarded as a very positive factor for regional security. We do an anonymous questionnaire of our security analysts. That way we hope to get information they might not want to say during the sessions, to each other. We ask whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: the emergence of China as a major power is the most important issue with which Asia-Pacific states must deal over the coming decades. Ever since we began our “Security Outlook”, every single one of our analysts has agreed with that statement.

Up until 2001, people in Southeast Asia, Japan and the US saw China as a threat. But since then China has been seen in increasingly positive terms. There are several factors for this. Foremost is China’s own diplomacy and the way it has quite successfully reached out to neighboring countries. China proposed free trade agreements with the

ASEAN group. Last year it set aside the South China Sea issue. China opened up to South Asia. Relations with India have improved. In Central Asia, China launched the Shanghai Process. Relations have even improved with the US. So you can see China has a very skillful diplomacy toward the rest of the region.

China is also emerging as a very important economic partner. If you look around the world, you don't see many places that are growing. China is one now of the few places—though SARS has put a damper on it—where you still see rapid economic growth of the sort associated with Asia of the 1990s. That has pulled countries toward China. This means their business communities have a very strong interest in a positive relationship with China.

Finally is the ubiquitous Taiwan issue. In our “Security Outlook” we call Taiwan part of China. We do not have a proper Taiwan chapter. If we did, we would not have gotten Mainland Chinese participation in this process. That being said, we always consider Taiwan in our overview chapter.

China's recent policy toward Taiwan has been much less confrontational. That makes the rest of the region feel more comfortable about China. Even though everyone must diplomatically state that Taiwan is some kind of Chinese part, people still interact with Taiwan. Taiwan is a separate state. So China's treatment of Taiwan is a measure of how China will treat other countries around it. The fact that Taiwan has been less of an irritant has very much helped China with its relations with a number of countries.

There is also quite a bit of enthusiasm about the new leadership in China. The old leadership was not bad. But the new leadership represents a generational change. Gradually, China is becoming more and more an integral part of what was already an Asia-Pacific community.

Another section of our “Security Outlook” covered the re-emergence of a full-blown Korean crisis. Our analysts predicted it in 2002. Korea was on what we call our “Watch List”. We have a list of security threats called “Watch List” issues. For example, Taiwan is an issue; territorial disputes over small islands in the South China Sea are an issue; arms sales are an issue; terrorism finance is an issue; and, finally, the Korean Peninsula was an issue. These are threats which we think are very important, or which could become much more important. That is why they need to be watched. All that being said, we never anticipated the current Korean problem to happen so suddenly.

The potential threat of North Korean nuclear weapons was considered capped by the Agreed Framework. It was hoped there was an understanding. Particularly after the visit by former President Kim Daejung to Pyongyang, there was a lot of hope in the region that some sort of inter-Korean process was moving forward. But when this full-blown Korean crisis exploded, our group of security analysts did not anticipate it.

Another very positive trend in this year's “Security Outlook” is Asian countries' increased participation in peacekeeping and nation building through the UN. Ever since our first “Security Outlook”, we have always tried to measure Asian countries'

contribution to regional/global security. Most countries would cite maintenance of their own stability as a contribution to regional/global security, as well as their positive relations with other neighboring countries. Very few countries—Korea is proudly one of them—had any significant contributions to international organizations and peacekeeping processes. But that has really changed. A lot of countries in the region now contribute to these processes, even though they themselves are quite fragile.

The biggest issue in this year's "Security Outlook" was the US, what was happening in the US, and what the future of Iraq was going to be. Our "Security Outlook" was written on the eve of war. Almost all of our security analysts thought the war, if it happened, would be a negative aspect for the Asia-Pacific security situation. Some worried about extra burdens that might be required from their own countries. They worried, for example, that the US might demand that Japan, Korea or Australia contribute more than was going to be politically easy for them to contribute. The analysts from some countries, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, worried that a US conflict with a predominantly Muslim country would create serious internal tensions.

From the group of about 21 analysts that we had, only one of them thought that his country should almost unconditionally contribute to the Iraqi war if it happened. That was the Australian analyst. The others thought that if there were a second UN resolution, then they would do it. But many were simply opposed all together.

This leads in to my second topic. Where is the US going? In addition to editing the "Security Outlook" every year, each time the US administration changes I try to do an analysis after the first year. What has really changed in the US' Asia-Pacific policy? The emphasis was always on the continuities. When there is a change of administration there is always a new group that wants to differentiate itself from the previous group. Quite often the president himself does not think much about Asia. It is the advisors who define an Asia-Pacific policy.

