Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism
Survey Results and Analysis

Authors
Bates Gill
Michael Green
Kiyoto Tsuji
William Watts

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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Assessments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding One: Expectations of an Accelerated Power Shift to China</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Two: Broad Support for an East Asia Community</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Three: Far Greater Confidence in National Tools and Global Institutions than in Regional Multilateral Tools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Four: No Consensus on Membership</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Recommendations: Areas of Consensus for Further Institution Building in Asia</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Authors</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Will Asia’s future see increasing economic interdependence and cooperation or growing power rivalry and confrontation? That strategic question will be answered in large measure by the region’s ability to construct effective multilateral institutions for integration and cooperation—what is now being called the new Asian “architecture.”

To illuminate the increasingly complex character of Asia’s new architecture, and to offer some practical judgments for future U.S. policy, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) initiated a series of studies in 2006 focused on the areas of convergence and divergence in national views of regional institution building. Building on a conference in 2006 and a major edited volume,\(^1\) CSIS approached the MacArthur Foundation, the Asahi Shimbun (Japan), the JoongAng Ilbo Shinmun (Korea), and the Opinion Dynamics Corporation to design a survey of strategic elites in Asia that would map aspirations and expectations across the region with respect to Asia’s emerging architecture.\(^2\)

- **Finding One: Expectations of an Accelerated Power Shift to China**

In response to the question of which other country will be the strongest in overall national power in the Asian region in 10 years, a weighted average of 65.5 percent of respondents answered China, compared with the 31 percent for the United States. These views were likewise reflected in respondent’s expectations as to which bilateral relationship will be most important in 10 years. A weighted average of 59 percent said that China would be the most important country to their nation in 10 years, with 36 percent saying the United States would be most important. Chinese overwhelmingly saw the United States as the most important country to China (77 percent), with a similar percentage of Americans (76 percent) saying the same about China. Only 16 percent of Americans said Japan would be the most important Asian country to the United States in 10 years.

However, a plurality of respondents expressed the view that the United States would play a continued positive and stabilizing role in the region. In every country other than China, China was listed as the most likely threat to peace and security in Asia in 10 years. (Among all respondents in the survey, 38 percent considered China the biggest threat, with North Korea the second-greatest threat with 21 percent and the United States third with 12.9 percent.)

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2. The methodology of the survey is detailed in the report, pp. 2–4
Finding Two: Broad Support for an East Asia Community

A weighted average of 81 percent expressed support for the concept of building an “East Asia Community,” though only 37 percent within that number “strongly favored” the idea. Indians stood out as the most enthusiastic about building an East Asia Community (with 68 percent “very supportive”). American elites demonstrated the least enthusiasm but were still fairly close to the weighted average in expressing support.

When asked what an East Asia Community should address, respondents placed a stronger emphasis on confidence building and conflict prevention, economic integration, and strengthening good governance and democratic norms, though support for the latter varied widely across the region, reflecting some lingering sensitivities on this issue.

Americans stood out for their hope that the region might develop greater defense cooperation. Least enthusiastic about common defense policies were the smaller nations, and particularly Thailand. However, the smaller nations were somewhat more enthusiastic about developing common diplomatic policies with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members. Thais, Singaporeans, and Indonesians were most in favor, and respondents from the two regional giants—Japan and China—least enthusiastic. This suggests both the utility of ASEAN to its members as a way to bound larger powers in the region but also the limited utility of broader regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum for developing common diplomatic approaches in the future.

Finding Three: Far Greater Confidence in National Tools and Global Institutions than in Regional Multilateral Tools

Most respondents—and particular those from relatively larger powers—place far greater reliance on military self-sufficiency or alliances than on multilateralism for preventing attacks in the future, or for responding to pandemics, humanitarian crises, or terrorism.

Likewise, there is little certainty at all across the region about how best to utilize regional institutions to promote good governance, transparency, and the rule of law. In this sense, there appears to be a clear gap between the aspiration of good governance as a regional norm and how regional institutions might play a role in achieving that goal.

On the other hand, there is evidence from the survey of a growing confidence in the potential for regional financial mechanisms, free-trade arrangements, energy cooperation, the Six-Party Talks, and the Proliferation Security Initiative. All received favorable ratings for their role in stemming proliferation in the region.

Finding Four: No Consensus on Membership

While the concept of an East Asia Community is strongly favored by regional strategic elites, less clear is which countries should form that community. In considering membership for Australia, the European Union, India, New Zealand, Russia, and the United States, India had the strongest support (80 percent) from the respondents, particularly from Southeast Asians, with the United States (79 percent) and Australia (74 percent) also faring well.
Russia fared considerably less well, with New Zealand and the European Union gaining the least support. Interestingly, 80 percent of Chinese respondents said it was very important or somewhat important to have U.S. participation in East Asia community building.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

*Demonstrate U.S. support for the broad concept of an Asia community and develop longer-term strategies for institution building in the region.* This is a clear preference of elites in the region, but the process will take time, and Washington should neither press too hard nor resist the unfolding patterns of cooperation. Strategic elites from the major powers—including China—see U.S. participation as important. The lack of consensus regarding the substance of East Asian integration and the final membership suggests that no regional power will be able to exclude the United States unless it chooses to be excluded itself. Indeed, the survey results suggest that in spite of the expected rise of Chinese power, attitudes on regional norms are moving in directions that support U.S. interests and values—even among Chinese elites. The United States can engage the region on future architecture from a position of patience, confidence, and generally shared visions for the future. But the United States must also have a longer-term strategic vision for building effective multilateral cooperation that is well coordinated with like-minded states and based on an appreciation of how best to integrate China.

*Asia strategy should begin with a focus on allies.* This survey demonstrates continued concern in Japan and Korea in particular about their security environment—including potential threats from both China and North Korea—and these allies’ strong expectation that the United States will continue to be the main source of dissuasion, deterrence, and defense. Neither Japan nor Korea demonstrated much confidence in the efficacy of multilateral security mechanisms, and the Japanese lack of confidence in the Six-Party Talks was particularly striking. U.S. strategy for building broader multilateral cooperation and expanded bilateral cooperation with China has to begin with continual shoring up of its allies’ confidence in its commitment to their security.

