THE MYTH OF POST-COLD WAR DISARMAMENT:
POST-SOVIET DISORDER AND REARMAMENT IN
THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Steven Ratuva
and
Douglas A. Borer

Introduction

On August 21, 1991 the cold war ended. This date marks the failure of the anti-Gorbachev coup led by Kremlin hardliners, and also marks the event which catapulted Boris Yeltsin to the forefront of world politics. Less than six months later the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. In the euphoric West many people assumed that the end of the cold war heralded the emergence of a new international world order featuring harmonious relations between nations as the ideological confrontation between East and West withered away.¹ The cold war period was one of heightened tension, and barely concealed hostilities between the Soviet Union and the United States, together with their respective allies. The United States' fundamental aim was to contain what it perceived as the "Communist menace." The Soviets on the other hand perceived US interests as global "economic internationalism" and "imperialist aggression." Mutual suspicion between the two superpowers was the primary justification for massive arms programs. Both sides' steady accumulation of weapons of mass destruction was designed to "deter" each other. This bi-polar threat of nuclear destruction functioned to maintain a global geopolitical equilibrium (or "order") as each side's security and very survival depended on the actions of the other.

Studies of the cold war have mostly focused on the US/Soviet dichotomy. The fundamental assumption being that all other global geopolitical developments were peripheral processes - gravitating around the US/Soviet conflict - their only significance being their relationship to the US/Soviet political-military order.² Following this logic, third world societies and other non-
superpower countries were intrinsically linked to mainstream US/Soviet cold war relations. This "neo-realist" perspective represents a rather vulgar form of the dependency paradigm. Overemphasis on the US/Soviet dichotomy overshadows the importance of the dynamics of the third world and undermines its significance in global affairs.³ It is only at the end of the cold war and the end of the Soviet/US conflict that attention has been drawn to geo-political dynamics that were once considered secondary. Among these are the marked levels of economic and military growth in the Pacific region, an emergence of an Asian-Pacific economic block, and simmering antagonism between Japan and the United States.⁴

The years following the cold war have not witnessed the hoped for reduction in levels of conflict. This paper argues that the end of the cold war, and the related disorder and conflict which presently characterises parts of the old Soviet empire, has tended to create conditions for re-militarisation in the Asia-Pacific region. While the old order may have been dominated by the US/Soviet dichotomy, the new disorder is largely caused by emerging geopolitical power disputes between non-Superpowers. A common trend is the formation of regional economic and military power blocks as a way of responding to the rapidly changing global economic and political climate. In both Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, these blocks are meant to consolidate economic and security positions in the face of perceived challenges. In the context of post-cold war militarisation, we cannot focus on one region independently of the other, as increasing disarmament in Europe contrasts with growing rearmament in the Asia-Pacific. It will be shown that, in a global context, disarmament is a myth. Simultaneously, there is also a race to obtain nuclear technology in the Asia-Pacific region, sparking off a new dimension in geopolitical relations. Post-Soviet disorder is related to, and partially the cause of, the present Asia-Pacific arms race.

Post-Soviet Disorder

European history has been marked by cycles of political "order" and "disorder". In this century alone, there have been three major periods of "disorder", the First World War, Second
World War and currently the post-cold war period marked by ethnic nationalism and geo-political change. The collapse of the Stalinist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was the fundamental cause of the present disorder. The ultimate demise of the Soviet Union as a superpower was the culmination of five years of "democratic" reforms instigated by Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost. Gorbachev's initial intention was to make Soviet socialism more responsive to global political changes; however, the momentum of his reforms snowballed into an uncontrollable process that permanently disintegrated the Soviet Union and changed forever the geopolitics of Europe and the world.

However, what is important to this analysis, are the remnants of the Soviet military machine. In physical size Soviet cold war military power extended over one third of the globe, covering the full length and breadth of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states. The estimated strength was 5 million uniformed personnel, 27,000 nuclear weapons, 55,000 tanks, over 200 army divisions, 6,000 fighter/attack aircraft, 300 naval surface warships and roughly the same number of attack submarines. These were deployed at thousands of missile sites, army and air bases, air defence posts, weapons depots and naval bases and supported by numerous defence research institutes, design bureaus, shipyards and arms manufacturing establishments.

Along its Asia-Pacific boarder, the Soviets kept thirty three divisions of ground troops in the Trans baik Kal and Far East areas. Some of these were deployed along the Soviet-Mongolian and PRC borders to counter Chinese forces. Added to these were fourteen coastal airfields with MIG fighter interceptors with a limited combat radius reach of 390km and numerous 100 SA-4 and SA-6 surface to air missiles along Sakhalin and Kamchatka. However, much of this material was obsolete and was primarily capable of territorial defence rather than offensive capacity. In the Asia-Pacific region Soviet tactical capability was routinely overstated, quantity not capability was exaggerated by US military officers.

