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“Security Communities” through Enhanced Security Cooperation: The Implications for an Asia-Pacific Regional Security Framework

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Abstract

This paper focuses on an idea of Asia-Pacific “Security Communities,” which Admiral Dennis C. Blair, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), is promoting. Blair’s concept aims to not only foster dependable expectations of peaceful change but also enhance regional readiness for combined operations. Blair’s Security Communities concept is not just a declared policy and USPACOM is undertaking various initiatives based on this concept, ranging from multilateralized exercises to strategic coordination. This concept deserves serious attention since it has a potentiality to change the existing ineffective combination of bilateralism and multilateralism in the region.

Keywords : security communities, Asia-Pacific regional security, security cooperation, U.S. Pacific Command, bilateralism and multilateralism

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the security framework of the Asia-Pacific has been reorganized to address the changing geo-political environment. The role of the United States and its bilateral alliance systems—the so-called “hub and spokes” system—remains central, but the security focus has shifted from global strategic balancing to regional stability.¹⁾ On the other hand, Asia-Pacific region has for the first time sought on their own to establish region-wide multilateral mechanisms aimed at addressing the new challenges of the region and to supplement the U.S.-centered alliance system.²⁾

While there has been a relatively wide consensus on the necessity of the U.S.-centered alliance system and concurrent multilateral regional dialogues like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), multilateral regional dialogues did not play an important role in addressing various regional contingencies including the conflict in East Timor and the Asian economic crisis.³⁾ On the other hand, it may be difficult to rely too much on the “hub and spokes” system since American involvement in regional contingencies is neither guaranteed nor always desirable.⁴⁾

To improve the current regional security structure, Admiral Dennis C. Blair, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), based in Honolulu, Hawaii, has been promoting the idea of Asia-Pacific “Security Communities” vigorously.⁵⁾ Blair defines Security Communities as “groups of nations that have dependable expectations of peaceful change.”⁶⁾ Balance of power mindsets, Blair argues, should be replaced by Security Communities way of thinking.⁷⁾ According to

1) Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 263-273.

2) *Ibid.*, pp. 273-279.

3) Paul Dibb, David D. Hale and Peter Prince, “Asia’s Insecurity,” *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 17-18.

4) Robert A. Scalapino, “The US Commitment to Asia,” *Journal of Security Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 1995), p. 73.

5) Dennis C. Blair, *Testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on Fiscal Year 2001 Posture Statement*, 7 March 2000 (hereafter *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2001*), (available at <http://www.pacom.mil/speeches/sst2000/000307db.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2001); Dennis C. Blair, *Testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on Fiscal Year 2002 Posture Statement*, 27 March 2001 (hereafter *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*), (available at <http://www.pacom.mil/speeches/sst2001/010327blairtestimonySASC.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2001); Dennis C. Blair and John T. Hanley Jr., “From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 7-17.

6) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2001*, p. 34.

7) Blair and Hanley, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

him, Security Communities include "treaty alliance signatories, participants in a non-military organization such as the ASEAN Regional Forum or groups of nations joined by geographic considerations or common concerns."⁸⁾

As we can easily see, Blair has got ideas from theoretical works on a pluralistic security community, originally developed by Karl Deutsch, and recently by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett.⁹⁾ Deutsch and his associates defined a security community as a group of people that had become integrated to the point that there is a "real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their dispute in some other way."¹⁰⁾ According to Deutsch, peaceful change cannot be assured without relationship based on a sense of community.¹¹⁾ Recently, the concept of security communities has been revitalized and reconceptualized by constructivist scholars. Adler and Barnett argue that security communities are socially constructed and path dependent.¹²⁾ They also present a conceptual framework for understanding how security communities emerge.¹³⁾

Compared to these academic works that are theoretically sophisticated, Blair has used the ideas of security community in a fairly flexible manner. Even while Blair refers to Deutsch or others' academic works, Blair's concept is not always compatible with the academic developments, as will be argued. Also, various initiatives that Blair and USPACOM have promoted in the Asia-Pacific are not directly deduced from Deutsch or others' theoretical works. However, divergence from academic arguments does not reduce the value of Blair's proposal. Blair's Security Communities concept, putting much emphasis on combined military cooperation on specific security tasks, deserves serious attention for its attempts to address diverse, often incompatible, challenges that U. S. policy in the Asia-Pacific faces. The purpose of the paper is to explain why.¹⁴⁾

First, this paper will give an overview of Blair's Security Communities proposal and

8) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2001*, p. 34.

9) Karl Deutsch et al, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957); Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, ed., *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

10) Deutsch et al, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

11) *Ibid.*, p. 36.

12) Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "A framework for the study of security communities," in Adler and Barnett, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 49.

13) Adler and Barnett, *ibid.*, p. 37-48.