*Strengthen policies and actions that further engage and embed China in regional networks of shared norms and interests.* The surveyed elites clearly see China emerging as the most important country in the region but have mixed feelings about what that will portend. Regional elites appear to recognize the need to engage China and not contain it but are nevertheless concerned about China’s intentions in the next decade. This strongly suggests that Washington can find common ground with regional leaders through policies supporting the role of institutions in Asia that can help foster a future China that contributes positively to the region’s growth and stability, while Beijing itself becomes more firmly committed to those goals as an interest that China shares with its regional partners. This survey does not support the hypothesis that China is using regional integration to exclude the United States, because Chinese elites did not reject a U.S. role in East Asia community building—or reject a focus over the coming decade on governance, human rights, and elections. There will certainly be continued strategic competition and hedging between the United States and China, but the potential for common ground on a broader regional agenda is noteworthy in these survey results.

*Invest in building a more robust regional energy agenda.* The survey demonstrated a strong consensus that energy is a key area for cooperation. The United States should work for a more robust regional agenda on energy, both within existing forums like Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and perhaps also through the establishment of new organizations that would coordinate
on peaceful energy cooperation. The Bush administration’s seven-party Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (AP-7) should be strengthened in the coming years. The energy subgroup of the Six-Party Talks will make limited progress absent further verification and disablement of North Korea’s nuclear program, but there may be an opportunity to engage on strategic energy issues in Northeast Asia in anticipation of eventual changes in the north.

Continue to expand engagement with regional militaries, both through alliance relations and through other military-to-military ties. The survey demonstrated a broad comfort level across the region with the goal of mutual confidence building, even as many respondents—particularly from major powers—continued to see their national militaries or alliances as the primary source of security in the region. The United States stood out as the most optimistic with respect to the utility of developing shared military capacity for disaster or humanitarian relief, and U.S. military planners will have to be sensitive to this gap. But this gap also suggests that the United States will have to continue leading in the development of regional cooperation and capacity building for responding to humanitarian disasters. It may be that greater collaboration with international institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and civilian agencies will raise the regional comfort level for expanded cooperation. It may also be the case that U.S. planners will have to look to missions other than cooperation on humanitarian or disaster relief operations to expand confidence building. Such missions could range from counter-piracy to exchanges on national doctrine and strategy. The bottom line is that this survey suggests a limited expectation for shared regional capacity for humanitarian relief and that these missions will therefore only carry the confidence-building objective so far.

Recognize the continued importance of such global institutions as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods system, and the World Trade Organization for addressing regional challenges. Preventing pandemics, strengthening human relief organizations, improving disaster response, and stemming the effects of climate change may prove “safe” areas for cooperation, but regional institutions are not currently seen as the most effective mechanisms to deliver on these needs. In the near to medium term, regional efforts will have to supplement broader international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), bilateral or multilateral initiatives, and national capabilities. The United States should support global institutions in their work to build regional cooperative capacity to address regional problems.

Continue support and encouragement of emergent norms of good governance, accountability, transparency, and democracy in the region, tempered by a clear understanding of the sensitivity of the issue across the region. There is remarkable support in the region for the steady spread over time of universal values of good governance, accountability, transparency, and democracy. However, even among democracies in the region, this issue is fraught with sensitivities and concerns about noninterference in internal affairs. Moreover, regional institutions are not yet seen as effective or preferred vehicles for the further introduction and promotion of these values in the region. The United States and Japan can work together to build on this general support, both within individual countries and by helping regional institutions such as ASEAN to improve their capacity to address these issues. Washington should be sensitive to always working with an Asian partner in taking these steps. Starting with areas such as good governance—which enjoys widespread support—will be more appreciated in the region.

Encourage Japan to take a proactive stance on security issues. Another striking takeaway from the survey is the lack of regional threat perception regarding Japan. That result should be reassuring to Japanese officials and a source of encouragement for Japan to consider utilizing its highly
capable Self-Defense Forces to contribute to internationally sanctioned missions for humanitarian relief, counter-piracy, or reconstruction. Of course, this is a survey of strategic elites, but even the Chicago Council on Global Affairs popular surveys taken shortly before this CSIS survey demonstrated a deep well of “soft power” for Japan in Asia.\(^3\) The very low expectations that Japan would be the most powerful country in Asia in 10 years only reinforces the need for Japanese strategic thinkers to utilize all of the positive attributes of their national power.

Work to strengthen relations with Thailand. The survey reflects a deterioration of support for the United States among strategic elites in Thailand. This may arise from a number of factors including the perceived role of the United States in recent political developments in Thailand and the ongoing development of stronger ties between Beijing and Bangkok. While a downturn in perceptions vis-à-vis the United States in Southeast Asia has been noted in a number of studies and surveys in recent years, the signals detected in this survey are cause for further concern in Washington. The new administration should give additional focus to rebuilding U.S.-Thai alliance relations.

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Introduction

Project Background

The sweeping arc of Asia—from the Indian Ocean to the Bering Straits and from Tashkent to Tasmania—stands out as the world’s most vibrant region. Powerful and unparalleled economic and political forces bring extraordinary changes, large and small, from the rise of China and India to the glimmers of democratic change. New transnational challenges—from environmental disasters to infectious disease outbreaks to the impact of globalization to terrorist networks—defy old notions of sovereignty. At the same time, traditional rivalries and emergent confrontations among regional powers raise the specter of past conflicts.

In the midst of this dynamic confluence of promise and peril, we must ask whether Asia’s future will see increasing economic interdependence and cooperation or growing power rivalry and confrontation. That strategic question will be answered in large measure by the region’s ability to construct effective multilateral institutions for integration and cooperation—what is now being called the new Asian “architecture.” Over the past 60 years, Asian stability has rested on the foundations of America’s bilateral alliances with Japan, Australia, and the Republic of Korea. However, in recent years the regional architecture has been reinforced with a more mature Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and the emergence of other multilateral forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the ASEAN Plus Three process, the Six-Party Talks on Korean peninsula stability, and the newly formed East Asia Summit (EAS).

Reflective of the region itself, this new architecture is highly fluid and engenders both cooperation and competition among the region’s powers. What is more, the future direction and success of these arrangements—and the implications for global and regional security and prosperity—remain unclear even as the elements of this dynamic regional architecture expand and become more complex. In Washington and in the region, concerns persist whether the process is evolving toward less-inclusive, bloc-based “talking shops” rather than toward a more open, inclusive, and problem-solving regionalism.