In the Pacific Ocean itself the Soviet Union had 22 ballistic missile submarines, more than twice as many as the US, although
with less firepower. The "flagship" submarines of the Soviet navy were the giant "Typhoon class" boats, which were bigger but less sophisticated and deadly than the US Trident submarines. The Soviets had approximately 999 warheads in its Pacific fleet, compared to 1,536 US Trident warheads. However, the collapse of the Soviet political system had a dramatic impact on the military establishment. The post-Soviet military no longer has the coherence, infrastructural and superstructural capability to function as a unit. As Steven Meyer points out, "With the strange irony of having outlived its host state the post-Soviet military continues to linger on as a fractured, directionless, demoralised and politically disenfranchised institution." The situation is made more complex by the volatile ethnic nationalism and the attempted creation of ethnic national territorial boundaries (even within parts of Russia). The creation of 15 new states from the old union republics resulted in vast portions of strategic and tactical weaponry, including both conventional and nuclear weapons, being left in the hands of ambitious nationalist leaders. Conventional arms and logistical infrastructures of the former Soviet military have been used in inter-ethnic clashes and serve as a source of income for arms traders. However, the bulk of the former Soviet strategic and tactical forces are still under the control of the Russian Republic.

Despite the end of confrontation with the West, there are a number of social and economic motivating factors behind the continued maintenance of a large army in Russia. The most obvious factor is the political value these forces hold for those who control them. This was starkly revealed in early October, 1993 when Boris Yeltsin decreed that the Russian Parliament be abolished. The anti-Yeltsin forces in Parliament responded by taking over a number of state buildings. Yeltsin called on loyal troops to put an end to the "rebellion." This was done promptly, but with much bloodshed. The incident has shown that under Yeltsin (with the support of the military) Russia is possibly heading towards a Western-sanctioned non-communist dictatorship.

Also, with a near-chaotic economy, and increasing unemployment, it is logical not to demobilise the military rapidly, as doing so would contribute to the swelling ranks of disenchanted
young men. Social unrest and a possible new power struggle between Yeltsin and surviving factions of the now defunct Russian Parliament makes, according to Steven Meyer, the retention of the Russian military in its present form “a wise form of social welfare and social control.”

Russia has continued to commit itself to nuclear disarmament with the United States. In October 1992, the United States Senate agreed to ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) while on 4 November, the Russian Parliament also approved START, but on the condition that the ratification formalities be postponed until Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and that they sign bilateral accords with Russian on all aspects of their nuclear forces. The protocol of START signed in Lisbon, Spain on May 23, 1992 by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States secured the commitment of the four Soviet successors states their obliged to adhere equally to the provisions of the START treaty. A draft of the START II treaty was ready by the end of 1992 and was signed in Moscow on 3 January, 1993. According to START II, between 1993 and 2003 the United States will reduce its nuclear missiles from 10,118 to 3,500 while Russia will reduce its from 10,007 to 2,971. This would be roughly equal to the respective levels in the 1960s and 1970s.

Substantial numbers of nuclear weapons still exist and could pose serious security and environmental threats if they fall into the wrong hands. According to a recent Harvard study titled “Cooperative Denuclearisation”, a huge number of cold war armaments remain and should be cause for continued concern. Its finding shows that scattered around hundreds of locations in Eurasia and North America are approximately 50,000 nuclear warheads, of these about 3,000 strategic nuclear weapons of the Soviet arsenal are located in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. There are also stockpiles of hundreds of tons of enriched uranium and plutonium with half-lives of hundreds of thousands of years. An additional problem is the human remains from the cold war’s nuclear standoff. There is a future uncertainty for more than one million people who have spent their entire careers and livelihoods in Soviet nuclear weapons program. Also there is the added environmental problem of the weapons design and manufacturing
complexes which are contaminated with radioactive and toxic waste.\textsuperscript{14}

Of related concern is the complex problem of disposing of weapons. Once the world’s largest nuclear submarine force, totalling 230 boats, the post-Soviet navy is confronted with the problem of decommissioning. The disposal of nuclear waste from decommissioned and currently operating submarines is a source of intense concern, especially when existing waste storage sites are virtually unusable, either because they are in poor shape, nearly filled, totally filled, or overflowing their capacity.\textsuperscript{15} At the end of March, 1993, the Russian government announced that radioactive waste had been dumped into the oceans since 1959. According to the reports the Soviet Union (contravening the London Dumping Convention) dumped 2.5 million curies of radioactive waste, including both liquid and solid waste, in addition to 18 intact nuclear reactors from submarines and ice breakers. Dumping even included spent nuclear fuel, totalling 2.5 million curies. Most of this waste was dumped in the Kara Sea (in the Arctic Ocean) but two reactors and a total of 20,000 curies of liquid and solid waste were dumped off the Far East coast of Russia. Apart from the dumping, it was also revealed that a number of accidents involving nuclear submarines took place near the disputed Sakhalin islands north of Japan. The Russian government attempted to allay fears saying that “there is no sign of radioactive contamination in the area”.\textsuperscript{16} Greenpeace revealed on October 15, 1993 that the Russians continued to dump liquid waste off Vladivostok. Unable to keep its operations secret, Russia admitted on the 18th of October, 1993 that it was dumping nuclear waste into the sea of Japan due to a shortage of dump sites on land.\textsuperscript{17}