14) For convenience sake, to indicate the policy presented by Blair, this paper usually uses the possessive case like "Blair's proposal" or the capitalised term "Security Communities" like "Security Community concept". When this paper indicates the academic concept cultivated by Deutsch and his followers, it will use the possessive case like "Deutschian security community" or "Deutsch's security community".

confirm its two main objectives. After describing the various initiatives of USPACOM to date undertaken to achieve these objectives, this section will survey regional response to USPACOM's initiatives and examine whether and how these initiatives can contribute to the different objectives.

Secondly, it will be identified what kind of Security Communities are likely to emerge in the mid-to long-term future and how their boundaries will be defined. Also, to clarify the nature of Blair's concept, this paper will assess whether USPACOM's efforts are likely to bring about Deutschian security communities or other type of security arrangements.

Thirdly, this article will assess the likely impact of the Security Communities concept upon current regional security framework, consisting of the U. S.-centered bilateral alliance network and formal/informal multilateral security fora. It will be argued that enhanced security cooperation among U. S. security partners can transform the existing regional security framework into a more effective and structured one.

The last section will identify some conditions that may be necessary or desirable in order for Blair's Security Communities concept to work as a basis of effective security framework in the region.

Blair's Security Communities Concept and USPACOM's Initiatives

Blair's Security Communities concept seems to have two main objectives. One objective is to develop dependable expectations of peaceful change in the region. Another objective is to enhance the will and capabilities for combined operations of countries in the region to address regional emergencies and instabilities. Although the latter objective tends to take a back seat, it is no less important than the former one.

Blair and Hanley ascribed the following attributes to Security Communities: (1) genuinely do not plan or intend to fight each other; (2) are willing to put collective efforts into resolving regional points of friction; (3) are willing to contribute armed forces and other aid to UN mandated operations to support diplomatic solutions; (4) are willing to contribute to humanitarian operations; and (5) are willing to plan, train and exercise their armed forces together to build trust, confidence, and capabilities to conduct these kinds of operations.¹⁵⁾

15) Blair and Hanley, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

We can see these expected attributes reflect the two objectives of the Security Communities concept. But important questions are: how can the Security Communities "grow from a concept to a substantial approach for promoting security and peaceful development?"¹⁶⁾ To answer this question, we will have to see a variety of initiatives under the name of the Security Communities concept.

The concept of Security Communities is not just a declared policy. Under the concept, USPACOM is undertaking various initiatives to shape the future security environment in the Asia-Pacific. These initiatives may be divided loosely into "enhancing regional security cooperation" and "enriching bilateralism."

Enhancing Regional Security Cooperation

The first pillar of U.S. efforts to establish Security Communities is "enhancing regional security cooperation". The purposes of enhancing regional cooperation are "to improve regional readiness for combined operations and to expand the set of states in the region that share dependable expectations of peaceful change."¹⁷⁾ Of note, the emphasis is put on tangible security cooperation to counter new types of security tasks, including peacekeeping, search and rescue, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, rather than mere confidence building measures (CBMs).

First, USPACOM has concentrated on merging bilateral exercises with its Asian security partners into regional multilateral exercises. A series of multilateral exercises flourished in 2000-2001. In October 2000, Singapore hosted "Pacific Reach," a multilateral submarine rescue exercise.¹⁸⁾ In May 2001, USPACOM carried out three annual bilateral exercises—"Tandem Thrust" with Australia, "Cobra Gold" with Thailand, and "Balikatan" with the Philippines—under the common concept of "Team Challenge," using UN Chapter VII (peace enforcement), non-combatant evacuation operation and crisis management scenarios.¹⁹⁾ Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), in which a U.S. Navy task force exercises with naval and other forces from the region,

16) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 36

17) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

18) Naval forces from the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Singapore participated *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Japan), "Kaiji Takokuseki Enshuu ni Hatsusanka (The Naval Self Defense Force is participating in a multilateral exercise for the first time)," 3 October 2000.

19) William S. Cohen, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress 2001* (Washington DC: The Pentagon, 2001), pp. 31-32; U.S. Embassy in Thailand Press Release, "New Regional Multilateral Exercise Team Challenge to include Cobra Gold," April 5, 2001 (available at <http://www.usa.or.th/news/press/2001/nrot020.htm>, accessed 1 November 2001).

began in Indonesia in May 2001 continued in the Philippines and Thailand in June, in Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei in July and August.²⁰⁾ Between 12-22 June 2001, the first Western Pacific Mine Countermeasures Exercise (MCMEX) was held, intending to train participating forces in practicing detection, identification and disposal procedures.²¹⁾

Second, USPACOM has led task-oriented security dialogues to foster cooperation among regional militaries. Of note, USPACOM-sponsored activities seem to go beyond the scope of usual security dialogue and aim at tangible military results. USPACOM has begun web-based collaboration through the Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN) and share sensitive, but unclassified, information such as standard procedures and doctrine for combined operations.²²⁾ They also have held Multilateral Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT) conference to train a cadre of military planners from key Asia-Pacific nations to improve capability of rapid and flexible augmentation of a multilateral headquarters.²³⁾

Third, USPACOM has promoted military education and training to underline the Security Communities.²⁴⁾ Under the Foreign Military Officer Education (FMOE) program, in particular, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, USPACOM has carried out exchanges of officers for military education. The IMET is not a new program, but now, it is redesigned to enhance regional readiness for combined operations.