When the Clinton Administration came in, they wanted to be very tough with China and very tough with Japan on economic issues. They wanted to de-emphasize security issues and emphasize international economic issues. It took them a while to realize the limits of what the US can really do. When people came in around President Bush, before September 2001 they wanted to be very tough with China, just as the Clinton people did. They wanted to really emphasize the relationship with Japan. They wanted Japan to be a UK-type ally in the Asia-Pacific region. They wanted to be very tough with North Korea. They really did not think too much about economic issues. They were more concerned with security.

There is always a discontinuity represented by these new emphases. Each new administration discovers there are national interests, and that political maneuverability is not that great. They discover subsidiary sets of issues, in relation to other issues in the US outlook throughout the world. They discover that other countries cannot be manipulated in the manner in which the US often thinks they can. As a result, there is often quite a great deal of continuity in US policy.

But still there were some discontinuities with the new Bush Administration before September 2001. One was actually a continuity, but I am describing it as a discontinuity. This was the split in US outlook between “hawks” and “doves”, or “unilateralists” and “multilateralists”, or people who emphasize institutions and others who emphasize *realpolitik*.

During the Clinton period, this division was between the administration and the Congress. The administration looked more multilateral and more institutional. Their critics, particularly the Republican conservatives in Congress, looked the opposite. This was a very visible difference.

In the Bush Administration, interestingly, the division is still there. But it is not between the president and the Congress. It is within the administration. It has been identified with a “state department”-type approach versus a “Pentagon”-type approach, even though some of the people involved are not neatly linked to either one of those agencies. President Bush is much more immune to Congressional criticism than was President Clinton.

Another discontinuity that carries over from the Clinton Administration is the importance of domestic politics on US foreign policy. Both Presidents Clinton and Bush were very concerned about their domestic constituencies. To people abroad, it often seemed that they were *overly* concerned with domestic matters and that US foreign policy was just an extension of its domestic politics.

There is a stylistic difference with the current president. He has a very skillful political and public relations strategy. He *has* to. The demographics and changes in US population are not in favor of the Republican party or Mr Bush. Constituencies that did not vote for him, which tend to be ethnic minorities and women, are increasingly prominent in their demographic profile. This puts a lot of pressure on Republican administrations to nurture their political position.

Another discontinuity relates to the character of the man. President Bush is a risk taker. His father, the first President Bush, was not a risk taker. President Reagan was a risk taker. President Clinton was not much of a risk taker. The current President Bush is very willing to take risks. He has a fairly strong set of ideas about the world, the way President Reagan had. He is willing to follow through on them. He is quite focused. This is scary for many foreigners. They wonder where he is going. It can also be scary for many US citizens, as well. This means that once President Bush gets started on something, whether it's a war against Iraq or a tax cut that none of us can understand, he will follow through with it.

The major discontinuity in the first year of the Bush Administration was not a new president for his people. It was September 11, 2001. It is really difficult to over-state the impact on the US. Before that date, terrorists were something that occurred in foreign countries; maybe against US facilities, but in foreign countries. Terrorists represented individual madmen like the Oklahoma City bomber.

US citizens woke up early that morning and found their major city under attack. This was the first attack on US soil in sixty years, and the first attack on the mainland in a couple of hundred years. People had realized the US was the number one superpower in the world. Now they realized it was also the number one target for terrorist groups.

To defend against terrorism is very difficult. In an open society, how do you defend against people who will hijack airplanes and take their own lives in such an attack? Increased concern about attacks could be even more devastating. A few pounds of plutonium can be carried in a suitcase and result in dirty bombs. A few grams of anthrax can lead to tens of hundreds of deaths. The whole mood of the country shifted from being reasonably secure and optimistic about its place in the world, to seeing a Hobbesian world with many threats.

This could be described as being somewhat similar to the view of some Asian countries toward the SARS influenza outbreak. People worried that a single traveler from China with SARS could infect a whole country, starting multiple deaths in, say, Korea, Japan or Taiwan. There were many extreme measures. Hotels would not accept people from Taiwan or Hong Kong. It didn't make too much sense medically, but it made sense in terms of the great fears that people had. This pandering toward the fears of the general populace has also occurred in the US since September 2001.