A similar problem is with the technicalities and politics of dismantling nuclear warheads. While it is within Russia’s technical capability to dismantle warheads, what to do with the plutonium becomes ethically and politically controversial - whether plutonium is to be considered a waste to be discarded, or as an asset for industrial use. Naturally, advocates of nuclear power as a domestic energy source consider the latter to be a promising alternative. Currently, negotiations are being carried out by the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy with various foreign countries
for the construction of breeder and other types of reactors for plutonium, and construction of associated industrial facilities. Negotiations are being carried out with the German company, Siemens for construction of breeder reactors and mixed oxide fuel (MOS). The General Atomic American Company has also been contracted to construct a high temperature gas cooled reactor. Recently, Japan presented a proposal at the G7 summit in Tokyo “regarding the development of reactor technologies in Russia for the disposition of military plutonium and associated industrial facilities for fabrication of plutonium fuel”. Meanwhile production of military plutonium continues in Kransnoyrsk and Tomsk in Russia.

A recent report confirmed the intention of the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (MINATOM) “to import and reprocess spent nuclear fuel from reactors in South Korea and the West, and re-export it as plutonium”, and Western nuclear establishments have expressed interest in contracts to build 26 new nuclear reactors planned for Russia. Production of plutonium by Russia is motivated by the need to acquire quick money for its fledgling economy. The danger is that the indiscriminate sale of plutonium in an unregulated market is tantamount to uncontrollable nuclear proliferation. This constitutes one of the largest security threats in the post-cold war period. The collaborative efforts with other countries to produce and export plutonium makes it a growing industry that could expand even further in the future. The largest market for Russian nuclear materials, and for the desperate yet highly trained nuclear scientists and technicians, is the booming Asia-Pacific region.

**The Race for Nuclear Arms in the Asia-Pacific Region**

The post-cold war disarmament process has reduced tensions in parts of Europe, however, in the case of Asia, the opposite seems to be the case. Signs of geopolitical instability are emerging and may signal a period of greater regional disorder. The trend now is towards the possession of nuclear technology, both for industrial and military purposes. Professor Tsuchida refers to this as a “tactical Nuclear Arms Race in Asia”.

Questions regarding the spread of nuclear technology in Asia came to the forefront of public attention at the end of 1992 as a result of Japan's importation of plutonium from France. The Japanese action has intensified the race for production of breeder reactors and possibly, the building of nuclear weapons. In January 1992, North Korea, which possesses nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, cited Japan's own mammoth nuclear power facilities as justification for building its own reprocessing complex. Japan's scheme involves reprocessing spent fuel from its own fast-breeder reactors to produce 98% pure plutonium 239. Japan has more than 2.35 tonnes of plutonium 239 (three times more than its industrial needs) and has the capacity to produce about 400 Nagasaki-type bombs. In comparison, North Korea has only 20kg of plutonium.

Speculations regarding Japan's possible intention to create a tactical nuclear weapons program has become a subject of intense debate throughout East Asia and Japan. The stage was set on April 5, 1982, when the Government of Japan announced in the Upper House of the Diet that:

"The Constitution does not prohibit of war capabilities that do not exceed the minimum necessary for self-defence. Therefore the possession of weapons, whether nuclear or conventional, is not in itself prohibited as long as it remains within the aforementioned limits."

This policy allows the possibility of acquiring tactical, although not strategic, nuclear weapons. However, given Japan's industrial and technological capabilities, a "tactical" or short-range weapon could easily be grafted to a missile delivery system, thus making it strategic. This policy is apparently in violation of the Japanese Constitution, which renounces war. Article 9 of the constitution of Japan stipulates:

"Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nations and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes."
In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised.”

However, like other constitutions, this article of the Japanese constitution has been subject to various interpretations, and has even been use as justification for Japan’s military forces. For instance, after its embarrassing non-participation in the Gulf War, Japan’s recent involvement in the United Nations’ Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) is argued by the Japanese government to be within this constitutional requirement - since PKO troops are involved in “defensive” and not “offensive” operations. Critics of the PKO argue that given the right circumstances PKOs can be used for offensive purposes. The situation in Somalia is a case in point, where UN PKO troops, although without Japanese participation, are actively involved in offensive strikes against Somali citizens.