Finally, USPACOM has proposed Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD) projects in collaboration with Australia.²⁵⁾ This project intends to improve the sharing of logistics information among coalition partners. This program grew out of the lessons in East Timor, where U. S. forces failed to exchange information on the arrival of personnel and equipment with other peacekeepers.²⁶⁾

Since the United States has encouraged regional partners to enhance their own defense capabilities for a long time, these initiatives may not look so new. But emphasis

20) Lyall Breckon, "Wanted: More Attention from the United States," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 2001), pp. 56-57.

21) *Ibid.* p. 57. It included participants from Australia, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Russia, the ROK, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as the United States.

22) U. S. Department of Defense, DoD News Briefing, 7 March 2000 (available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2000/t03072000_t307uspc.html, accessed 1 April 2001).

23) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 34.

24) Blair and Hanley, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

25) Sheldon W. Simon, "New Military Cooperation but Continuing Political Tension," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 2001), p. 51.

26) *Ibid.*, p. 51.

has shifted significantly. First, recent efforts assume future coalition operations or combined ones. Second, for effective coalition operations, the United States is encouraging its potential coalition partners to collaborate each other. Traditionally, the United States has encouraged each regional security partner to enhance its capabilities individually. Third, confidence and trust among participants is expected as a by-product. In sum, traditional efforts to enhance regional partners' capabilities are reorganized under the concept of Security Communities with new policy emphasis and initiatives.

Enriching Bilateralism

The second pillar of Security Communities building is "enriching bilateralism." According to Blair and Hanley, "Enriched bilateralism principally involves greater consultation and policy coordination with the nations of the region regarding the full range of U. S. policies that affected interests, going beyond those that affect only bilateral arrangements."²⁷⁾ During the Cold War, bilateral alliances mainly focused on mutual defense among allies. Now the alliances in the Asia-Pacific—notably, the Japan-U. S. alliance—come to emphasize their role in maintaining "regional" peace and stability. Blair and Hanley write, "U. S. consultation with security partners regarding third countries before setting policy and taking action is becoming more important as security challenges become more regional and interdependent."²⁸⁾

Enriching bilateralism enables multiple parties concerned in a particular issue work together. A notable example is the establishment of trilateral planning and coordination between the United States, Japan, and the ROK to address North Korea's threat. Trilateral efforts include the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation (KEDO), the Perry Process, and the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG).²⁹⁾ Ralph A. Cossa, the executive director of Pacific Forum CSIS in Honolulu, name this trend a "virtual alliance", which serves all three nation's security interests but does not require formal trilateral alliance.

This trend is also reinforcing the bilateral security ties between Japan and the ROK that have been traditionally weak. In October 1998, ROK President Kim Dae-Jung and

27) Blair and Hanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11

28) *Ibid.*, p. 11.

29) Ralph A. Cossa, "U. S.—Japan—Korea: Creating a Virtual Alliance," *PacNet Newsletter*, No. 47 (3 December 1999), (available at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/pac4799.html>, accessed 1 April 2001).

Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo issued a joint declaration that pledged to increase defense exchanges and consultations and to establish regular bilateral cabinet meeting.³⁰⁾ Then, joint naval search and rescue exercises were carried out and a bilateral hotline for crisis management was established. Recent events such as the controversy over the new version of a Japanese history textbook and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's visit to Yasukuni Shrine enraged South Korean public opinion and led to the cancellation of the visit by the chairman of the ROK joint chiefs of staff to Japan and the port call by Maritime Self-Defense Forces vessels at Incheon. But on the other hand, the TOCG meetings were held in Tokyo in September 2001 and reconfirmed the importance of trilateral coordinated policy toward North Korea.

Similarly, Australia has expanded its security ties with the United States to address regional uncertainty and instability since the end of the Cold War.³¹⁾ Cossa has pointed out that Australia is a silent partner in the emerging U. S.-Japan-Korea virtual alliance, given Canberra's military commitment to the UN Command, its active participation in KEDO, and its stated support for other initiatives such as the Four Party Talks and TCGO process.³²⁾ Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer's ambitious but controversial proposal on establishing a security forum consisting of Australia, the United States, Japan, and possibly the ROK seems to follow a similar way of thinking.³³⁾

Regional Responses and the Feasibility of the Concept

Blair's proposal and various related initiatives have sparked ambivalent regional responses. On the one hand, they have triggered regional concerns. Some Asian countries are sensitive to China's reaction. Philippines Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja, Jr. said that joining multilateral military exercises might only exacerbate matters.³⁴⁾ Many defense experts criticized Downer's proposal on a security forum as

30) *Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration: A New Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century*, issued on 8 October 1998 (available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/joint9810.html>, accessed 21 November 2001).

