The 107th Congress will be confronted by a number of issues involving the Asia Pacific region. Perhaps most important, the Bush administration will make a concerted effort to revitalize the US-Japan relationship as the cornerstone of US engagement in the region. China will remain a subject of debate on Capitol Hill, but the end of the annual battle over extending normal trade relations status to China may give the Bush administration a chance to forge broader congressional consensus on China policy. National and theater missile defense development will be pursued by the new administration, and significant debate will take place on Capitol Hill over the ramifications of NMD and TMD for the Asia Pacific. While Congress and the new administration may seek a tougher line against North Korea, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung’s commitment to his “sunshine policy” will constrain new departures in US policy. Regarding the Association for Southeast Asian Nations, the US-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement will be considered and is likely to be approved by Congress, while the new administration will continue to pursue a US-Singapore free trade agreement. The fate of Indonesia will remain a concern, and President Bush will seek to upgrade ties with other partners in Southeast Asia as well as with Australia and the Pacific Islands.

Daniel E. Bob is currently an independent consultant. Formerly he worked for the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator William V. Roth, Jr., (R-DE), as special assistant for Asian and Pacific affairs. Mr. Bob has also served as assistant director for Studies and Policy Programs at the Japan Society of New York. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Bob writes and speaks frequently on US-Asia relations.
Introduction

The advent of a new Congress and a new administration will bring change to US domestic and foreign policy; US policy toward the Asia Pacific region will be no exception. Of course, the extent and shape of that change is impossible to predict with precision. Indeed, as George Eliot noted, “Prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error.” That said, this essay examines the major issues regarding Asia that appear likely to confront the 107th US Congress.

Before getting to that examination, however, several broad points about the Bush administration, Congress, and the US economy are worth noting. First, the new administration is likely to have more senior-level officials with extensive experience in the Asia Pacific than many previous administrations. The selection of those individuals would appear to indicate that the Bush administration will also focus more attention on the region than many of its predecessors.

Second, as Congress tends to be a reactive body—particularly on issues of foreign policy—greater attention to the Asia Pacific by the administration is likely to be reflected in increased congressional scrutiny of the region.

Third, although the 107th Congress is unusually evenly divided, the leadership of both parties remains largely the same as in the last Congress. Moreover, with the exception of the Finance Committee, all Senate committee chairmen and virtually all ranking Democratic members are holdovers from the 106th Congress. Due to self-imposed term limits, however, several House chairmen from the last Congress were required to step down. Thus, a number of new faces have been added to the list of key members affecting policy toward the Asia Pacific. Perhaps most notable, Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), a strong supporter of permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) with China, assumed the chairmanship of the House International Relations Committee in place of Representative Ben Gilman (R-NY), a strong opponent of PNTR.

Finally, a major economic downturn in the United States will have serious consequences for the countries of Asia and could significantly alter regional dynamics. In addition, protectionist sentiments in the United States may rise and anger over trade imbalances may be directed at US allies in the Asia Pacific.

Japan

Perhaps the most important change in Asia policy that will confront the 107th Congress will be the Bush administration’s shift in focus away from China and toward Japan and the US-Japan relationship.

Over the past eight years, Beijing dominated Washington’s policy discussions of the Asia Pacific region. The reasons for this trend are varied, but, perhaps most important, Japan’s persistent economic problems ended the mistaken concerns of the late 1980s and early 1990s that it would inevitably overtake the United States as the world’s largest economy. In fact, China’s swift growth through most of the 1990s made Beijing appear—at least to some—a more likely economic challenger to long-term US economic preeminence. In addition, events of the last eight years, including inconstancy of the Clinton administration’s China policy, the crisis in the
Taiwan Strait in 1996, the reversion of Hong Kong to China in 1997, Beijing’s ongoing human rights abuses, alleged Chinese contributions to US political campaigns and theft of US nuclear secrets, China’s activities contributing to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, China’s military modernization, and the country’s pursuit of membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), all gave Washington policymakers ample fodder for debate over appropriate US policy toward China. Finally, the requirement that China’s normal trade relations (NTR) status be renewed each year, subject to congressional approval, provided members a ready vehicle to voice their objections over Chinese behavior.