Given the uncertain and often troubling nature of power relations in Asia today, renewed efforts to build regional institutions in the Asia Pacific region seem to be growing in frequency and scope. To engage and address this increasingly rich and diverse discussion, and to offer some practical judgments for future U.S. policy, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) initiated a series of studies in 2006 focused on the areas of convergence and divergence in national views of regional institution building. In the first phase, CSIS partnered with the Stanley Foundation to convene a meeting of experts from the region in St. Michaels, Maryland, in November 2006.
The expert scholars, journalists, and government officials who gathered from Australia, China, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States identified convergence of thinking across the region in three key areas: 1) the need to move from multilateralism for its own sake toward more functionally effective cooperation; 2) the compelling need to begin that transition with a focus on transnational threats, such as climate change or pandemics; and 3) the need for greater U.S. engagement in the process of institution and community building in Asia without moving away from the U.S. network of alliances. However, the participants also unearthed three areas of continuing divergence: 1) whether regional integration should ultimately be pan-Pacific, pan-Asian, or just East Asian; 2) whether institution building should be guided by the principle of “noninterference in internal affairs” or work toward consolidating universal principles such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; and 3) the scope, degree, and depth of trade liberalization.

The results of the conference are contained with recommendations in a joint CSIS-Stanley Foundation report, Building an Open and Inclusive Regional Architecture in Asia,¹ and 10 of the scholars collaborated to produce a book-length volume on the subject.²

Building on the findings of the St. Michaels conference and the resulting book project, CSIS approached the MacArthur Foundation, the Asahi Shimbun (Japan), the JoongAng Ilbo Shinmun (Korea), and the Opinion Dynamics Corporation to design a survey of strategic elites in Asia that would map aspirations and expectations across the region with respect to Asia’s emerging architecture.

**Methodology**

The survey targeted “strategic elites” in nine Asia-Pacific nations. An expert steering group³ identified 150 candidates each in the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Australia, and Singapore. Members of the “strategic elite” were identified as nongovernmental experts who are influential in the debate on international and/or Asian regional affairs in their respective countries. Excluded from the list were serving members of the legislative, judicial, or administrative branches of government or those with expertise outside of international relations and/or Asia. Members of the expert steering group were also excluded from the survey.

The Opinion Dynamics Corporation⁴ conducted telephone surveys in eight of the countries in the primary languages used there.⁵ The Asahi Shimbun conducted the surveys in Japan and both

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³. Members of the expert steering group were: Eric Altbach (ex officio), Xenia Dormandy, Charles Freeman, Bates Gill, James Green (ex officio), Michael Green, Matthew Goodman, Chanho Kang, Yoichi Kato, Al LaPorta, Alex Lennon, James Loi (ex officio), Derek Mitchell, Amy Searight, Scott Snyder, Nicholas Szechenyi, Kiyoto Tsuji, Dan Twining (ex officio), and William Watts.
⁴. Opinion Dynamics Corporation (ODC) is a U.S.-based public opinion, consulting, and market research firm headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. ODC has additional offices in Oakland and Laguna Niguel, California, and a telephone calling center in Philadelphia. Founded in 1987, ODC is a leader in conducting research in a wide variety of sectors—including national and international public policy, education, healthcare, energy, financial services, and the media.
⁵. English in the United States, Australia, India, and Singapore; Korean in South Korea; Chinese in China; Thai in Thailand; and Indonesian in Indonesia.
JoongAng Ilbo Shinmun and Opinion Dynamics conducted the surveys in South Korea. Because the survey required about 15 to 20 minutes of time and the questions required a significant level of expertise on a range of policy issues, we expected the number of participants to fall well below the 150 individuals developed for each country. The final number of participants in each country was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>313</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To allow comparisons among the nine countries where the response rates varied from as low as 17 to as high as 74, we have used a weighted average across all countries when analyzing the results (in order to avoid skewing the regional perspective toward countries that had the higher response rates).

It is important to note the advantages and limitations of this kind of elite survey sample. The respondents are influential individuals who have studied and written on the subjects of the survey, and many have held senior positions in their respective governments with responsibility for policy with respect to those subjects. The 313 responses therefore allow for a well-informed comparison of strategic thinking across Asia on questions associated with regional integration and order.

However, the selection of “strategic elites” is necessarily subjective, even with the process of peer review established by CSIS through the expert steering group. Moreover, the number of returns varied from country to country without necessarily reflecting the full range of elite views. It is conceivable, for example, that those who chose not to respond to the survey held particularly skeptical views about regional integration—or, conversely, about the United States. It is not possible methodologically to calculate a margin of error for this survey sample that would allow us to control for such variables. In addition, this survey was conducted after the Beijing Olympics and just as the global financial crisis was building. Most respondents were interviewed between September 8 and November 1, 2008, but the Australian and South Korean surveys were not completed until the first week of December. There may therefore be some minor variation in results based on impressions created by the proximity of events such as the Beijing Olympics in August or the deepening of the financial crisis in the fall. Given these methodological limitations, this elite-oriented survey cannot be compared with the kind of larger public opinion surveys that were familiar during the U.S. presidential election. In short, while derived from a carefully constructed survey and methodological approach, the results cannot be considered precise or scientific.

Nevertheless, the project leaders are confident the survey results advance our overall understanding of the strategic landscape in Asia with respect to questions of regional institutions, norms, and power. To date, most analyses on the future regional order are based on anecdotal impressions, limited individual interviews, participation in conferences, or interpretations of current government policies. This survey and report should provide a more comprehensive data set.
for assessing prospects for future institution building in Asia. We encourage scholars and analysts to mine the results for their own insights. In our view, the survey reveals four key findings.

**Key Assessments**

**Finding One: Expectations of an Accelerated Power Shift to China**

In response to the question of which other country will be *the strongest in overall national power in the Asian region* in 10 years, a weighted average of 65.5 percent of respondents answered China, compared with the 31 percent for the United States, 5.5 percent for Japan, and 2.9 percent for India. This result stands in contrast to other survey data conducted by Pew and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs that reveal expectations of a more gradual shift of power toward China.

![Figure 1. Strongest in Overall National Power](image)

- American and Indian respondents stood out as having the highest expectation that China will be the most powerful country in Asia in 10 years. (It should be noted that respondents had to choose a country other than their own or “none of the above.”)
- Japan and Thailand also stood slightly above the weighted regional average in viewing China as most likely to be the most powerful country in Asia in 10 years.
- U.S. allies Korea and Australia stood apart from the weighted regional average in their views that the United States would continue to be stronger than China.

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7. See Appendix for additional graphs not discussed in the narrative.
Therefore, shifting expectations as to which bilateral relationship will be most important in 10 years...

A weighted average of 59 percent said that China would be the most important country to their nation in 10 years, with 36 percent saying the United States would be most important. This generally tracks slightly below expectations of relative national power, but with some interesting exceptions.