The statement by Japan’s Upper House, reserving the right for Japan to make nuclear weapons for “self-defence” purposes, generated nationwide concern. The controversial plutonium shipment from France and sizeable international opposition made Japan attempt to neutralise any suspicion. Tokyo stipulated that, “Japan strictly adheres to its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, producing or allowing nuclear weapons within its territory ...” However, Japan’s intention to build a reprocessing facility created political ripples Asia-wide. South Korea expressed a profound concern for a possible resurgence of 1930s Japanese imperialism. South Korea’s suspicion is of Japan’s intent to possess nuclear weapons in order to obtain its desire to achieve superpower status. This suspicion is given further credibility by Japan’s possession of plutonium supplies, participation in the UN PKO, and plans to acquire a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Japan’s Defence white paper of 1990 held the position that “defensive” nuclear weapons were not in any way inconsistent with the pacifist provisions of its constitution. This was related to Japan’s current reservations to the nuclear Non-Proliferation
Treaty (NPT), stating that the restriction on peaceful nuclear activities should be removed, and also that there should be no discrimination in the application of safeguards between Japan and the Western European countries.\(^{28}\)

South Korea announced in September 1992 that it would purchase two Canadian CANDU reactors with the capacity to produce weapons-grade plutonium. Almost simultaneously, on September 9, China carried out its first tactical nuclear weapon test. This test was reported four months later, in December, at the same time when Russia announced that it was building four Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR). In March 1993, the South Korean President announced his opposition to North Korea's nuclear program, proclaiming that it could result in Japan's development of nuclear arms.\(^{29}\)

Under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Japan has built an extensive reprocessing program and recently warned that if North Korea built a reprocessing facility, even if operated under similar safeguards, it will withdraw its proposed compensation for atrocities in the Second World War. North Korea accused Japan of pursuing a double standard, because, while Japan uses IAEA safeguards as legitimising mechanisms for its own plutonium recycling program, it does not believe that North Korea could be trusted not to use plutonium to make bombs.\(^{30}\)

The crisis worsened as a result of North Korea's announcement on March 12, 1993, proclaiming its withdrawal from the NPT. It was unprecedented because North Korea was the first country to invoke the NPT withdrawal clause. North Korea's nuclear program, although relatively minor, attracted international attention, especially after its announced decision to pull out of the current NPT regime. Reactions from the US and UN included possible imposition of economic sanctions and military pressure. Stephen Solarz, the former chairperson of the Asia Pacific Committee of the US House of Representatives, suggested that the use of military strikes is a plausible option against North Korea's nuclear facilities. He made these statements in November 1991 (and also in 1992), even after the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) inspection of the North Korean nuclear facilities.\(^{31}\)
The IAEA, UN and United States reaction against North Korea’s fledgling nuclear capability and withdrawal from the NPT is an attempt to isolate and possibly destroy what is perceived as one of the last bastions of the socialist “evil empire.” The US in particular, despite its opposition to North Korea’s nuclear program, has not raised any concern about Japan’s nuclear capability. If anything, it has generally supported it. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs admitted that:

"Whether in the context of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, or in any other context, the government of the United States has never expressed concern about Japan’s plans to use plutonium. Indeed the United States Government has supported Japan in this matter."  

Support for the US, UN and IAEA reaction to North Korea’s withdrawal from NPT has been mixed. While many countries (like China) opposed sanctions, other G7 countries put their weight behind the US moves, and also yielded to the Japanese demand not to put in place a definite extension to the current NPT. The reason was that Japan demanded “an option to develop nuclear weapons in view of the North Korean threat.”  

However, their handling of the North Korean “threat” has raised serious doubts of US and IAEA objectivity,

"the IAEA and the US are practicing a double standard by their unprecedented and extraordinary pressure and procedures applied to North Korea, while they are not raising an issue with other nations such as Israel, India, and Pakistan, which are known to possess nuclear weapons and have not even signed the NPT".

There are additional doubts about the extent of North Korea’s nuclear weapon capability. Rear Admiral Gene La Roque, a retired US naval officer, in an interview with the Japanese magazine "Sapio" (Dec 1990), stated that:
"I think North Korea has no capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons though its subways are the world's best. If a person says that North Korea can possess a nuclear weapon in the near future, his intention might be for some reason to create fears for the Japanese and South Korea."³⁵

In fact, the 1993 edition of the year book "The State of the World" reported that:

"Pyongyang has accepted nuclear inspections since May 1992 and the IAEA carried out on the spot inspections of North Korea's nuclear facilities in Nyongbyon and other areas. No evidence has been found that the nuclear facilities are used for military purpose".³⁶

Even the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy Industry Victor Mikhailov, who worked closely with the North Koreans said that: "The DPRK did not possess nuclear warheads, nor did it have facilities to make one in the near future."³⁷ This is significant evidence to suggest that the US and Japanese fears of North Korea's nuclear weapons capability are unfounded. Furthermore, General Robert W. RisCassi, the present Commander in Chief of United Nations, US, and South Korean combined forces admits that the inspection at Yongbyon, "...confirmed that it was in fact a reprocessing facility. However, it seemed to be only 70 to 80 percent complete and therefore not yet operational."³⁸