31) See *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force* (Canberra: Australian Department of Defence, 2000), (available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/WPAPER.PDF>, accessed 12 November 2001).

32) Ralph A. Cossa, *U. S. Asia Policy: Does an Alliance-Based Policy Still Make Sense?* (Hawaii: Pacific Forum CSIS, 2001), (available at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/issues/usasia.pdf>, accessed 10 November 2001), p. 18.

33) About Downer's proposal, see *The Canberra Times* (Australia), "US flags security forum with Australia," 31 July 2001. About the following China's response, see *The Strait Times* (Singapore), "China moderates criticism of security plan," 2 August 2001.

34) *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, "Manila undecided over US proposal to join allied military exercise," 30 March 2001 (original source: *Philippines Daily Inquirer* web site, 28 March 2001).

sending the wrong signal to China.³⁵⁾ In addition, some countries like Thailand and Philippines worry that multilateralization would weaken their bilateral ties with the United States.³⁶⁾ On the other hand, there have been many positive responses. For example, Singapore's Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Tony Tan said that current security risks like piracy and ecological disaster were multilateral in character and only multilateral exercises could meet the challenge.³⁷⁾ Philippines President Arroyo backed the U.S. initiative to multilateralize military exercises in her foreign policy speech in July.³⁸⁾ The increasing number of participants in multilateral exercises seems to demonstrate that the countries in the region are basically receptive towards USPACOM's initiatives. Even Japan, traditionally hesitant to commit to multilateral exercises, has shown interest.³⁹⁾ Uneasy experience in operations in East Timor and other low intensity conflicts, including piracy and terrorism, have obliged regional countries to accept the necessity of regional readiness.⁴⁰⁾

Even if many regional countries were receptive to USPACOM's initiatives, would Blair's proposal be feasible? As we have seen, the Security Communities concept assumes quite a simple idea, that is, enhanced security cooperation on common tasks will build confidence and trust among participants as well as improve their readiness for combined operations. Is this really a tenable concept?

Intensified security cooperation on common tasks is likely to achieve one of two objectives of the Security Communities concept, that is, enhancement of regional countries' will and capabilities to address regional emergencies and instabilities. Diverse initiatives are designed to give regional countries opportunities to work with others on specific tasks, understand merits of multilateral operations, find difficulties in combined operations, and improve ineffectiveness. Even Operations Other Than War (OOTW) such as peacekeeping operations, search and rescue, counter-terrorism, piracy control, drug control and humanitarian assistance are difficult more than it appears and need to be trained and coordinated in advance. It seems reasonable to assume that tangible regional cooperation on common task will enhance and regional countries' will and

35) *The Canberra Times*, *op. cit.*

36) *Asahi Shimbun* (Japan), "Beigun Enshuu wo Sakugen e (The U. S. force will reduce exercises)," 12 April 2001.

37) *The Strait Times* (Singapore), "Singapore to join Cobra Gold exercise this year," 14 January 2000

38) Lyall Breckon, "Solid in Support of the U. S. ...So Far," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (October 2001), p. 66.

39) *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *op. cit.*

40) *Asahi Shimbun* (Japan), "Ajia no Takokukan Enshu (Asia's multilateral exercises)," 10 June 2000, and *Ibid.*, "Bei no Tounanajia Takokukananpo (U. S. multilateral security policy in Southeast Asia)," 18 October 2000

capabilities to address regional emergencies, if not easy. Similar efforts in Europe—British call them “Defence Diplomacy”—have achieved tangible result in enhancing interoperability.⁴¹⁾ In addition, Blair’s proposal has strength, that is, it can make use of accumulated institutional assets including technical interoperability, information provision, and decision-making procedures that the United States has developed with its security partners.⁴²⁾ If such bilaterally developed institutional assets were adaptable to multilateral operations, transaction cost for enhancing interoperability would be relatively low.

On the other hand, it may appear difficult to see a causal relation between regional cooperation on common tasks and development of dependable expectation of peaceful change. It seems too naive to assume that “Working side-by-side on these missions builds confidence and trust among the participants as it improves operational capabilities.”⁴³⁾ Proposed regional security cooperation seems to improve military effectiveness through enhancing interoperability, but military effectiveness is not always transferable to political cohesion. Nevertheless, states may develop close security ties to promote the notion that the security of states is interdependent.⁴⁴⁾ While we can not place absolute reliance on causal relation between closer security collaboration and emergence of “dependable expectations of peaceful change” or sense of community, task-oriented security cooperation is likely to provide another channel to foster mutual understanding and find “a way that want to exert more influence in the region to do so in constructive ways that contribute to regional security.”⁴⁵⁾ Also, we should note that it is the United States as a hegemon who is promoting the ideas of Security Communities. If the United States uses its hegemonic coercion adequately and domestic conditions in regional secondary states allow their reception of norms articulated by the hegemon, secondary states may internalize the concept of Security Communities through hegemon-led “socialization” process.⁴⁶⁾

41) About Defence Diplomacy, see *Strategic Survey* 1998/1999 (London: IISS, 1999), pp. 38–53.