### Figure 2. Most Important Country in 10 Years

- Japanese stood outside the weighted average in seeing the United States as still the most important country in Asia to them in 10 years (57 percent to 35 percent for China).
- Koreans saw China as more important than the United States (53 percent versus 41 percent for the United States, but overwhelmingly trust the U.S. role more, as the next graph will demonstrate.)
- Chinese overwhelmingly saw the United States as the most important country to China (77 percent).
- Only 16 percent of Americans said that Japan would be the most important country to the United States in Asia in 10 years, compared with 76 percent who said China. This elite view is in sharp contrast to popular U.S. views on the relative importance of China and Japan to the United States in the Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey taken in the United States two months before this CSIS elite survey.8

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Continued expectations of a positive strategic role for the United States (with some surprising exceptions)...  

Despite the expectation of an accelerated shift of power to China over the coming decade, the United States ranked ahead of China in terms of which nation respondents thought would be the greatest force for peace, with a weighted average of 40 percent pointing to the United States, compared with 24 percent for China and 14.75 percent for Japan (again, respondents were asked to choose a country other than their own).

**Figure 3. Greatest Force for Peace and Stability**

- Some 94 percent of Korean respondents said that the United States would be the greatest force for peace in 10 years, well above the regional weighted average.
- Japan and Singapore were also above the weighted average in seeing the United States as the major force for peace in the region in a decade.
- Perhaps surprisingly, Chinese respondents were also above the weighted average in seeing the United States as the greatest force for peace in the region.
- Australians were below the weighted average (and the Chinese) in their view of whether the United States would be the greatest force for peace, though they still gave the United States the top spot, followed by China (26 percent), India (11 percent), and Japan (5 percent).
- Indonesia and Thailand also had diverse views of what nation would be the greatest force for peace, and no Thai respondents answered the United States (which may have reflected the political turmoil in Bangkok and tense relations with Washington at the time of the survey).
- In spite of a transforming strategic relationship, more Indians see China or Japan as forces for peace in Asia in 10 years than the United States.
Strategic uncertainty about China...

In every country other than China, China was listed as the most likely threat to peace and security in Asia in 10 years (among all respondents in the survey, 38 percent considered China the biggest threat, with North Korea the second-greatest threat with 21 percent and the United States third with 12.9 percent).

**Figure 4. Greatest Threat to Peace and Stability in 10 Years**

- Both Japanese and Korean elites are more worried about China as a threat to peace in 10 years than they are about North Korea (Japanese respondents: 51 percent for China and 24 percent for North Korea. South Korean respondents: 56 percent for China and 38 percent for North Korea). This could reflect assumptions about a post–Kim Jong Il environment, deeper concerns about China's future, or both.

- In contrast, Chinese elites are more worried about the North Korean threat than any other (40 percent viewed Pyongyang as the greatest threat to peace in 10 years, compared with a weighted average across the region of 21 percent—and greater than the 24 percent of Japanese and 38 percent of South Korean elites who pointed to Pyongyang as the greatest threat). Only 17 percent of Chinese cited the United States as the greatest threat to regional peace in the next decade.

- Thais listed the United States as the major threat, perhaps reflecting stresses in the U.S.-Thai relationship in the wake of the 2006 coup and a more benign Thai view of China.

- Interestingly, Japanese and Indians tended to see China as both the greatest threat to peace and as a potential force for peace at the same time, reflecting certainty about growing Chinese influence but lingering ambivalence about its impact.

- Regional elite views of Japan as a threat were surprisingly benign. Japan ranked sixth as the greatest potential threat to regional stability in 10 years, with only a handful of Chinese (9 percent) and Indians (3 percent) listing Japan. No Koreans listed Japan as the greatest threat.
Finding Two: Broad Support for an East Asia Community

A weighted average of 81 percent expressed support for the concept of building an “East Asia Community,” though only 37 percent within that number “strongly favored” the idea.

Indians stood out as the most enthusiastic about building an East Asia Community (with 68 percent “very supportive”), even though—as can be seen in Table 1—there is considerable disagreement in the region about whether India should even be included in an East Asia Community.

Korean enthusiasm was also above the weighted average.

American elites demonstrated the least enthusiasm, but were still fairly close to the weighted average in expressing support.
Emphasis on confidence building, economic integration, good governance, and eventually democratic norms as the most important elements...

Table 1. East Asia Community: Rank Order of Important Elements
(weighted averages for all countries; very/somewhat important = total support)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Total Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting confidence and mutual understanding</td>
<td>66/29 = 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing interstate conflict</td>
<td>66/29 = 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a framework for trade and economic integration</td>
<td>58/32 = 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting good governance</td>
<td>53/32 = 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting human rights</td>
<td>43/37 = 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting free and open elections</td>
<td>34/45 = 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening domestic political institutions</td>
<td>40/38 = 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting defense and security cooperation</td>
<td>30/46 = 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining national unity</td>
<td>37/36 = 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noninterference in internal affairs of other countries</td>
<td>30/41 = 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting common diplomatic practices</td>
<td>14/49 = 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a regional identity</td>
<td>21/40 = 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The highest priority goals listed for building an East Asia Community in 10 years time were “promoting confidence and mutual understanding” and “preventing interstate conflict,” both of which were listed by a weighted average of 95 percent as “very important” or “somewhat important.” It is not surprising that there is broad agreement on these first-order goals of multilateral institution building and socialization of member states. There was relatively little variance among countries on these priorities.

- A weighted average of 90 percent also identified “establishing a framework for trade and regional economic integration” as “very important” or “somewhat important.” Again, this broad consensus conforms with the reality that 55 percent of all East Asian trade is intraregional (compared with 47 percent for the North American Free Trade Agreement) and with current discussions of regional free-trade agreements (FTAs) ranging from the ASEAN Plus Three discussions to proposals for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) and the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP).

- Support for the goals of universal norms such as good governance, human rights, promoting open and free elections, and strengthening domestic political institutions was striking. Though ranked below confidence building, conflict prevention, and trade, these normative issues were listed as “very” or “somewhat important” goals for an East Asia Community by significant majorities (85 percent for “good governance,” 80 percent for “human rights,” 79 percent for “free and open elections,” and 78 percent for “strengthening domestic political institutions”). Narrow majorities in China also expressed support for all of these 10-year goals, including “free and open elections.” The strong support for including performance on these domestic politi-

9. Detailed graphs on how respondents viewed each of these issue areas are listed in the Appendix under Figures 31 through 42.
cal prerogatives as part of regional institution building ranked as a higher priority across the region than the traditional principle of maintaining “noninterference in internal affairs,” which received 71 percent support.

- There was least enthusiasm for developing common diplomatic policies—for example, as the European Union has attempted—with 61 percent expressing support for this goal and only 14 percent describing it as “very important.”

With varying prioritization and lingering sensitivities...