Times, however, have changed. With last year’s congressional passage of permanent normal trade relations ending the annual NTR debate, a likelihood that the new administration will employ a steadier hand on China policy, and a clear intention by key Bush administration officials to reinvigorate the US-Japan relationship, congressional attention is poised to shift in some degree away from China and toward Japan.

A report issued in October 2000 by the National Defense University (the so-called Armitage report) reflects the thinking of a group of individuals who appear destined to wield influence over policy toward the Asia Pacific in the Bush administration. The report asserts that “Japan remains the keystone of US involvement in Asia,” yet the bilateral relationship has “wandered, losing its focus and coherence.” Therefore, the authors declare, “the time has arrived for renewed attention to improving, reinvigorating, and refocusing the US-Japan alliance.” Reflecting the views expressed in the report, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated in his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the “bedrock” of US involvement in the Asia Pacific “is our strong relationships with our Asia Pacific allies and friends, particularly Japan. Weaken those relationships and we weaken ourselves.” The report’s significance was also reflected in Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori’s recent call for the creation of a counterpart group to the one that produced the Armitage report. It will convene in February 2001 under the direction of former ambassador to Thailand, Hisahiko Okazaki, a proponent of Japan engaging in collective self-defense.

The Armitage report calls for an upgrade of the bilateral security relationship along the lines of that shared by the United States and the United Kingdom, greater cooperation in intelligence matters, US support for further economic reform in Japan, and encouragement of Tokyo regarding Japan’s assumption of a larger international role. While most of the report’s recommendations require minimal congressional involvement, implicit is a sense that the use of gaiatsu (outside pressure) in attempting to prod Japan toward change—a technique Congress has often employed—must become more nuanced and selective.

In terms of opening Japan’s markets or encouraging further deregulation, for example, the administration is likely first to seek allies within Japan who share an interest in effecting change, reserving the blunter technique of gaiatsu—including congressional participation—for targeted issues or as a last resort. In addition, President Bush is likely to look more positively than his predecessor on Japanese proposals to increase Asia Pacific financial coordination in order to prevent a repeat of the regional economic crisis of 1997–98.

1 “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” is a consensus report reflecting the views of Richard Armitage, Paul Wolfowitz, James Kelly, and Torkel Patterson, among others. As of this writing, all appear likely to hold key positions in the new administration.
The administration may also accept some form of Japan’s recent proposals to set up bilateral “economic framework talks” that would include representatives of government (perhaps even members of the Congress and Diet) and the private sector to discuss deregulation, information technology, and other issues. The United States may use such talks to seek revisions in Japan’s commercial code and taxation policies to encourage greater foreign direct investment, one of the keys to fundamental change in Japan’s economic structure. Difficulties between the two countries may arise, of course, over sensitive trade issues such as automobiles and auto parts or steel, particularly if the US economy falls into recession.

In terms of upgrading the bilateral security relationship, Japan’s self-imposed prohibition on collective self-defense remains a primary constraint, and there are severe limits to what the United States can and should do to convince Japan to remove that restriction. However, in response to the likely views of the Bush administration, the Diet may move more swiftly toward enactment of bills better defining Japan’s capabilities to respond to humanitarian emergencies and participate in UN peacekeeping operations.

For its part, as Secretary Powell stated in his confirmation hearing, the United States will work to minimize the “intrusion by the US forces in the lives of the people in Okinawa,” including the relocation of the Marine Air Corps Station at Futenma. In broader terms, the administration is likely to renounce the use of a specific number of US military personnel deployed in the Asia Pacific as a measure of US commitment to the region. Instead the focus will be on adapting the US force structure to allow greater mobility, flexibility, and survivability. Finally, the Bush administration will work more closely with Japan in addressing the key security problems in the region: the China-Taiwan relationship and North Korea.

**China**

Despite a shift in attention toward Japan, China will still present a range of challenges to the United States and will remain under close congressional scrutiny. The tone the Bush administration adopts toward China will be different from that of its predecessor. As Secretary Powell put it:

> A strategic partner China is not. But neither is China our inevitable and implacable foe. China is a competitor and a potential regional rival, but also a trading partner willing to cooperate in the areas—such as Korea—where our strategic interests overlap. China is all of these things; but China is not an enemy and our challenge is to keep it that way.