There are severe implications for this. Politically, the terrorist attacks in the US initially helped President Bush. He became a leader of a country facing a major threat. What if there is a second terrorist incident? If it happens a second time, it is on his watch. He will become a great loser. So the administration has to make terrorism its top priority. Moral issues aside, politically it cannot afford to allow a second attack.

The difference can be seen in the US' various security warnings. The Quadrennial Defense Review comes out every four years. The most recent one was issued just after September 2001, but it was prepared before that date. The thrust was geopolitical. It focused on a "rising" China. It did not take into account any sort of post-terrorist situation. This past year the administration released a more general security document, the National Security Strategy. The emphasis this time was clearly *not* on geopolitical interests. It was on terrorism and small-scale internal conflicts that may trigger terrorism. There was a lot of emphasis on pre-emptive and preventive aspects of dealing with these situations before they become a threat.

Two weeks after the terrorist attacks in the US, I spoke to the top Asia person in the National Security Council. He said to me that when this administration came in, it thought Clinton had been *too* involved in the Middle East and other international issues. It thought the US should be more relaxed and let foreign countries work out any problems by themselves. But now the administration feels it has to be "proactive", he said. The administration's emphasis now is on pre-emptive attacks.

One of the implications of this discontinuity is the great deal more appreciation in the US for established state borders. Countries that are responsible members of the international community—this includes China and Russia, which were having difficulty

with the US before September 2001—are now much more greatly prized for their stability.

The September 2001 attacks re-focused US foreign policy. During the Cold War it was focused on the Soviet threat. After the Cold War there was no focus: one day it was human rights, another day it was trade, etc. Being attacked really focused the US. Some sort of vision is now gradually being worked out. Human rights and trade are still there, but they have less visibility. This has smoothed relations with established governments, like China and Russia.

The attacks also centralized US policy. There used to be a separate “China policy”, a separate “Japan policy” and a separate “Korea policy”, for example. Now all these policies fall into one worldwide plan.

Let me now turn to Asia. From the perspective of Washington, DC, US relations with the Asian region look pretty good. Relations with Japan are perceived by the Bush Administration as being the best that the US has ever had. The security relationship has been moving in a direction the US wants, toward more burden sharing from Japan. This is not simply paying for US facilities in Japan, but a willingness to pick up burdens outside of Japan as well. This is controversial in much of the region, however. Economic issues that many people think should be part of the agenda have really been put aside. They are not a major issue in US-Japanese relations.

China relations are better now than they have been in many years. Taiwan is still there, though. Terrorism is a threat the US and China share. The administration appreciated the way in which China positioned itself on North Korea. A lot of underlying suspicion in each country about the other’s intentions remains. But the relationship is as strong as it has been for some time. As for Korea, after President Roh’s visit, there is a feeling that the South Korean relationship is back in a positive direction.

Washington also feels that Southeast Asia has problems with regional stability. There is a great deal of concern about Indonesia. But there is also a feeling that many of these countries are working closely with the US. Cooperation against terrorism is quite good. Even in Thailand, where there is not much visible US support, quiet support has been fairly effective. Of course, the relationship with the Philippine leadership is very strong. Australia saw John Howard in Washington, DC, at the time of the terrorist attacks. He is probably the staunchest ally after Great Britain.

From Washington’s point of view, that spectrum of countries—from Japan in the north to Australia in the south—represents a region with positive relationships. It looks pretty good compared to Europe and the Middle East, and even compared to Latin America.

So is there a problem? Washington’s problems with Asia—and Asia’s problems with Washington—are much more general in nature. They are much more similar to the US’ greater problems with the world at large. Government leaders and public opinion are often out of sync. Governments tend to want good relations with Washington, though there are of course exceptions. The Pew Group’s study shows that world public opinion

is really quite negative about the US, and becoming more and more so. Statistics for Korea, in this regard, are better than for many other countries. But perceptions of the US are at rock bottom in the Middle East, and are going strongly downward in parts of Europe. The US obviously has a great task ahead of itself in terms of public diplomacy.

Why do these problems exist? I compare today to the period immediately after World War II. During that time, the US was as dominant as it is today. Some estimates state that 50% of world GDP at that time was from the US. But the US was generally perceived at that time as acting in a manner that was for the system as a whole, not simply for itself. The Marshall Plan and the creation of the Bretton Woods and UN institutions gave US policy at that time a moral component that is lacking today.