**Figure 6. East Asia Community: Comparison of National Priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>Aust</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indon</th>
<th>Sing</th>
<th>Thai</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>S. Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average of “Very important” and “Somewhat important” responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting confidence and mutual understanding</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevenring inter-state conflict</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a framework for trade and regional economic integration</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting good governance</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting human rights</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting free and open elections</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening domestic political institutions</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting greater defence and security cooperation</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining national unity</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-interference in internal affairs of other countries</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting common diplomatic policies</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a regional identity</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Respondents across the region clustered well within the weighted average on the top two objectives of promoting confidence and preventing interstate conflict.

- There was somewhat greater variance on the priority of creating a regional trade and economic integration framework. Singaporeans were most enthusiastic, with 86 percent listing this goal as “very important” (because no Singaporeans answered “somewhat important,” the total positive responses for Singapore is lower than the regional average), followed by Koreans (76 percent for “very important” and 18 percent for “somewhat important”) and Indians (65 percent for “very important” and 29 percent for “somewhat important”). Australians stood out as the least enthusiastic about this goal, with 26 percent saying that establishing a trade and economic framework was “not so important” and only 74 percent expressing support (below the 90 percent regional average). This ambivalence could reflect Australian concerns about whether an
East Asia Community would include Australia or a studied realism about how much this will actually impact Australian energy and commodity exports.

- Americans were above the weighted average in ranking the strengthening of domestic institutions (94 percent for “very” or “somewhat important” versus 78 percent for the weighted average), human rights (94 percent versus 80 percent for the weighted average), and fair and open elections (87 percent versus 79 percent for the weighted average). On human rights, the two most authoritarian states in the survey—China and Singapore—were below the regional weighted average, with 67 percent of Singaporeans and 71 percent of Chinese describing human rights as “very” or “somewhat important” versus the regional weighted average of 80 percent. No nation had majorities opposed to human rights as a 10-year goal for regional community building. For some reason, Australians were the only democracy that joined Singapore and China in giving a lower weight to human rights, with 69 percent of Australians saying human rights were a “very” or “somewhat important” goal (though this is in the context of lower expectations for community building across the board demonstrated by Australian respondents).

- The three major developing countries—India, Indonesia, and China (in that order)—were above the weighted average in listing “good governance” as a priority for regional community building. In general, there was greater consensus on the goal of “good governance” than on other political or normative issues such as human rights.

- Regarding the issue of noninterference in internal affairs, Japanese ranked lowest in considering this a priority (51 percent said it was “very” or “somewhat important” compared with the regional weighted average of 71 percent), with Singapore, the United States, and Australia also in a somewhat lower range. While the noninterference principle is usually identified with China, it was India that ranked the principle as most important (84 percent), followed by Thailand (80 percent), and then China (78 percent). Indonesia was also above the weighted average with 75 percent. Adherence to the noninterference principle tracks more closely with states’ level of development or whether they are post-colonial states than with their actual form of government (democratic versus authoritarian or one party).

- Koreans ranked slightly above the weighted average in “promoting human rights” (82 percent “very” or “somewhat important” versus 80 percent for the weighted average) and “promoting free and open elections” (83 percent versus 79 percent for the weighted average) but were placed surprisingly low in “promoting good governance” (54 percent versus 85 percent for the weighted average) and “strengthening domestic political institutions” (65 percent versus 78 percent for the weighted average).

- The fact that elites from India, Indonesia, and Thailand also placed relatively higher emphasis than the regional weighted average on issues such as human rights and good governance reflects some tension in these countries between growing identification with universal values on the one hand and heightened sovereignty concerns on the other. Indeed, there is a direct correlation between respondents in countries who were above the weighted average in emphasizing the goal of “maintaining national unity” (see Figure 42 in the appendix) and respondents from countries who emphasized “noninterference in internal affairs.” India, China, Indonesia, and Thailand were all above the weighted average in stating that maintaining national unity was a “very” or “somewhat important” priority in the process of regional community building (96 percent of Indians, 92 percent of Chinese, 83 percent of Indonesians, and 80 percent of Thais compared with a regional weighted average of 73 percent) and also ranked noninterference as a high priority, despite their differing views on issues like human rights and elections.
These views may in part reflect certain countries’ perceived strength of their national institutions. For example, when asked what institutions are best placed to respond to potential threats—such as preventing an attack on their country, responding to natural disasters, preventing terrorism, or resolving territorial disputes—regional groupings are not seen as effective by a large margin among respondents. Instead, national institutions, such as military forces (and to a lesser extent, bilateral alliances), are given greater weight, especially by those countries (United States, Singapore, China, India) where national institutions were given high marks for effectiveness.

On the other hand, in those countries where elites gave lower marks to their domestic institutions—Indonesia and Japan tended to stand out in this regard—respondents gave slightly higher marks to outside institutions as preferred mechanisms for responding to regional threats. For example, Indonesians—who have a lower view on the effectiveness of such national institutions as the military, the police, the judiciary, and national and local government—gave greater weight than the regional weighted average to the role of the ASEAN Regional Forum in preventing an attack on Indonesia and to the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for responding to natural disasters. Indonesians also gave greater weight to the issues of national unity, formulating common regional diplomatic practices, and promoting good governance as important goals for the East Asia region. But as the next section discusses, Indonesia is something of an outlier in this regard: across the region, there is little confidence that regional institutions can effectively handle the principal potential threats facing East Asia.

**Differences over closer defense and diplomatic coordination...**

Americans stood out for their hope that the region might develop greater defense cooperation, reflecting perhaps a U.S. desire for greater burden sharing as the primary provider of public goods in the region (88 percent of Americans said this was “very” or “somewhat important,” compared with a regional weighted average of 75.7 percent). Least enthusiastic about common defense policies were the smaller nations, and particularly Thailand.

However, the smaller nations were somewhat more enthusiastic about developing common diplomatic policies. ASEAN members—Thais, Singaporeans, and Indonesians—were most in favor, and respondents from the two regional giants—Japan and China—least enthusiastic. This suggests both the utility of ASEAN to its members as a way to bound larger powers in the region but also the limited utility of broader regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum for developing common diplomatic approaches in the future.

**Finding Three: Far Greater Confidence in National Tools and Global Institutions than in Regional Multilateral Tools**

One of the strongest findings to emerge from this survey was the lack of confidence that regional institutions are currently well suited to tackle many, if not most, of the likely major challenges facing Asia in the next 10 years—or that they will be well positioned to do so in 10 years.
Relying far more on military self-sufficiency or alliances than multilateralism for preventing attacks in the future...