Recently, the United States' recognition of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula is a turnabout from its former confrontational stance where the Korean Peninsula was perceived as vital link in its Forward Deployment Strategy (FDS).³⁹ However, old ways die hard. Reports by the US and Russian intelligence allege that North Korea sold a number of 500 kilometre-range Scud C missiles to Iran and Syria, while at the same time negotiating for the sale of the 1,000 kilometre-range Nodong 1 missile (still under development) to Libya. However, the report from the Russian intelligence suggest that North
Korea's missile industry is "encountering a number of objective difficulties." Interestingly, Jane's Defence Weekly announced that a former South Korean government official claimed that his country started developing nuclear weapons in the 1970s, and would have been able to produce a bomb by the first half of 1981, had it not been for the cancellation of the project in 1979.

The Asian Arms Bazaar

In addition to the quest for nuclear capability by Asian states, perhaps even a greater threat comes from the massive infusion of conventional weapons to the region. While the end of the cold war was expected to usher in a "peace dividend", thus enabling nations to achieve major savings on military spending, the exact opposite has been the reality. Instead of pursuing peace, nations in the Asia-Pacific region are preparing for war. Jane's Defence Weekly asserts that there is a military build up of "unprecedented proportions" in Asia. Much, but not all of the arms infusion, comes from the liquidation of weapons stocks by cash-starved states of the old Soviet empire.

In terms of global arms spending, costs incurred by Asian countries in 1981 accounted for 15% of the world total. This figure excludes the US and Soviet Union. However, ten years later, in 1991 the amount increased to 25% of the world's non-superpower total. This percentage amounts to approximately 35% of all major weapon's systems, and is significant when compared to the reduction of 20% or more by other regions. For instance Taiwan and South Korea increased their military spending by 12.5% in 1991 and this increase remained constant in 1992. At the current rate the total military spending by Asian nations by 1995 would be around $US120 billion.

The increase in arms acquisition has been in part due to the accumulated cash reserves by Asian nations with thriving economies. Ready and rich buyers have lured US, Russian and European arms merchants. Other reasons suggested for the increase in Asian arms expenditure are: the decline in the US, Russian and European arms market; the "power vacuum" in Asia due to uncertainty of future superpower commitment to the region; suspicion about China's designs; and the growth of
militarisation in Japan. Other related reasons are the continuing regional disputes, absence of a regional security framework and perceived lessons of the Gulf War about the importance of modern weapon systems to national survival and status.\textsuperscript{44}

The country with the highest post-cold war spending is China, with a 50\% increase over the last 3 years. It recently announced another increase of 11.5\% and it was the largest Asian arms importer in 1991. Its recent acquisitions include the purchase of the unfinished Soviet aircraft carrier Varyag, and 24 SU-27K carrier fighter aircraft. Purchase of two Russian conventional Kilo-class submarines is now being negotiated and China expects to introduce new classes of amphibious assault and supply ships. This would tremendously boost its offshore capability. Chinese officials announced plans to expand naval capabilities by building three naval bases along its eastern seaboard by 1998 in order to boost its logistical support to a blue-water fleet. This became necessary after China enacted a new territorial-waters law in 1992, declaring that the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and the Seukaku Islands in the East China Sea belong to China. Sovereignty claims on the Spratly Islands have been made by Brunei, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Vietnam.\textsuperscript{45} The squabble over the Spratly Islands has been due to their strategic and resource value. The standard 200 mile Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), and the reported oil resources within, are valuable assets for any of the claimants.

However, China's defence spending will probably increase at a much faster rate than the 1993 expenditure proposed by the government in mid-May. The proposed total state spending would increase by 6.8\% to 473 billion yuan (US $83 billion) while the defence spending would increase by 12.5\% to 42.5 billion yuan (US $7.5 billion). China's Premier Li Peng said that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) plans to, "...become the best armed force that China's conditions permit... In future while concentrating on economic development, we should continue to modernise national defence."\textsuperscript{46} The increase in arms expenditures for the three million-strong Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) comes despite this year's estimated 20.5 billion yuan ($3.6 billion) budget deficit. President Jiang Zemin told PLA delegates to the National People's Congress that China's military spending needs to keep pace with
its rapid economic growth. He added that China needed this power since there had always been regional conflict, and "power politics and hegemony" would persist in the post cold war period.\textsuperscript{47}

In the case of Japan, arms purchases in 1992 were \$US2.1 billion with an annual budget increase of about 5\% from 1986 to 1991. Japan is the United State's largest weapons customer in the region. Japan's latest purchases were two modern airborne warning and control system aircraft, one Aegis-type missile destroyer and one 8,900 ton through-deck tank transport ships worth 880 billion Yen (US\$6.8 billion).\textsuperscript{65} In the 1992 fiscal year, the Japanese Self-Defence Forces (SDF) and the Defence Agency spent a total of 1.35 trillion Yen (US\$0.01 trillion) for procurement of weapons and other military-related equipment.