Today, the US looks much more selfish. It looks like it is only trying to protect its own interests around the world, rather than really taking into account what are the more general systemic interests. That is a serious problem. That is a substance problem. That is also, to some extent, a perception problem, for there is a lot more consultation that goes on than meets the public eye.

There is also a sense that the US prefers military solutions to issues. People believe that for Americans, the default option is the military option rather than the diplomatic option. In the case of North Korea, there is a general sentiment that the US is somehow very anxious to engage in a pre-emptive strike against North Korea, no matter how much US officials deny that.

There is also an issue about “taxation without representation”. The US is so powerful that whatever it does—whether it invades Iraq or does something diplomatic—affects the security of many other countries. These other countries, though, have little ability to get their feedback into decision-making circles within the beltway. Especially in this administration, decision-making circles are very narrow.

There is also the issue of expectations versus capabilities. Traveling in the more Muslim parts of Asia, I find a lot of expectations and unhappiness about US policies. People expect the US to do things it is not able to do. People think the US can, say, solve the issue in the southern Philippines, or force the Israelis to abandon settlements and give away part of Jerusalem, and so forth. There are serious limits on US capabilities that are simply not recognized by the general population in many parts of the world.

This is particularly true of the Korean problem. Many people believe that if the US would only talk to North Korea again, the problem would somehow be solved. This reflects the differences between the way in which the US increasingly views North Korea, and the way in which South Korea perceives its northern cousin.

The US never considered North Korea a threat to the US. It considered North Korea a threat to *South Korea*, but it was not a threat to the US. It has never been a threat to the US until very recently. Only this last year has North Korea become a threat to the US and less of a threat to South Korea. That is because the North is engaged in a nuclear weapons program.



A North Korean reprocessing plant that turns out plutonium is a danger to the US, though not so much to South Korea. North Korea is so poverty stricken, they will be tempted to sell this plutonium to anyone, particularly terrorists. Terrorists do not target South Korea. They target the US.

What North Korea does, or says it does, in terms of starting a reprocessing plant is perceived in the US as being a great threat. Especially since September 2001, the threat of terrorists having nuclear weapons is very real. The US cannot allow that. No president would be able to tolerate a plutonium factory in North Korea.

So the US perception of this issue, even with dampened public concern, is very serious. The South Korean perception of North Korea, if I can generalize, is that it is much less a threat than it was in 1960, 1970, 1980 or even 1990. That is because, first of all, its economy is on its knees. So from Seoul, it's very hard to perceive North Korea as a threat.

I have only been to North Korea once, twelve years ago. At that time, North Korea was much better off than it is today. But even though many people were wearing military uniforms, it did not look as if they were in any position to engage in aggression against anyone. The country was very defensive and very weak. It is very hard to perceive of such a weak North Korea as being a threat.

A conventional threat, or even a conventional form of nuclear threat, is not the main threat from North Korea. The threat is that a nuclear North Korea would have a destabilizing effect on other countries in the region. The main concern, of course, would be pressure on Japan to develop a nuclear bomb. Then, there is the threat that terrorists would have access to North Korean plutonium. Finally, there is the threat that, since the government in North Korea is so weak, when it collapses we will have a "loose nukes" problem. How would you account for the material it developed? How would you control it?

These are some very significant differences between South Korea and the US. But we could paper over those differences. We could agree that we are all against North Korea having nuclear weapons. But how do we stop them? That is where there are some very significant differences. The US thinks direct talks with North Korea outside a multilateral context will not be very productive. They would lead to the same kind of stalemates and generate the same kind of negative view that the US is somehow out to attack North Korea.

You must get an international group of countries, some of which may be perceived as friends with, or at least sympathetic to, the North Korean regime. They must come and tell North Korea as a group that developing nuclear weapons is not something it can do. North Korea is like an alcoholic with a problem. Friends must intervene and tell him, for the first time in his life, that he is an alcoholic. His wife could not tell him. But his ten best friends can tell him all together. That analogy is somewhat akin to the perception of the US on how to deal with the North Korean problem.

All that, though, may not resolve the problem. The question is, “What do the North Koreans want?” The initial assumption was that they just wanted more economic aid. But increasingly the view in Washington is that they really want nuclear weapons. You can argue that calling them part of an “axis of evil” only increased the credibility of those in North Korea who takes that line. That may be true.