**Figure 7. Preventing an Attack on Your Country**

- While there is broad consensus across the region on the importance of establishing an East Asia Community and a high priority placed on confidence building and preventing conflict, regional strategic elites express relatively little confidence in the ability of regional multilateral institutions to actually prevent an attack on their country even in 10 years. On a weighted average, 43 percent consider their own militaries to still be the most effective for that purpose, followed by 25 percent that answered military alliances and 8 percent that answered the United Nations.

- The biggest military powers—the United States, China, and India—were well above the weighted average in expressing the view that their own military would be most effective in preventing a direct attack in the next 10 years (77 percent for Chinese, 61 percent for Americans, and 58 percent for Indians).

- Japanese and Koreans put far more emphasis on their alliance with the United States than on their own capabilities or regional or global institutions (57 percent of Koreans and 54 percent of Japanese).

- Only a handful of Indonesians and Thais expressed the view that the ASEAN Regional Forum would be most useful in preventing an attack on their country in 10 years (14 percent of Indonesians and 10 percent of Thais). Singaporeans expressed no confidence in the ASEAN Regional Forum and looked more like the big military powers, with 57 percent responding that their own military would be most effective in preventing an attack.
These widely different views of the efficacy of multilateral security between major military powers on the one hand and the smaller powers that are “in the driver’s seat” for the ASEAN Regional Forum on the other, points to one of the unresolved dilemmas of institution building in Asia.

Even for responding to humanitarian crises or health pandemics or terrorism...

Figure 8. Responding to Natural Disasters

Figure 9. Handling Health Pandemics in the Region
Figure 10. Preventing Terrorism in the Region

Growing confidence in regional financial mechanisms...

Figure 11. Responding to Regional Economic and Financial Crises
The experience of the 1997 to 1998 financial crisis and subsequent intraregional debt-swapping arrangements through the Chiang Mai Initiative has given elites in the region increased confidence in regional versus international multilateral cooperation. Yet the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is still seen as the most important institution for responding to international crisis—notably in the United States, but even more so in Korea, where the IMF prescription for the Korean economy a decade ago caused considerable hardship. APEC, however, is viewed by most in the region as less relevant than the narrower ASEAN Plus Three and the Chiang Mai Initiative. Only Australia and Thailand view APEC as more likely to respond to a regional financial crisis than ASEAN Plus Three, whereas Thailand's ASEAN counterparts—Singapore and Indonesia—are far more confident in the ASEAN Plus Three. China, Japan, and Korea likewise weight the ASEAN Plus Three and the Chiang Mai Initiative substantially more heavily than APEC, as does—perhaps surprisingly—the United States.

Regional free-trade arrangements...

Figure 12. Promoting Economic Integration and Trade Liberalization

- Regional and bilateral trade agreements were also viewed by strategic elites in these countries as more important for advancing free trade than the global Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the exceptions were elites in Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand, who not only viewed the WTO as equal to or more important than bilateral FTAs, but they also viewed regional trade arrangements such as ASEAN Plus Three and even APEC (for Indonesia and Thailand) as more important than bilateral FTAs. India also viewed the WTO as the most important venue for trade liberalization, an ironic situation given that the Indian delegation did more to bring the Doha Round to a halt than any other nation. Korea, Japan, and Australia all viewed regional trade arrangements as more important than global trade liberalization at the WTO. Japanese confidence in the WTO is particularly low, compared with bilateral and regional FTAs, while the United States and China rank the WTO relatively highly.
Bilateral energy cooperation ranked highest, reflecting the proliferation of bilateral agreements between suppliers and consumers in the region, and the growing competition among consumers like China and Japan for resources. But overall, only a weighted average of 22 percent of respondents across the region chose bilateral cooperation, with the ASEAN Plus Six and East Asia Summit combining for second highest at 16 percent and the global International Energy Agency at 10 percent. This suggests a relatively high level of confidence among experts across Asia that region-wide energy cooperation mechanisms could prove fruitful over the coming 10 years, even though energy discussions in the East Asia Summit or APEC are still largely notional.
Regional experts had the highest confidence in the United Nations to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within Asia with a weighted average of 36 percent pointing to the United Nations, followed by the Six-Party Talks with 16 percent, the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) with 9 percent, and bilateral alliances with 6 percent. Of the participants in the Six-Party Talks, only the Chinese respondents rated the United Nations higher (51 percent versus 20 percent for the Six-Party Talks), while the American and Korean respondents rated the Six-Party Talks as by far the most effective mechanism (39 percent for Americans and 47 percent for Koreans). Perhaps reflecting frustration over the recent six-party process, Japanese respondents actually rated PSI most effective (20 percent compared with 18 percent for the United Nations and 18 percent for the Six-Party Talks).
With little certainty at all about how best to utilize regional institutions to promote good governance, transparency, and the rule of law...

**Figure 15. Promoting Good Governance**

- Respondents clearly favored the United Nations as the most important institution to address questions of good governance, including the rule of law, transparency, and accountability in the region, with only thinly spread support for regional institutions to take on this role. Indeed, among all survey participants responding to the question asking which institutions could most effectively promote these issues in the region, 39 percent responding ambivalently, preferring to say “other,” “all equally,” or “none.” By contrast, the four listed regional institutions in the question—the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN + 3, and ASEAN—were cited by only 28 percent of the respondents in the weighted average. However, Japanese stood well above the weighted regional average in seeing the potential for the East Asia Summit to advance governance.

- The lack of confidence that regional multilateral institutions could advance good governance stands in contrast to 85 percent of respondents who felt that good governance should be a goal of the East Asia Community. This could reflect the sensitive and “internal nature” of such domestic political issues for many elites in the region, or the broader skepticism among the respondents about whether a regional institution is well positioned to advance good governance within countries. Overall, there appears to be a clear gap between the aspiration of good governance as a regional norm and how regional institutions might play a role in achieving that goal.
Finding Four: No Consensus on Membership

How important is it for your country (Figure 16, India; Figure 17, United States; and Figure 18, Australia) to participate in East Asia Community building?

Figure 16. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of India’s Participation in East Asia Community Building

![Figure 16 Diagram]

Figure 17. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of the United States’ Participation in East Asia Community Building

![Figure 17 Diagram]
Figure 18. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Australia's Participation in East Asia Community Building

While the concept of an East Asia Community is strongly favored by regional strategic elites, less clear is which countries should form that community. To shed a little more light on this issue, the survey asked respondents in ASEAN + 3 countries (in this survey, that was Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, China, Japan, and South Korea) to say how important it is to have certain countries included in an East Asia Community. The respondents were given six international players to consider: Australia, the European Union, India, New Zealand, Russia, and the United States.