42) About institutional asset, see Celeste A. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn 2000), pp. 705–735.

43) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 33.

44) Adler and Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

45) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 33.

46) See G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and hegemonic power,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer 1990), pp. 283–315.

What Kind of Security Communities?

If the USPACOM's initiatives worked successfully, what kind of Security Communities would emerge? In other words, what kind of groups of nations is expected to develop as a result of enhanced pattern of regional cooperation? At a first glance, Blair's proposal seems to show an optimistic expectation to build a single inclusive security community for the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. But, judging from proposed measures to develop Security Communities, Blair and USPACOM adopt a more careful and pragmatic approach.

As already seen, Blair's Security Communities are expected to develop through security cooperation on common tasks. The point to observe is that Blair seems to consider that a variety of communities should be tailored according to level or scope of common tasks. The area of common tasks ranges from traditional mutual defense to various OOTW missions. Regarding mutual defense, existing bilateral alliances should continue to work. They also have functioned and will function as stabilizing mechanism of relation among allies. In addition to formal alliances, "virtual alliance" like trilateral security cooperation among the U. S.-Japan-the ROK may be organized against a determinate aggressor and become prepared to "put collective efforts into resolving regional points of friction."⁴⁷⁾ In lower intensity tasks such as peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian support or widely acceptable cases like recent anti-terrorist campaign, looser *ad hoc* coalition is likely to emerge.⁴⁸⁾ The idea that a variety of Security Communities can be tailored according to diverse common tasks is one important characteristic of Blair's proposal.

This adaptive character of Security Communities concept will lead to another important characteristic: conditional membership. Membership of Security Communities is neither regionally inclusive nor strictly exclusive. It may be proper to say membership of each Security Community is conditional according to the scope and level of common tasks. According to Blair, common tasks will be carried out by "group of like-minded nations getting together and pursuing common goals where they can, generally without

47) Blair and Hanley, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

48) About regional cooperation related to anti-terrorist campaign since 11 September 2001, see *The Straits Times* (Singapore), "Multilateral War—That's the way to beat terrorism—Adm Blair," 27 October 2001.

formal treaty organizations or formal structures, but who cooperate on a range of issues in order to develop and resolve them peacefully.”⁴⁹⁾ Non-allied countries like Vietnam and China are not excluded. Technically, as long as a state has the will and capacity to cooperate on common tasks, it can be a member. But when mutual defense matters, the membership of a group of nations addressing the tasks is likely to become restrictive and each nation’s interest tends to diffuse (can China cooperate with the United States and the ROK to fight against North Korean attack?). Even when nations share interests, expected costs may make them reluctant to participate in cooperation. On the other hand, if needed tasks are low intensity or widely acceptable ones, membership can be fairly open.

However, is it appropriate to call groups of nations, which Blair expects to emerge, “security communities”? As stated above, the concept “security community” has its roots in Karl Deutsch’s academic works, which defined a security community as a group of people that had become integrated to the point that there is a “real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their dispute in some other way.”⁵⁰⁾ According to Deutsch, a sense of community or we-feeling is indispensable for the formation of a Deutschian security community. A sense of community is a matter of mutual sympathy and loyalties, of we-feeling, of mutual identification and of successful prediction of behavior.⁵¹⁾ Similarly, in recent theoretical developments propelled by constructivist scholars, shared identities, values, and meanings as well as many-sided interaction and reciprocal attitude are the basis of community.⁵²⁾

If we follow these academic definitions of security community literally, the term “security community” may not be applicable to some components of Blair’s Security Communities. We can consider bilateral alliance between the United States and its allies such as Japan and Australia as Deutschian security communities. It is difficult to imagine that the United States and its allies use force and threat of force against each other to settle their disputes. They have developed tight military coordination including sensitive intelligence sharing and interdependent military posture. Moreover, they have developed a sense of community and emphasized shared values. For example, *The U. S.*

49) U. S. Department of Defense, *DoD News Briefing*, 7 March 2000.

50) Deutsch et al, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

51) Deutsch et al, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

52) Adler and Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region 1998 said, "the United States and Japan will continue building a global partnership based on our shared values, mutual interests and complementary capabilities."⁵³⁾

But on the other hand, military-to-military cooperation on low intensity risks with flexible membership does not seem to converge on a clear common identity. How can we define "we" given that there is little consensus on who constitute "we"? In comparison, in the case of the trilateral relationship among the U.S.-Japan-the ROK, it is relatively easy to define the boundary of a security community because its membership is limited and "they" can be easily defined. But even in this case, it is uncertain if the three countries could form a we-feeling.