For the world at large, it is really important for those of us in the globalized world to develop a common set of understandings—as much as we can—about what the problems in the world are and how you work together to resolve those problems. There are a lot of problems in the different ways we see the world. The US, when looking at the Middle East problems, sees those in a certain way that reflects its energy interests and its concern about Israeli security. But for many other countries looking at those far away issues, they can look in terms of how it affects their particular country back home.

But we really have to look at how it affects the global system. During the financial crisis in 1997, it was very striking to me to hear some friends from Asia talk about the financial crisis as if it was a conspiracy by Washington, DC, to somehow cut Asia “down to size”. Yet, I would hear people from Washington, DC, talk about the crisis as if it were totally a result of local Asian corruption and weak corporate governance, as if that had suddenly happened overnight.

There are wide gaps in our understanding, not just about North Korea but also about the whole world, and the Middle East too. That is what we are about at the East-West Center. That is what the Institute for Global Economics is about. We are trying to put together the different voices and create as much of an international consensus as possible.

The US needs to be better prepared to understand the issues in this region much better than it already does. We live in a globalized age and need a globalized perspective. Thank you very much.

### **Questions & Answers**

**Q** As you discussed very broad issues, I would like to ask you a question about the United Nations. The UN, as you know, was born after World War II amid much hope and many expectations. But in hindsight, it has not been too useful in times of crisis. The only time it has done anything real was during the Korean War, only because the USSR did not know how to exercise its veto, a mistake it never repeated since. Ever since then, for example in the case of Kosovo, the UN could not get involved anytime there was a threat of a veto.

In fact the UN effectiveness depended on the US’ reputation. When the US was widely accepted, the UN was meaningful because the US backed it. Now that, as you pointed out, the US’ reputation is at stake, how do you see the usefulness of the UN? Is it becoming a second League of Nations? Do you see how it can be resuscitated?

**A** I have just seen an article in the June 4 issue of *The Financial Times*. It is about global attitudes to the US and global attitudes to the UN. The article lists about 20 countries. It shows that for many of these countries, the UN is becoming less and less popular. The questions asked are, “How effective is the UN,” and, “Is it relevant?”

The country where the UN is seen least relevant is Israel. About 75% of Israelis think the UN is not relevant. The second top country where the UN is seen as irrelevant is South Korea, also with more than 70%. Contrast that with the US where only about 60% see the UN as irrelevant. Down at the bottom is Kuwait, but about 40% of its population still finds the UN irrelevant. So there is a problem of our image of the UN.

Underlying that are some questions about the structure of the UN and how the decision-making processes work there. Some of that is due to the power in the UN and the actual power that countries have. In particular in the General Assembly, Brunei, Bhutan and Congo all have one vote along with the US and China. This can seem inequitable. Whatever the population base, whatever the power base, you still have only one vote.

But the UN General Assembly really does not matter. The Security Council is what matters. There, you have what were the “great” powers in 1945, each with a veto. You can only, then, get effective action if you have a consensus of these countries. Part of the problem is that the Security Council does not bring in new “great” powers or rehabilitated “great” powers. A single country can make it very difficult to have any action.

The current US administration sees many problems in the world that it thinks must be dealt with. It knows that if it goes through the United Nations, they will probably not be able to do what they feel they need to do. Luckily, in a sense, the US president was convinced to go to the UN for an initial resolution. But in the end it was felt that the only way necessary action could be taken was to do it with a so-called “coalition of the willing”.

Even on the rehabilitation of Iraq, there was a great deal of reluctance to let the UN and the UN bureaucracy get its hands on this function. The fear is that this is in fact very critical. The war is not really won until Iraq is a different kind of Iraq with a different government. War will not be won for many years. The only chance of having that is initially through some kind of coalition led structure, the UN having a role, and trying to bring in the credible elements as quickly as possible.

There is a great deal of concern about the UN as an institution through which action can be taken. But at the same time, how can you not have the UN? You need the UN for global consultations. You need the UN to deal with many issues that come up in the system, including issues in this region, which is East Timor, Cambodia, etc. You need UN institutions beyond just the ones in New York. Think of SARS, the WTO and so forth. This is a family of organizations, some of which need significant review and repair, and others which are in pretty good shape.

In the long run of history, we are slowly groping and grappling toward more world governance. That is a fact, even though countries that highly prize their sovereignty, like the US, deny that is happening. In fact, more and more, as we have a globalized world, we need rules for that world. We need institutions like those in the UN system to be the repository of both treaties and agreements, and the way in which we try to develop world rules.