India had the strongest support from the respondents, with 80 percent saying its membership in building an East Asia Community was either “very important” or “somewhat important.” The United States was behind in second place, with 79 percent of respondents saying its participation was “very important” or “somewhat important.” Australia fared almost as well, with 74 percent of respondents answering its participation was either “very” or “somewhat important.” Russia fared considerably less well, with New Zealand and the European Union gaining the least support. Indeed, in the latter two cases, a majority of respondents said their participation was either “not too important” or “not at all important.”

Interestingly, the survey allows readers to gauge the strength of views of certain countries’ elites about the participation of certain countries in building an East Asia Community. For example,
while Indian participation is strongly favored in ASEAN countries and in Japan—it is considered “very important” by 63 percent of Indonesian respondents, and 53 percent, 43 percent, and 43 percent of Japanese, Singaporeans, and Thais, respectively—only 11 percent of Chinese and 6 percent of Koreans felt the same. However, 57 percent of Chinese and 53 percent of Koreans felt Indian participation was “somewhat important.”

- Japanese (91 percent) and South Korean (83 percent) respondents felt most strongly in favor of U.S. participation, saying it was either “very important” or “somewhat important.” Respondents from other countries—Thailand (70 percent), Singapore (67 percent), and Indonesia (65 percent)—felt less strongly. Interestingly, 80 percent of Chinese respondents said it was “very important” or “somewhat important” to have U.S. participation in East Asia Community building, perhaps reflecting a familiarity with the United States among the Chinese identified for the survey and respect or at least acceptance of the regional “balancer” role of the United States. That was the highest percentage of support Chinese respondents gave to any of the six international players in this question. Notably, about one-third of Southeast Asian respondents—Thais (30 percent), Indonesians (29 percent), and Singaporeans (29 percent)—felt that U.S. participation was either “not too important” or “not at all important.”

- Overall, Australian participation was favored as “very important” or “somewhat important” by nearly three-quarters of respondents. Australian participation in East Asia Community building was most strongly favored by Japan, with a total of 91 percent of respondents there saying it was “very” or “somewhat important.” For South Koreans, 71 percent voiced this opinion. Chinese were least favorably inclined toward Australian participation, with a little more than half saying it was “very” or “somewhat important,” but 42 percent finding it either “not too” or “not at all important.”

**Conclusions and Recommendations: Areas of Consensus for Further Institution Building in Asia**

One of the strongest findings to emerge from this survey was the lack of confidence that regional institutions are currently well suited to tackle many, if not most, of the likely major challenges facing Asia in the next 10 years—or that they will be well positioned to do so in 10 years. However, in reviewing the overall results of the survey, there are some key areas of consensus that may form the basis for strengthening regional institutions. As such, Washington should integrate these findings into policy initiatives seeking to engage and promote the process of effective Asian institution building, consistent with U.S. and regional interests.

*Demonstrate U.S. support for the broad concept of an Asia community and develop longer-term strategies for institution building in the region.* This is a clear preference of elites in the region, but the process will take time, and Washington should neither press too hard nor resist the unfolding patterns of cooperation. Strategic elites from the major powers—including China—see U.S. participation as important. The lack of consensus regarding the substance of East Asian integration and the final membership suggests that no regional power will be able to exclude the United States unless it chooses to be excluded itself. Indeed, the survey results suggest that in spite of the expected rise of Chinese power, attitudes on regional norms are moving in directions that support U.S. interests and values—even among Chinese elites. The United States can engage the region on future architecture from a position of patience, confidence, and generally shared visions for the
future. But the United States must also have a longer-term strategic vision for building effective multilateral cooperation that is well coordinated with like-minded states and based on an appreciation of how best to integrate China.

**Asia strategy should begin with a focus on allies.** This survey demonstrates continued concern in Japan and Korea in particular about their security environment—including potential threats from both China and North Korea—and these allies’ strong expectation that the United States will continue to be the main source of dissuasion, deterrence, and defense. Neither Japan nor Korea demonstrated much confidence in the efficacy of multilateral security mechanisms, and the Japanese lack of confidence in the Six-Party Talks was particularly striking. U.S. strategy for building broader multilateral cooperation and expanded bilateral cooperation with China has to begin with continual shoring up of its allies’ confidence in its commitment to their security.

**Strengthen policies and actions that further engage and embed China in regional networks of shared norms and interests.** The surveyed elites clearly see China emerging as the most important country in the region but have mixed feelings about what that will portend. Regional elites appear to recognize the need to engage China and not contain it but are nevertheless concerned about China’s intentions in the next decade. This strongly suggests that Washington can find common ground with regional leaders through policies supporting the role of institutions in Asia that can help foster a future China that contributes positively to the region’s growth and stability, while Beijing itself becomes more firmly committed to those goals as an interest that China shares with its regional partners. This survey does not support the hypothesis that China is using regional integration to exclude the United States, because Chinese elites did not reject a U.S. role in East Asia community building—or reject a focus over the coming decade on governance, human rights, and elections. There will certainly be continued strategic competition and hedging between the United States and China, but the potential for common ground on a broader regional agenda is noteworthy in these survey results.

**Invest in building a more robust regional energy agenda.** The survey demonstrated a strong consensus that energy is a key area for cooperation. The United States should work for a more robust regional agenda on energy, both within existing forums like Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and perhaps also through the establishment of new organizations that would coordinate on peaceful energy cooperation. The Bush administration’s seven-party Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (AP-7) should be strengthened in the coming years. The energy subgroup of the Six-Party Talks will make limited progress absent further verification and disablement of North Korea’s nuclear program, but there may be an opportunity to engage on strategic energy issues in Northeast Asia in anticipation of eventual changes in the north.

**Continue to expand engagement with regional militaries, both through alliance relations and through other military-to-military ties.** The survey demonstrated a broad comfort level across the region with the goal of mutual confidence building, even as many respondents—particularly from major powers—continued to see their national militaries or alliances as the primary source of security in the region. The United States stood out as the most optimistic with respect to the utility of developing shared military capacity for disaster or humanitarian relief, and U.S. military planners will have to be sensitive to this gap. But this gap also suggests that the United States will have to continue leading in the development of regional cooperation and capacity building for responding to humanitarian disasters. It may be that greater collaboration with international institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and civilian agencies will raise the regional comfort level for expanded cooperation. It may also be the case that U.S. planners will have to look to missions
other than cooperation on humanitarian or disaster relief operations to expand confidence building. Such missions could range from counter-piracy to exchanges on national doctrine and strategy. The bottom line is that this survey suggests a limited expectation for shared regional capacity for humanitarian relief and that these missions will therefore only carry the confidence-building objective so far.