Indonesia is increasingly a source of security concern for its neighbours, especially Australia. It is the only South East Asian country actively involved in colonial aggression. Its colonies are East Timor and West Papua. East Timor, a former Portuguese colony was invaded by Indonesian troops in December 1975, after the left-wing FRETLIN political movement came into power. Despite the UN General Assembly's resolution deploring the invasion, Indonesia, through its policy of "integration", imposed military rule in East Timor. Brutality by the Indonesian soldiers has led to the death of about 200,000 East Timorese.\textsuperscript{48} On the other hand West Papua's "assimilation" into Indonesia was a result of a UN resolution which endorsed the occupation. The resolution legitimised Indonesian repression to the extent that by 1990, 300,000 people had been killed, and 15,000 refugees had escaped to Papua New Guinea. Thousands more are landless.\textsuperscript{49}

Indonesia recently announced acquisition of 39 ships from the former East German Navy. It bought one East German submarine and is considering buying two more. It also purchased 6 frigates from the Netherlands and 12 F-16s fighters from the US. Indonesia's plan, as revealed by government officials, is to set up more bases to safeguard its national sovereignty, particularly with regard to the Naturua Islands, near the disputed Spratly Islands. Airforce Chief Vice-Marshall Rilo Pambudi stated in the future that his country will need at least three squadrons of advanced jet fighters by the year 2000, and two more squadrons
by 2,018. Currently, Indonesia is negotiating for the purchase of 24 advanced British Aerospace Hawk 100 and 200 fighters. Pambudi proudly noted that Indonesia’s Airforce would regain the superiority it had in the region during the 1960s when it had 19 squadrons of Soviet-built MIG fighters.50

Malaysia on the other hand is buying as many as 30 MIG29 fighter aircraft from Russia, two modern British frigates and an upgraded version of the British Aerospace Hawk fighter/ground attack aircraft. Like China and Indonesia, it is anxious to expand its military presence in the South China Sea and plans to develop a major naval base near Kotainabulu in Sabah Province, with the Spratly Islands “high on the agenda”.51

Singapore, the smallest of the Asian states, is in the process of purchasing 11 more F16 A/B fighters from the United States in addition to 8 bought earlier. Interestingly, the French offered to sell Singapore two nuclear powered submarines but were refused “because the nuclear infrastructure involved was too costly”.52 Singapore’s basic concern is to protect its position as a major economic growth centre and vital communication link in Asia.

South Korea for the past two years has bought from the US 120 F16 fighters, 8 P3 Orion naval aircraft and 81 Blackhawk helicopters. It is also buying 100 Sikorsky helicopter, 16-18 destroyers, and 700 main battle tanks. The Germans also supplied South Korea its first submarines. Taiwan is expected to receive 150 F16 fighter jets from the US after suspension of the ban imposed by George Bush during the 1992 election campaign. Furthermore Taiwan signed a contract with French companies for the supply of 60 Mirage 200-5 war planes and 1,500 air-to-air missiles. Through technology transfer agreements with the US, the Taiwanese navy is currently constructing 12 Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates. In addition, it is purchasing 16 Lafayette-class frigates from France and has purchased two submarines from the Netherlands, and currently is negotiating for technology transfer to build four other submarines. Thailand recently ordered six frigates from China and is currently proposing to purchase a helicopter carrier, maritime patrol craft and seaborne helicopters.53

The figures above do not include light arms for land based military and para-military forces. The emerging pattern points
towards an unprecedented build up of air and naval forces rather than of land forces. These weapons systems allow for more mobility and geographical reach, thus enabling effective and speedy deployment of forces in response to security threats or for expansionist aggression.

Regional Disorder

At the national level, accumulation of arms is often used for purposes of sustaining domestic repression and containing what are real or perceived anti-government activities. Justifications of "security" are used as a means of suppressing opposition. The experience of Asian countries testifies to this use of coercive state violence. Most Asian states are either military or semi-military authoritarian regimes with questionable human rights records. In regional terms, the largest emerging threat to stability is the dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. The islands are claimed by Brunei, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The claims are either for all or part of the Spratly Islands and/or their attendant maritime area. 54 It is thought that the group of islands harbour significant oil and gas resources, and the group has strategic value for sealane defence, interdiction and surveillance. The dispute has been in existence for many years, and "all but Brunei have strengthened their claims by reinforcing their troop presence, making it more difficult to disengage and demilitarize, and on the contrary, leading to an incipient arms race in the region." 55