**Q** You partly answered this already, and in fact alluded to this issue in your presentation. That is US unilateralism. It will cause more enemies around the world. Are you concerned about this unilateralism?

**A** As I tried to indicate, it is a matter of concern. It is very important that the US genuinely consult with people on issues, and tries to develop a position on issues where it's perceived to be less a unilateral process, as the Iraq war was. The important thing is that we now address these issues. The North Korean issue needs to be addressed. There are a lot of institutions that could cover this, but in this particular case the US is trying to act as multilaterally as possible. One absolutely critical country to be involved in that process is China. US, Japan and South Korea meet regularly. But there are other meetings that involve China and Russia. That is very important.

**Q** I want to ask about the redeployment of US troops stationed in Korea. Apparently, the *Washington Post* reports that there won't be any permanent bases in South Korea, and they quote a Defense Department official. Instead there may be only some support units stationed in Korea. In your view, will there be a permanent US military base in Korea? What's your view on this issue?

**A** You must look beyond Korea. Looking around the world, there really is a shift in the way the US sees its defense strategy. In some ways it's not a shift that has occurred in the last year or two, or with Donald Rumsfeld, or even with September 11. This is a shift that has been taking place for some time. In the Clinton Administration, the talk was "places, not bases". Some of the old threats are really very different in form and don't require large numbers of US troops to be a deterrent force in the same way. So your military can be deployed much more flexibly. That may include very small groups in many different places, some of which may not even be allies in the traditional sense. But they can be reinforced when needed.

The conventional threat from the North in terms of a massive North Korean attack on the South is not perceived as a significant threat right now. It is still a matter against which you must have a deterrent, but the way in which those forces are placed should be reviewed at the fiftieth anniversary of the alliance. Korea is only one small part of a more global outlook.

Secondly, there is an ongoing crisis with North Korea. That has confused the public. To them, it appears that the US is withdrawing from north of the Han just at a time when the crisis is intensifying. Does that make any sense? I think it does not make any sense. It makes sense for the US forces to get out of the middle of Seoul. But I am quite sure any withdrawal would appear to be critically related to the North Korean deterrent and

would take place when that North Korean issue has been resolved. That is not something that is going to happen in the next six months or year. It is a long-term process.

As you know, the US military is completely honest about this. It is not in any way trying to reduce the effectiveness of its forces here in Korea. It is trying to increase its effectiveness. It is also trying to do it in a way that makes it less problematic in terms of Koreans' public perception.

**Q** The US government has been demonstrating a very diminished view of APEC for the last several years. However, the APEC process is moving onward. In 2005 the APEC economic leaders' meeting will be held in Seoul. It is about time we in Korea begin to think about how to take advantage of that occasion and turn it into a meaningful event for the Asia-Pacific as a whole. What is likely to be the evolving attitude of US governments toward APEC? Do you have any suggestion how APEC 2005 could be staged and modernized by the Korean government?

**A** Vis-à-vis the financial crisis, quite a few countries were wondering how useful APEC had been, not just the US. There is a life to an institution. In the beginning when it is created, everyone gets very excited. There are many plans. There was an APEC Vision. There was an APEC Action Plan in Manila. There was an APEC Action Framework. In the early days, dreams and visions were set out.

Once we get to the details, it becomes a lot harder to move forward. APEC's current work is at the detail level. Such detailed negotiations do not grab the public's imagination. For political reasons, the issues that actually come up in a certain grouping of countries may not be the ones that group is best at dealing with. It may not be that particular grouping that should take action. The tremendous utility of APEC is that it sets out a vision of Asian-Pacific countries working across the Pacific. It provides an avenue for countries in the region to talk about global issues. For example, in countries like Thailand or Indonesia, the WTO codes are not that familiar. So having to defend and explain what they are doing was very important in the APEC context.

Having the leaders meet is also incredibly important. The first President Bush made a trip around the region. He went to Australia, Singapore, Korea and Japan. He traveled 25'000 miles and he only met four leaders. He was so tired he got sick in Japan. In comparison, the current President Bush can meet 16 or 17 leaders, depending on how many come, in one place, at the APEC meetings. Much of the work is bilateral meetings and dealing with other issues which are not part of the formal APEC agenda. It really means that the leaders themselves get another chance to meet each other. Particularly in Asia, the meeting of top people is a very important dimension of international relations.