*Recognize the continued importance of such global institutions as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods system, and the World Trade Organization for addressing regional challenges.* Preventing pandemics, strengthening human relief organizations, improving disaster response, and stemming the effects of climate change may prove “safe” areas for cooperation, but regional institutions are not currently seen as the most effective mechanisms to deliver on these needs. In the near to medium term, regional efforts will have to supplement broader international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), bilateral or multilateral initiatives, and national capabilities. The United States should support global institutions in their work to build regional cooperative capacity to address regional problems.

*Continue support and encouragement of emergent norms of good governance, accountability, transparency, and democracy in the region, tempered by a clear understanding of the sensitivity of the issue across the region.* There is remarkable support in the region for the steady spread over time of universal values of good governance, accountability, transparency, and democracy. However, even among democracies in the region, this issue is fraught with sensitivities and concerns about noninterference in internal affairs. Moreover, regional institutions are not yet seen as effective or preferred vehicles for the further introduction and promotion of these values in the region. The United States and Japan can work together to build on this general support, both within individual countries and by helping regional institutions such as ASEAN to improve their capacity to address these issues. Washington should be sensitive to always working with an Asian partner in taking these steps. Starting with areas such as good governance—which enjoys widespread support—will be more appreciated in the region.

*Encourage Japan to take a proactive stance on security issues.* Another striking takeaway from the survey is the lack of regional threat perception regarding Japan. That result should be reassuring to Japanese officials and a source of encouragement for Japan to consider utilizing its highly capable Self-Defense Forces to contribute to internationally sanctioned missions for humanitarian relief, counter-piracy, or reconstruction. Of course, this is a survey of strategic elites, but even the Chicago Council on Global Affairs popular surveys taken shortly before this CSIS survey demonstrated a deep well of “soft power” for Japan in Asia.10 The very low expectations that Japan would be the most powerful country in Asia in 10 years only reinforces the need for Japanese strategic thinkers to utilize all of the positive attributes of their national power.

*Work to strengthen relations with Thailand.* The survey reflects a deterioration of support for the United States among strategic elites in Thailand. This may arise from a number of factors including the perceived role of the United States in recent political developments in Thailand and the ongoing development of stronger ties between Beijing and Bangkok. While a downturn in perceptions vis-à-vis the United States in Southeast Asia has been noted in a number of studies

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and surveys in recent years, the signals detected in this survey are cause for further concern in Washington. The new administration should give additional focus to rebuilding U.S.-Thai alliance relations.
Figure 19. How Effective Is Your National Government?
Figure 20. How Effective Is Your Local Government?

Figure 21. How Effective Are Your Judicial Systems and Courts?
Figure 22. How Effective Is Your Military?

Figure 23. How Effective Are Your Police and Local Security?
Figure 26. How Effective Are Your Religious Organizations?

Figure 27. How Effective Is Your Media?
Figure 28. Which One of these Relevant Institutions Do You Think Will Be the MOST Effective in Resolving Territorial and Historical Disputes?

Figure 29. Which Policy Issue Do You Consider MOST Important?
Figure 30. Which Policy Issue Do You Consider LEAST Important?

Figures 31 to 42—The Importance of the Following as Elements of an East Asia Community in 10 Years:

Figure 31. Noninterference in Internal Affairs of other Countries

Weighted Average
U.S.
Aust
China
India
Indonesia
Singapore
Thai
Japan
Korea

Don’t know
Not at all important
Not too important
Somewhat important
Very important
Figure 32. Establishing a Framework for Trade and Regional Economic Integration

Figure 33. Promoting Confidence and Mutual Understanding
Figure 34. Preventing Interstate Conflict

![Preventing Interstate Conflict](image1)

Figure 35. Promoting Good Governance

![Promoting Good Governance](image2)
Figure 36. Strengthening Domestic Political Institutions

Figure 37. Promoting Human Rights
Figure 38. Promoting Free and Open Elections

Figure 39. Developing a Regional Identity
Figure 40. Promoting Common Diplomatic Policies

Figure 41. Promoting Greater Defense and Security Cooperation
Figure 42. Maintaining National Unity

Figure 43. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Including the United States in East Asia Community Building
Figure 44. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Including India in East Asia Community Building

Figure 45. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Including Australia in East Asia Community Building
Figure 46. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Including New Zealand in East Asia Community Building

Figure 47. (ASEAN + 3 Countries) The Importance of Including the European Union in East Asia Community Building
Bates Gill is the director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), an international, nongovernmental research institute focusing on global and regional security, arms control, and nonproliferation. Prior to this, he held the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) from 2002 to 2007. Dr. Gill has also inaugurated and led East Asia–related research centers at the Brookings Institution and the Monterey Institute of International Studies. His most recent books include Asia’s New Multilateralism (Columbia University Press, 2009), coedited with Michael Green; Rising Star: China’s New Security Diplomacy (Brookings Press, 2007); and China: The Balance Sheet (PublicAffairs, 2006), coauthored with C. Fred Bergsten, Nicholas R. Lardy, and Derek Mitchell.

Michael Green is senior adviser and holds the Japan Chair at CSIS as well as being an associate professor of international relations at Georgetown University. He served as special assistant to the president for National Security Affairs and senior director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council (NSC) from January 2004 to December 2005. He joined the NSC in April 2001 as director of Asian Affairs with responsibility for Japan, Korea, and Australia/New Zealand. From 1997 to 2000, he was senior fellow for Asian security at the Council on Foreign Affairs and also served as senior adviser to the Office of Asian Pacific Affairs at the Department of Defense.

Kiyoto Tsuji joined the Japan Chair at CSIS as a research associate in the summer of 2007, where he conducts research on Asian institutional architecture, the U.S.-Japan security alliance, Japanese politics, and democracy promotion. Mr. Tsuji has previously held positions in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, including an advertisement consultant for an advertising agency in Tokyo, policy staff for a Japanese Diet member, and the Tokyo representative for Asia Society’s 17th Asian Corporate Conference. Mr. Tsuji received his B.A. in economics from Kyoto University and his M.A. in international affairs from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.

William Watts is president of Potomac Associates, a nonpartisan policy research organization in Washington, D.C., that addresses vital issues in U.S. foreign and domestic policy. A key part of the work of Potomac is the assessment of policy within the framework of changing public attitudes, seeking policy alternatives or new approaches that will find broad public support. A consultant to several organizations, Watts lectures frequently on foreign policy and the political process. Author of numerous articles and books, he writes for publications in the United States, Europe, and Asia.