It is doubtful whether USPACOM's current initiatives will lead to a clear sense of community, and form security communities in Deutschian sense. But the declared proposed goal like "dependable expectation of peaceful change", endorsed by hegemonic leadership, may make a sense of community more attainable than without such a clearly defined goal. Ikenberry and Kupchan point out that a hegemon can exercise power by altering the substantive beliefs of leaders of other nations as well as manipulating material incentives through threats of punishment or, promise of reward.⁵⁴⁾ Also, to foster a sense of community among the United States and its friendly countries may be easier than among Asia-Pacific countries as a whole. Secretary of State James Baker and President Clinton alike called for a community in the Asia-Pacific, but their proposals do not seem to trigger a formation of a sense of Asia-Pacific community.⁵⁵⁾ In comparison, Blair's approach is more limited and appears more achievable.

At any rate, to form a security community needs years of experiences and only time will tell if the Blair's concept will result in Deutschian security communities. But even though Blair's proposal cannot bring about Deutschian security communities, it does not detract from the potential usefulness of USPACOM's initiatives. USPACOM's efforts are likely to improve regional readiness for combined operations and facilitate future

53) U. S. Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region 1998* (Washington DC: the Pentagon, 1998), (available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/easr98/>, accessed 1 April 2001), Chapter 6.1.

54) See Ikenberry and Kupchan, *op. cit.*

55) James A Baker III, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 5 (Winter 1991/1992), p. 18; William J. Clinton, *Remarks in Address to the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea*, 10 July 1993 (available at <http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w930710.htm>, accessed 1 April 2001).

coalition building in the region. Emphasis of coalition and combined operations has potential impact on existing regional security framework, which consists of bilateral security ties and inclusive multilateral dialogue, as will be examined next.

Impact on Regional Security

USPACOM's recent initiatives under the Security Communities concept try to address several challenges, which the existing bilateralism and multilateralism have not dealt with. They encourage regional security cooperation on common tasks among regional countries, especially among U. S. security allies and partners. If it succeeds, the Security Communities concept may lead to a new regional security framework with a new balance between bilateralism and multilateralism.

Restructuring "Hub and Spokes"

As we will see, the "hub and spokes" system, with almost no security collaboration among U. S. allies or partners, has fundamental flaws. Security Communities concept seems to restructure the "hub and spokes" system by expanding security collaboration among U. S. allies and partners.

The first flaw of bilateralism in the Asia Pacific is its inefficiency. As stated above, American allies and partners have developed some degree of interoperable assets through their individual relationship with the United States. But, since there is little coordination and collaboration among U. S. allies and other partners, their readiness for combined operations will remain immature. Even OOTW missions require peacetime collaboration including combined exercises and information sharing, as stated above. Multinational operations have different characteristic from bilateral operations, therefore, multilateral exercises and training become critical.

Second, separated bilateral ties with the United States rely too much on U. S. leadership and burden. Without U. S. leadership, the "hub and spokes" system cannot play any role more than a disorderly crowd. To overcome this fundamental weakness of the "hub and spokes" system, Morimoto suggests that a loose framework based on the "hub and spokes" compensate a reduction in the U. S. presence and fulfill the same

56) Morimoto Satoshi, "A Security Framework for the Asia/Pacific Region," *Journal of Security Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 1995), p. 226.

functions as the former U. S. presence.⁵⁶⁾ If the regional readiness develops well in such a way, it is likely to relax American uneasiness at its counterparts' free riding as well as to relieve regional countries' obsessive anxiety about the U. S. presence.

Finally, the "hub and spokes" system cannot foster dependable expectations of peaceful change even among U. S. allies and friends. Japan-the ROK tie has remained fragile and encompasses a source of tensions. Same thing can be said in the ASEAN where continued disputes remain. As already said, we cannot place absolute reliance on the expectation that closer security collaboration will develop dependable expectations of peaceful change. However, collaboration on common security tasks may provide another channel to foster mutual understanding and trust. In addition, American hegemonic leadership may succeed in making its allies and partners internalize cooperative norms.

Engaging China

USPACOM's Security Communities concept also tries to address one of the most important U. S. security dilemmas in the post Cold War: whether containment or engagement should form the U. S. policy toward China. The possibility of new formal multilateral/minilateral treaties or alliances is deliberately excluded from the Security Communities concept, taking the concerns of countries other than allies and friends, especially China, into consideration.

Even conditionally, Blair's proposal is open to China. Blair clearly rejected the idea that Security Communities concept is a scheme for containing China in his testimony before the Senate and welcomed Chinese involvement in regional security cooperation such as their contribution to peacekeeping in Cambodia and CIVPOL contingent in East Timor.⁵⁷⁾ Blair also suggested there that the some of restrictions in USPACOM's interaction with armed forces of some nations in the region should be eliminated, for example in the IMET program.⁵⁸⁾ But, as we will see, questions still remain on whether and how much China will accept Blair's proposal.