I have no specific suggestions for the APEC Seoul meeting. I do think there needs to be a re-thinking and re-articulation about what APEC is about. What can we expect? What should we not expect? We certainly cannot expect APEC to achieve its goal of free trade by 2010 or 2020. That is incredibly naïve.

**Q** In your presentation you subconsciously, or unconsciously, mentioned that there have been some new elements added to the US-Korea relationship since the ascendancy of Mr. Noh to the presidency. I understand that some of the concerns people in Washington, DC, had in regard to President Noh and his government have been much eased as a result of President Noh's visit to Washington. But there is only so much that a visit can do in that regard. In your view, how do you assess the current US-Korea relationship in view of the possibility of strain and uncertainties, and misgivings Washington might have?

**A** This question really relates to the new regimes in Korea and the US. When you have a new president and new leaders, there is always a settling in process as you try to figure out what the world is all about and how you operate in that world. President Noh has not had a great deal of experience in foreign policy. But he is a very intelligent person. He is going through a learning process. He is meeting other leaders. He had a successful meeting in the US. I hope he had a successful meeting in Japan. In any case, he is the president of the country for a number of years to come. It is very important to work with him.

In the same way, the current President Bush will be president of the US for some years to come, and maybe more. He and his administration also had a settling-in process. One of those problems was North Korea. Former President Kim Daejung came to Washington, DC, a little before the current President Bush had his team in place and had settled in. It was not a properly prepared meeting. It created a number of misperceptions of the Bush Administration's approach to North Korea.

The president was quoted as saying that he does not like the North Korean regime. But to say that is quite different from saying that you want to replace it. If there is a sense of regime change, it is simply in the same sense that President Kim Daejung mentioned regime change: over time, through interaction with other countries, the regime may change. We've seen that in China. Today's regime in China may not be democratic in the same way that Japan or South Korea is democratic. But it is very different from the Chinese regime that ruled in Beijing 20 or 25 years ago. This has occurred through an evolutionary process. If something like that would happen in North Korea, that would be fine.

The policy of the US is not to attack North Korea and change the regime in the way that happened in Iraq. The policy is to have negotiations and discussions with the North Koreans. The US has called for discussions without preconditions. They wanted to know what the North Korean attitudes were. In fact, they didn't even ask for discussions in one area that the Clinton Administration emphasized: forward deployed missiles.

Washington did not cause what happened next. What happened next was caused by Pyongyang. Pyongyang declared it had been purposefully developing an alternate nuclear program, even though its agreements with South Korea, its agreements with the non-proliferation pact, and its commitment to the Agreed Framework all said it could not do that. Washington did not start this crisis. This crisis was started by Pyongyang. Washington has had to react.

Washington seems to be saying that until that threat has ended—and that threat is a direct threat to the US and to the region—it is very hard to move forward on other issues with North Korea. Washington always said it was able to work with North Korea. The US wants to work with its Chinese friends, Russian friends, Japanese friends, and, of course, its South Korean friends. It really wants to try to develop an approach to North Korea that involves and end to the threat that is posed by the nuclear reprocessing program and the heavy uranium program, but which would envisage continuation of approaches between North and South Korea. The US very much welcomes that, as long as it is part-and-parcel of the common goal: to prevent the North Koreans from becoming a country that can sell nuclear material. They also want North Korea not to export drugs.

The government in Pyongyang is a problem for the international community. We have to help reform that government. There are parts of that which will be a long-term process, through the process of opening up. But other parts are simply obligations that they have to meet. These are the international rules that the world has created to protect itself. We need to make sure North Korea honors and respects those international rules.

**Q** We can understand there are different views between the administration and Congress. But within the administration now there are two strong camps. Does President Bush enjoy the difference of opinions? Is this part of the checks-and-balances idea? Why are there such two strong camps within the administration?

**A** There is no answer to that. Almost all US administrations will have different camps within it. Some of them, like President Roosevelt's administration during World War II, very consciously tried to force opposing views up to the president. People around him would not make decisions. That is also at work in the current Bush Administration.

For all the conflict you see, and for all that appears to be different views, this is a well-organized administration. In the end, the president and his national security staff make the decisions.

The apparent camps are a product of democracy. It is noisy. There are many different branches of government. But we have many individuals who are pulled into government. Even though they are now all in government, government is not a monolith. There will always be dissenting voices.