In striking this new tone, the Bush administration may be better able to bridge the differences on Capitol Hill regarding China, with a view toward forging a working consensus on US policy toward Beijing.

Although China is well on its way to membership in the World Trade Organization, several important steps remain to be completed before its accession can occur. Most important is that Beijing complete talks with the WTO working party on reforms China must institute to bring its policies, institutions, and laws into conformity with its WTO obligations and responsibilities.
Only after that process is completed can the WTO hold a vote on China’s accession to the organization.

While the United States is only 1 of the 37 members in the WTO working party, Washington will play the lead role in these negotiations. If China proves recalcitrant in reaching agreement and the country’s accession is delayed until after June when the annual grant of NTR runs out, Congress may be forced into yet another vote on renewal of China’s annual normal trade relations status.

Public Law 106-286 grants China permanent normal trade relations upon its accession to the WTO. Since it is quite possible that China’s accession will not take place until after June, there remains a chance that the president will have to renew NTR for China once again, thereby giving Congress another chance to debate and vote on a resolution of disapproval on NTR extension. Short of some sort of egregious action on the part of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), such a motion of disapproval should be defeated handily in the House. However, the fact that President Bush is scheduled to visit China this year to participate in the October 2001 APEC Leaders’ Meeting in Shanghai may give members of Congress another opportunity to raise concerns about China.

Meanwhile, as mandated by Public Law 106-286, Congress will be involved in setting up a congressional-executive commission to monitor and report on China’s policies on human rights, labor practices, and religious freedom; developing rule of law programs; and generally assessing China’s compliance with its WTO obligations. In light of the growing US trade deficit with China and the possibility of an economic slowdown in the United States, Congress can be expected to expend a fair amount of energy on such compliance issues.

Another major concern for Capitol Hill will be whether Beijing lives up to its promise to permit Taiwan to accede to the WTO after China’s own accession. Any indication that Beijing will renege on its commitments will lead to serious repercussions by Congress, perhaps including an attempt to impede China’s accession.

Indeed, Taiwan continues to present one of the greatest challenges to Sino-US relations. Beijing has openly expressed concerns about the direction of the new administration’s policies regarding Taiwan, particularly as a large segment of Congress would like to move Washington toward strengthened relations with the island. One of the clearest expressions of that sentiment can be found in the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA) offered in the last Congress by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Representative Tom DeLay (R-TX). In its original form, TSEA would have significantly upgraded US-Taiwan military cooperation. A somewhat watered-down version of that legislation passed the House in the course of the debate over PNTR, but the Senate never took up that version. Since President Bush endorsed TSEA during the campaign, a renewed attempt at gaining its passage may be expected.

Whether or not that occurs, Congress remains genuinely concerned about Taiwan’s security. A congressionally mandated report issued by the Department of Defense in February 1999 found that by 2005 improvements in Chinese military capabilities would permit Beijing “to attack Taiwan with air and missile strikes which would degrade key military facilities and
damage the island’s economic infrastructure.”

Moreover, in October 2000, China issued a white paper, “China’s National Defense 2000,” which stated for the first time that if Taiwan failed to negotiate with the PRC over reunification, China “will have no choice but to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to safeguard China’s sovereignty.”

Needless to say, Beijing and Congress will be closely watching the administration for any departures from the “one-China” framework that has guided US policy for decades. The administration affirmed its acceptance of the one-China principle when, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary Powell stated that, “The US has long acknowledged the view that there is only one China. In that respect, Taiwan is part of China.” However, in recent years, suggestions from a number of quarters have been made about negotiating a new strategic bargain between Beijing and Taipei to reduce the strains inherent in a one-China policy. At least one individual poised to assume an influential foreign policy position in the Bush administration has supported that view since such strains have intensified with the maturation of Taiwan’s democracy and the reversion of Hong Kong and Macao to China.

Another important test of the administration’s views will come in April when the administration decides on the military equipment it will sell to the Taiwanese. In particular, the Clinton administration refused Taiwanese requests for sales of destroyers with AEGIS battle management systems and antismissile defense capabilities, submarines, and P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft. Sales of each of these items are opposed by Beijing in varying degrees, with the AEGIS system the most objectionable due to its potential use as a platform for theater missile defense (TMD). Since Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian reportedly sent a letter to President Bush appealing for destroyers with AEGIS systems, the Bush administration’s decision will come under close scrutiny by both Beijing and Congress. Capitol Hill input into arms sales to Taiwan, moreover, is mandated by Public Law 106-113, which requires the Secretary of State to consult with Congress on such matters.