The Spratly issue was discussed in an Indonesian-coordinated talk in Jakarta in June 1992, but no amicable solution was arrived at. This was followed in July 1992 by a meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, and a Post Ministerial Conference which included China, Japan, Russia and the United States. The biggest obstacle to a peaceful solution to the dispute has been China which insists on the sole legitimacy of its territorial claims. China exacerbated the issue further by passing a "Law on Territorial Waters and their Contiguous Areas" which formalised and made rigid its claim to territorial sovereignty over both Paracel and Spratly islands. The formalised claim was reinforced by China's increased naval and air presence in the South China Sea area. 56
China has carried out geophysics and stratigraphic tests on Spratly islands, and granted a concession to Crestone Energy Corporation, a US oil drilling Company, pledging to protect the company with force. Vietnam claimed that the area given by China for the oil concession overlaps its continental shelf and is within 200 nautical mile EEZ. In response to China’s unilateral actions, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers met and promulgated its first ever formal declaration relating to regional security, called the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. It called for peaceful settlement of disputes by the claimants to the Spratly Islands. This was later endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement’s political committee in September 1992. Japan and Vietnam have emulated the Chinese example. Vietnam is offering concessions near the Crestone area to US oil companies. Japan on the other hand has allowed Mobil access to a Japanese-held concession, in an area encompassed by China’s “historic claim” line. The Spratly issue has shown how both resources and strategic considerations have become significant in Asian geo-politics. The US may well be dragged into the dispute due to the involvement of US companies and allies.

The United States retains its interests in the straits and sealanes of South East Asia, as they are critical to its war-fighting strategy. These straits include Malacca, Combok, Sunda and Ombai-Water, which are frequently used by the US Seventh fleet for transit between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The effectiveness of the US Trident fleet depends on its ability to pass through these passages and sealanes unannounced and undetected. The importance of Spratly Islands to the US lies in its appropriateness as a surveillance and monitoring base. Despite the end of the cold war, “the US still needs to consider the worst scenario of their (Spratly Island) control by a hostile power”.

The Spratly Islands issue may have some bearing on the Asian nuclear stand off, as China could use its nuclear capability to deter other claimants use of militarily force to defend their interests in the islands. One of the prevailing views is that the Chinese military build up is “really stimulated by a potential threat from Japan - and the Spratly Islands problem provides a smoke-screen for its real consensus and intentions, as well as an opportunity for the PLA Navy to enhance its budget”. However,
we tend believe that at this stage of the conflict, Japan poses no military threat to China, unless the conflict draws in the United States. US intervention would depend much on how its trade and oil supply routes are threatened.

Vietnam could, in the future, become an economic growth area, and might compete readily with other Asian “dragons.” Although it has a limited economic infrastructure, in comparison to Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, Vietnam has much larger energy and population resources - equal to the combined total of those four economies. The Vietnamese government believes that the best way to exploit its oil and gas resources is to allow the participation of US corporations. The reasons are that the US has the technology and capital to explore the expected large oil and gas fields more than 150 miles off the Vietnamese coast, and also “the desirability of having a major US company operating far out on the Vietnamese shelf near the disputed border with China in the South China Seas.” This might deter the Chinese from responding militarily to Vietnam’s exploration activities. However, while relations between Vietnam and other countries may have improved at the end of the cold war, its relations with China have continued to be tense.

Apart from China, it would seem that Indonesia poses the greatest security risk to its neighbours. The Indonesia government’s plans to build the first of a complex of nuclear reactors in 1996 raises further anxiety about Indonesia’s desire to gain nuclear weapons capability, especially in the minds of its immediate neighbours, such as PNG and Australia. However, Australia’s own role in regional militarisation has been significant. Australia has provided military aid to 26 countries in the Asian Pacific region, totalling $75 million in 1992. Under the Australian Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) Papua New Guinea (PNG) continues to be the principal beneficiary with A$37 million in 1991-1992 budget and A$31 million in the 1992-1993 budget. Total assistance to other South Pacific countries remains around A$22 million while ASEAN countries will receive an increased proportion in 1992-1993 (up from A$15 million to A$20 million). DCP aid to PNG is being used by the PNG forces to suppress the Bougainville secessionists led by Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). The PNG-BRA war has been bloody and has led to
criticisms that Australia’s role is linked to human rights abuses. New Zealand on the other hand continues to exercise its independent nuclear policy. It was one of the first countries in the Pacific to denounce China’s nuclear test resumption in defiance of the international moratorium. Fiji later joined New Zealand in its denunciation of China’s action.