Coalition of the willing

Lack of formal treaties or organizations is not necessary to restrict habits of cooperation. Rather, this characteristic may provide much flexibility with the concept

57) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 37.

58) *Ibid.*, p. 39.

of Security Communities. The diversity in threat perception, strategic posture, and historical experiences of the Asia Pacific suggests that *ad hoc* or task specific multilateral collaboration is more likely to be workable than the whole regional and fixed security framework.⁵⁹⁾ The more narrowly the scope of collaboration is limited, the more its success is likely and less its cost in the case of failure become. At the same time, unwillingness to form a new formal treaty or organization may help to maintain the core function of bilateral alliances, that is, collective defense, by not extending collective defense guarantee beyond existing allies.

The informal character of Security Communities seems to match well the post Cold War tendency that “coalitions of the willing” approach has become preferred more than before.⁶⁰⁾ According to Richard Haass, the coalition approach “differs from alliances and institutionalism in its eschewal of formal organizations and not requiring broad or complete consent. At its core is the idea of selected nations states coalescing for narrow tasks or purposes—and in some cases disbanding once the specific aim has been accomplished. Membership is open to those able and willing to participate.”⁶¹⁾ The Gulf War coalition, the KEDO, peacekeeping in East Timor, and recent anti-terrorist campaign are notable examples of the coalition approach.

But, the concept of Security Communities goes beyond *ad hoc* coalition. Haass pointed out, “Informal coalitions take time to forge...The lack of common equipment, military doctrine, and common experience is likely to limit effectiveness. So, too, will the lack of resources.”⁶²⁾ Various initiatives under the Security Communities concept try to address such weakness by developing the will and capacity of regional countries which is prerequisite for successful coalitions. In that sense, USPACOM’s initiatives will bring about “well prepared” *ad hoc* coalitions. They are *ad hoc* because missions and member of the coalitions is not determined in advance. They are well prepared because readiness for combined operations is being enhanced ahead of crises.

Enhanced regional readiness for combined operations “provides the United States with competent coalition partners so that our armed forces need not shoulder the entire

59) Ralph A. Cossa, *U. S. Asia Policy: Does an Alliance-Based Policy Still Make Sense?*, p. 19-22.

60) See Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff* (New York: The Council on Foreign Relations, 1998); Patrick M. Cronin, “Coalition Warfare Facts, Fads and Challenges,” *Strategic Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Spring 1994), p. 67-70; Stephen M. Walt, “Coalitions,” in Patrick M. Cronin ed., 2015: *Power and Progress*, (Washington DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1996), Chapter 3.

61) Haass, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

62) *Ibid.*, p. 97.

63) Blair, *Testimony on Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 33.

load."⁶³) In contingencies where the U. S. vital interest is not at stake, the U. S. is likely to provide only supporting capabilities such as planning support, communications systems, intelligence and logistics without providing majority of forces and weapons.⁶⁴) This may be a convenient way for the U. S. to maintain its influence in regional contingencies without producing intolerable casualties and other costs.

The complimentary combination of bilateralism and multilateralism became cliché in the regional security discourse in the post Cold War Asia-Pacific. But real challenge is how to combine what kind of bilateralism and multilateralism. Blair's Security Communities concept seems to present one innovative and pragmatic response to the challenge. While maintaining the core function of existing bilateral alliances, the United States encourages its regional counterparts to play more regional roles and collaborate further. Bilateral relations are expected as a basis for regional cooperation. Embryonic multilateral security institution is not abandoned, but Blair's proposal emphasizes the role of more informal regional security cooperation based on American bilateral security ties not only as a measure to address regional contingencies but also as a measure to develop expectation of peaceful change. In the Security Communities concept, bilateralism and multilateralism are interconnected more synergistically than now.

Conditions for Success

Blair's Security Communities tries to satisfy several, sometime competing, requirements in the U. S. policy toward Asia-Pacific: to improve regional readiness for combined operations to address regional instability and uncertainty; to reduce U. S. burdens while maintaining its influence in the region; to minimize Chinese fears of containment; and to expand the set of states in the region that share dependable expectations of peaceful change. However, some conditions must be satisfied in order that the concept will function as a basis of stable regional security order.

Managing Multi-Layered Security Framework

The concept of Security Communities is likely to lead to a following multi-layered regional security framework: alliance for collective defense; enriched bilateral ties and

64) Walt called such approach "vertical coalition", see Walt, *op. cit.*

well prepared, *ad hoc* coalition of the like minded countries for regional contingencies; and multilateral security forum for the long term trust building. The UN will also play an important role. As Scalapino pointed out, the coexistence of various levels of activities may “produce strong contradictions and varying degrees of tensions.”⁶⁵⁾ The tensions among different security arrangements should be reduced to manageable level. Since each component has its own strength and weakness, the scope and limitation of each component should be clearly recognized.