Members of the 107th Congress will also watch how the new administration responds to allegations that the PRC sold ballistic missiles and nuclear technology in defiance of non-proliferation agreements, as well as China’s future acquisition of potentially sensitive US technology. In November of last year, the State Department reached a new missile nonproliferation agreement with China that permits consideration of resumed satellite exports to China by the United States. Given problems during the Clinton administration over such exports, as well as waivers granted by the previous Bush administration, any new waivers or licenses for exports of satellites will be subject to intense congressional review. Senator Fred Thompson (R-TN), chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, who invested a great deal of effort on legislation directed at Chinese proliferation activities during last year’s PNTR debate, may play a leading role in such a review.

China’s purchases of military hardware from Russia, as well as other developments in ties between the two countries, may become an increasing congressional concern as well. According to the Russian periodical Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Russia and China are currently holding talks on a defense treaty designed “to oppose US influence and to counter the Pentagon’s

---

plans to create an anti-missile shield in America and a part of Asia.” Key congressional committees can, therefore, be expected to follow these developments closely.

Finally, the 107th Congress will keep a watchful eye on the human rights situation in China and developments in Hong Kong that might abridge the freedoms of the Special Administrative Region’s people. In what may be an attempt to mollify some of China’s critics and preempt a US attempt at introducing or supporting a resolution condemning Beijing’s actions at the annual UN human rights commission meeting in Geneva in March 2001, Chinese officials recently told UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that the PRC will soon ratify the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

**Missile Defense**

Issues related to both theater and national missile defense will be of paramount importance to the 107th Congress, and both systems have major ramifications for the Asia Pacific. In 1999 the House and Senate passed legislation making it “the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack.” Despite this statement of policy, Congress can be expected to engage in vigorous debate over the feasibility and the strategic implications of national missile defense (NMD). When President Clinton deferred the decision on deployment of NMD to President Bush, a strong advocate of a robust system, debate in Congress was also postponed.

Although NMD is not specifically directed at China or Russia, both countries have emphatically opposed it, claiming it is destabilizing and will engender an arms race. The PRC, notably disturbed that NMD will allow the United States greater maneuvering room on the issue of Taiwan’s status, has threatened a dramatic increase in the number and capabilities of Chinese missiles aimed at the United States and an end to cooperation over its nuclear and missile exports and in convincing North Korea to arrest its missile program. Moscow has voiced opposition to the NMD system—as have some US allies in Europe—which would require elimination of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, and has threatened an arms buildup, with China’s support, if NMD is deployed. Japan and Australia have expressed some support for NMD, while South Korea and Taiwan have yet to take a position. In pursuing a national missile defense, the Bush administration will be working closely with allies in the region to explain the merits of the system. Overtures will also be made to Beijing and Moscow.

As Secretary Powell stated in a February 5 television interview:

And at some point we will bump up against the limits of the ABM Treaty. At that time, we will have to negotiate with the Russians what modifications might be appropriate, and we have to hold out the possibility that it may be necessary to leave that treaty if it is no longer serving our purposes, or if it is not something that we can accommodate our programs within. But it’s not something that’s going to happen tomorrow, and it’s not something that’s going to happen without full consultation with our friends and allies and full consultation with the

---

Russians, and beyond that, full consultation with other nations that have an interest in this, in Asia, Japan, Korea, and China.  

Regarding theater missile defense, the FY1999 National Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of Defense to provide reports to Congress on missile defense systems that could protect and be transferred to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.  Patriot TMD systems of varying types are already deployed in all three places.  In the aftermath of North Korea’s launch of its Taepo Dong missile over Japan in 1998, Tokyo agreed to join the United States in developing a more advanced TMD.  Mainly due to improved relations with the North, South Korea has declined to participate in that development program.