Last is Russia’s future as an Asia-Pacific power. Despite its weakened position, when compared to that of its Soviet predecessor, Russia remains a major player in the Pacific. Russia’s ongoing dispute with Japan over controlled Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, Kusile and Etorofu islands, north of Japan has eased but has not been resolved. However, the two countries began talks for the return to Japan of the contested islands in exchange for massive doses of economic aid to Russia. Although the deal has not materialised, already Japan has committed US$2.7 billion in aid to Russia.65 The transfer to Russia of Japanese technology for plutonium processing has further enhanced the relations between the two countries. Overall, Russia’s significance as a military power in the Far East has declined, although its forces still maintain considerable dominance within the former Soviet borders. Political chaos in Moscow has paved the way for the ruthless exploitation of natural resources in the Asia-Pacific region, as Mark Valencia observes:

“A Russia that is weak and desperate for foreign exchange could easily sell its resources to the highest bidder without a concern for sustainable development, the environment or the long term welfare of its people. In industries such as timber and fisheries, this is already occurring”.66

Russia’s Far East is rich in timber, fisheries, animal furs, oil, gas and a variety of minerals, and their exploitation would have to be on the basis of partnership with its industrialised neighbours. Japan and South Korea have the technology, China and North Korea have surplus labour. This could be a basis for regional cooperation and security in the future. However, it could also be the source of future conflict.
Conclusion - Hope for Regional Security?

The concept of regional security has been favourably considered by the US and other nations. The Clinton administration has indicated a substantial shift in its policy towards the Asia-Pacific region from one based on bilateral initiatives radiating from Washington to a multilateral regional approach. In April, Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific expressed the Clinton administration’s desire for “new mechanisms to manage or prevent” emerging regional problems:

“We welcome increased security consultations in the framework of ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference. This process can usefully encourage nations to share information, convey intentions, ease tensions, resolve disputes and foster confidence. The US will fully participate. For the first time this century, there are no adversarial fault lines among the great powers in Northeast Asia: the US, Japan, Russia and China. The post-cold war period invites dialogue to prevent arms races, forging of competing alignments, and efforts by one power or group of powers to dominate this strategic region.... Asia is not Europe. We do not envisage a formal CSCE-type structure. But it is time to step up regional discussions on future security issues.... We will heed the ideas of others like Japan, Australia, and ASEAN, which have been particularly fertile in this domain. Together we can explore new Asia-Pacific paths toward security.”

The formation of multilateral regional security arrangements may not be easy because, unlike Europe, where cooperative institutions have a long history, Asia-Pacific countries have had little experience in cooperating with one another. Only lately have they begun to deal with each other as important political actors. The regional organisations include the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) formed in 1967, and more recently the
South Pacific Forum (1971), the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC, 1983) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC, 1989). However, there are disagreements in Asia about Australian and US participation in any security arrangements. Malaysia in particular has been critical of Australia's attempt to "take ASEAN for granted" by suggesting that APEC discuss security issues. Malaysia's proposal is to form an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) that would exclude Australia and the United States. The US has shown opposition to EAEC. 68

So far in 1993 ASEAN has had two high level talks, first in February in Tokyo, and second in Singapore in May. The Singapore meeting included ASEAN members, the US, Japan, the EC, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia. What emerged in the meetings were differences in their approach to the security question. For instance Japan supported Australia's idea of APEC discussing security problems while Malaysia maintained its initial opposition. Yet, according to Frederick Chien, Prime Minister of Taiwan, the need for a regional security system becomes more and more necessary with the growing "unresolved territorial, ethnic and religious conflicts, zealous nationalistic movements, weapons proliferation and the prospect of an arms race as among the threats to regional stability". 69

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a positive development in world history. Regardless of varying opinions of the merits of socialism as an ideology for constructing a society, it undisputable that since Stalin's rise to power in the 1920s, the Soviet Union was not a classless, or egalitarian society. The despotism of the Czars and nobility was replaced by the despotism of the commissars and party apparatchiks. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union does not necessarily bode well for world politics. The East-West ideological struggle appears to have been replaced by more traditional forms of conflict; those over perceived or real historic wrongs, those over control of territory and resources, and those over racial or religious hatred. Instead of learning one of the main lessons of the cold war -- that unchecked military spending and possession of nuclear weapons did not guarantee the survival of a superpower -- nations of the Asia-Pacific region appear to be taking the first steps along a similar path.
Endnotes

5. "Order" is defined here not as a system of equal and harmonious relations but as the existence of a definite form of socio-political relationship with an identifiable pattern. "Disorder" refers to the loosening or breakdown of the pattern as a result of major structural changes.
13. Ibid., p. 4.


22. The bomb dropped on Nagasaki was a plutonium bomb. The plutonium bomb has a much more complex structure than the more bulky uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima.


29. See Tsuchida, p. 6.

30. Zuberi, p. 5.

31. See Noh, pp. 5-6.


33. See Tsuchida, p.7.

34. See Takagi, p.1.


39. See Ratuva and Wilkes, p. 65.


43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., p. 12.


51. PCDS, p. 3.
52. Ibid.
58. Valencia, p. 11.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. 60.
61. Ibid., p. 1.
62. Ibid.
68. Ibid., p. 19-20.