Concert of Big Powers⁶⁶⁾

Merits of the concept would be seriously damaged if the concept provokes strong objection of any major state and trigger disputes among major powers, especially China. Though USPACOM is cautiously trying to engage China, China may view American initiatives as a measure to contain China. China has sometimes expressed its concern about U. S.-led multilateral cooperation and it is uncertain whether China would accept this concept.⁶⁷⁾ Scalapino said, “Agreements can be achieved on specific issues, as indicated, but consensus on the full range of issues that are critical to Asia’s future is not possible.”⁶⁸⁾ Complete consensus among major powers may not be necessary for Security Communities, but some sort of acceptance will be desirable.

Political Support from Allies and Partners

In order that Security Communities will grow from a mere concept to a substantial approach for regional security, effective capabilities of regional countries are indispensable. However, it is still unclear that regional countries can and want to make sufficient contribution beyond their own defense. To enhance regional readiness for combined operations, stable political support in each regional country is necessary. A degree of regional political supports for Security Communities concept is influenced by relevance to their own national interest and their security norm. As we have seen, reaction of American partners in the region is not hostile, but still ambivalent. If the concept of Security Communities neglects interests, concerns, capabilities or norms of

65) Scalapino, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

66) About the applicability of concert system in Asia, see Amitav Acharya, “A Concert of Asia?” *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (Autumn 1999), p. 97.

67) *Yomiuri Shimbun*, “Kaiji Takokuseki Enshuu ni Hatsusanka.”

68) Scalapino, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

regional countries enormously, it will remain a nice looking but dysfunctional concept like the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

U. S. Commitment

Without continuous U.S. commitment, the concept of Security Communities cannot work. Without U.S. efforts as a catalyst or mediator, recent security collaboration between Japan and the ROK would be unimaginable. U. S. initiative would help regional countries realize the possibility and potentiality of developing regional military and security cooperation on common tasks. The United States has also provided regional countries opportunity to enhance their readiness for combined operations. In crisis, the United States may take some leadership in forming a coalition with diplomatic pressure, even if it wants to play only a supporting role in operations. But despite the importance of U.S. role, political foundation of the concept of Security Communities seems neither wide nor deep.⁶⁹⁾ It is unclear that the Congress and the U. S. administration will support the crux of the concept continuously and sufficiently.

Expanding the Scope of Cooperation

Blair's Security Community concept focuses narrowly on military -to- military cooperation. However, the aim of the concept seems to be better achieved by expanding the scope of cooperation to include other foreign and economic policy areas particularly because proliferating complex emergencies require coordinated approach among political, humanitarian and military elements.⁷⁰⁾

Managing Old and New Dilemmas

Security Communities cannot extinguish all of dilemmas. Rather, they can produce new dilemmas. For example, international intervention may provoke antagonism in the intervened country. In the case of East Timor, anti-Australian sentiment was growing in Indonesia.⁷¹⁾ Old issues will also remain. It is unlikely that the Security Communities concept can function in diminishing existing intense confrontations, for example, dispute

69) About fragmented character of U. S. Asian policy, see *The Strait Times* (Singapore), "Bush's point man for Asia combines empathy and realism," 26 January 2001.

70) See John Mackinlay, "Beyond the Logjam: A Doctrine for Complex Emergencies," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 114-131.

71) Harold Crouch, "Don't Rush to Write off Our Indonesian Links," *PacNet Newsletter*, No. 36 (September 1999), (available at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/pac4799.html>, accessed 1 April 2001).

between the PRC and Taiwan, while it may work as a source for international efforts to address these disputes. The viability of the Security Communities concept depends upon whether it can reduce dilemmas and uncertainties to manageable level.

Conclusion

Blair's concept of Security Communities seems to present a new way of promoting regional stability. If Blair's proposal succeeded, it would have great implications for regional security framework. Regional countries, especially U. S. security counterparts, would be finally interconnected to address regional security issues. Also, enhanced regional readiness may provide the United States competent coalition partners and help the United States to reduce its security burden. Despite its idealistic appearance, the Security Community concept reflects various U. S. interests and careful considerations for regional countries' reaction.

It is uncertain if Security Communities concept will be able to eliminate or lessen balance of power thinking as Admiral Blair insists. Nevertheless, this concept seems to open a new dimension of regional security order, that is, tangible security cooperation on specific common tasks among like-minded regional countries. For a long time, security cooperation on common tasks among regional countries, even among U. S. security partners, was beyond imagination. The concept of Security Communities and various ongoing initiatives make such cooperation imaginable, backed by accumulated invaluable assets that the United States has developed with friendly countries in Asia-Pacific. This epistemological turn may become one of driving forces to shape future security environment in the region.