Taiwan, on the other hand, is facing ever-growing Chinese missile deployments along the Taiwan Strait.  From a starting point of about 20 missiles in 1996, China currently has deployed about 200 M-9 and M-11 short-range missiles opposite Taiwan, and Beijing may increase that number to 650 over the next several years.  In response, Taiwan has sought upgraded Patriot systems from the United States as well as AEGIS-equipped destroyers that could eventually be employed in an advanced sea-based TMD.  Needless to say, China is not pleased over Japanese cooperation with the United States on TMD, but Beijing has indicated a degree of acceptance of such collaboration wholly absent from its view of transfers of TMD systems or technology to Taiwan.

Korean Peninsula

In the concluding weeks of the Clinton administration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited North Korea and President Clinton sought an agreement on missiles and other issues that he believed would have allowed him to travel to Pyongyang before leaving office.  It is highly unlikely that the new administration will pursue such a visit by President Bush.  It is possible, however, that North Korea will send representatives to attend the APEC summit in Shanghai in October 2001, and, as his two recent trips demonstrate, Kim Jong Il is not averse to traveling to the PRC.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration will take a hard look at current US policy toward Pyongyang including the Agreed Framework and the Perry initiative, which offered North Korea a path toward normalized relations with the United States in return for positive actions by North Korea on nuclear and missile issues.  The Perry initiative itself was the product of congressional dissatisfaction over President Clinton’s North Korea policy: in the FY1999 Omnibus Appropriations bill, Congress called on President Clinton to name a North Korea Policy Coordinator to conduct a review of US policy toward Pyongyang.  There have also been attempts by Congress—including legislation passed in the House—to use the US Atomic Energy Act to require a congressional vote on US implementation of the final stages of the Agreed Framework.

Reduction in conventional forces is one area the Bush administration may make a higher priority than its predecessor in its policy toward North Korea.  Radical change in US policy, however, is circumscribed by South Korea’s commitment to President Kim Dae Jung’s

---

5 Colin Powell, Secretary of State, ABC News This Week Interview, February 5, 2001.
“sunshine policy,” which has included large-scale food and humanitarian aid to North Korea, removal of restrictions on business deals between the North and South, and resumption of official North-South negotiations. The culmination of President Kim’s policy was his historic visit to Pyongyang on June 13–14, 2000, for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. The summit produced a variety of agreements that included the rebuilding of a railway and the construction of a highway between North and South, measures to stimulate South Korean investment in the North, flood control projects, and continued food aid. Kim Jong Il also promised to visit President Kim in Seoul, perhaps in 2001.

Given the South Korean view of the importance of last year’s summit, as well as diminished fears in the South about the North’s military capabilities, President Kim remains committed to his policies and has offered to visit President Bush early on to ensure the United States does not make significant changes to its North Korea policy. Indeed, Pyongyang’s latest diplomatic offensive may be part of a strategy designed to weaken the new US administration’s inclination to take a harder line against North Korea.

In the interim, the United States will have to contend with potentially growing anti-US sentiment in South Korea as a consequence of revelations concerning the incident at Nogun-ri, problems at US bases in South Korea, and declining fears among many South Koreans over the military threat posed by the North—and hence ultimately about the need for a US military presence. On the other hand, the recent signing of a revised Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the United States and South Korea may ease some of the problems arising from the bases. On economic matters, with the exception of steel, conflicts with South Korea have diminished in recent years. An economic slowdown in the United States, however, might bring latent problems in automotives and other areas to the fore.

ASEAN

Many of the most prominent issues regarding the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) involve trade. On July 13, 2000, the United States and Vietnam signed a bilateral trade agreement, which requires congressional approval. In the midst of last year’s congressional debate over PNTR for China, the Clinton administration chose not to submit the Vietnam trade agreement for a vote. The business community, however, is gearing up for early consideration of the agreement by the 107th Congress. If the trade agreement is approved, as appears likely, Congress would thereby grant Vietnam normal trade relations status, subject to annual renewal.

Legislation to provide Laos with PNTR may also be considered by Congress. The previous administration did not press for passage due to concerns over human rights problems in the country. The Bush administration is likely to prod Laos to correct those problems to clear the way for passage of this legislation. Meanwhile, Senator Max Baucus (MT), the ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, stands ready to shepherd a Laos PNTR bill through Congress.

---

In the 106th Congress, the Clinton administration also initiated but did not complete a bilateral free trade agreement with Singapore. The agreement was launched without advance notice to Congress, and an attempt was made to hurry its completion before the Clinton administration left office. No agreement was reached, however. While the Bush administration may pursue free trade negotiations with Singapore due to Singapore’s economic openness and close ties with the United States, Robert Zoellick, the new US Trade Representative, must fit those negotiations into a broader trade agenda. That agenda will likely include gaining fast-track trade negotiating authority, securing progress on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (perhaps beginning with a free trade agreement with Chile), and launching a new round of trade negotiations at the upcoming WTO ministerial in Qatar.  

President Bush may review sanctions on Burma, as some administration officials have criticized the general effectiveness of economic sanctions in achieving policy goals. However, certain powerful members of Congress are likely to oppose any easing of the current array of sanctions, including the ban on new US private investment in Burma, unless fundamental political change is realized.

The problems afflicting Indonesia will likely be addressed by the Bush administration in cooperation with Japan and Australia. To the extent that Congress has focused on Indonesia, it has generally done so through the narrow lens of human rights and East Timor. The new administration, however, may attempt to convey to Congress the broader strategic interests the United States has in the world’s largest Islamic country and work to enhance assistance to Jakarta in certain areas. For example, while Indonesia’s economic recovery is underway, such matters as reducing corruption and strengthening democratic institutions and the judicial system must be addressed if long-term growth is to be sustained.

US-Thai relations, although historically on good terms, still suffer after-effects from the failure of the United States to come to Bangkok’s aid during the Asian financial crisis. Certain members of the 106th Congress tried to ameliorate bilateral frictions through largely symbolic congressional resolutions. A somewhat more substantive effort to enhance the relationship may be undertaken in the 107th Congress by members from both parties.

The arrival of a new president in the Philippines offers the chance for President Bush to continue the process of reviving the bilateral security relationship. That revival, driven on the Philippine side in large part by the country’s confrontation with China over disputed territory in the South China Sea, has included the completion of a Visiting Forces Agreement allowing the US military to participate in joint training and other activities in the Philippines as well as the formulation of a new US military support program. Limning that support program will be a task of the new administration and Congress.

US ties to Malaysia may also see an improvement under President Bush. During the APEC Leaders’ Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1998, former Vice President Al Gore was openly critical of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad’s arrest of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. Mahathir, in turn, openly welcomed George W. Bush’s presidential victory.

---

7 President Bush has said he would like to complete an FTAA agreement by the end of 2003.
The ASEAN Plus Three process—which includes the ten ASEAN countries as well as Japan, South Korea, and China—is expected to be formalized in the near future and has been welcomed by the United States. However, Australia and other countries have expressed concerns that the new organization may amount to a new version of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad’s proposed East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), a defunct initiative meant to create an organization that would serve as a precursor to a trading bloc excluding Australia, New Zealand, and North America. EAEC was strenuously opposed by the first Bush administration. Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong has stated that the ASEAN Plus Three organization should not be interpreted as an attempt to exclude the United States from regional economic matters and that the body would be guided in its trade endeavors by the same principle of open regionalism as APEC. The Australians have expressed a desire to join ASEAN Plus Three; the organization’s decision on that matter will be viewed by the new administration as a sign of where the group is headed.

Australia and the Pacific Islands

Australia may enjoy a higher profile in the new administration, particularly on military matters. Likely key players in the executive branch have spoken publicly about their desire to share more of America’s military high technology with Canberra.

The Pacific Islands have largely been ignored by the United States since the previous President Bush held a meeting with Pacific Island leaders. The new president may make a similar gesture before his first term is over, particularly as political problems have developed in the Solomon Islands and Fiji, with the latter an important concern of certain members of the Senate.

Conclusion

The list of issues likely to confront the 107th Congress regarding the Asia Pacific is long. For the most part, however, the Bush administration will initiate new policies while Congress will weigh in with its reactions. The shift in emphasis toward the US-Japan relationship, the forging of broader consensus on China policy, and the adjustment of policy toward the Korean Peninsula, ASEAN, Australia, and the Pacific Islands all require leadership from the executive branch. Yet Congress must and will have its say on all these matters.