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ASIA RESPONDS TO ITS RISING POWERS

China and India

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International Order and the Rise of Asia: Theory and Practice

Kenneth B. Pyle

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter examines how Asia's rise relates to classic questions about the integration of rising powers into the international system.

MAIN ARGUMENT:
The shift of wealth and power from the North Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific, accompanied by the rise of new powers, is creating a crisis in international governance that will challenge the legitimacy of the U.S.-led order and compel the U.S. to find ways to accommodate this new distribution of power. While liberalism suggests that interdependence, international institutions, nuclear weapons, and new forms of security threats will impel nations to cooperate, realism holds that the new distribution of power will create the kind of tensions that have been historically resolved through war. Asia's first modern power, early twentieth-century Japan, provides an example of the failure to manage a new rising power. This and other precedents suggest that Europe's history of interstate conflict could be Asia's future. While theories based on history are often upended by surprise events, such theories can also sharpen the questions we ask about future changes and how we should prepare for and respond to them.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:
- The key issue is whether the U.S. and other status quo states are willing to concede enough to satisfy rising powers without compromising their own values or appearing weak. If they are not, the rising powers will likely attempt to change the system.

- Asia is in an interregnum, lacking a structure for coping with its diverse peoples and tensions. Though Asian countries are seeking their own norms and will not be satisfied to have them imposed from outside, the number and diversity of actors will complicate creating new rules and institutions.

- All rising states in the modern era have been driven by nationalism, and China will prove no exception. It is unlikely that China will be smoothly integrated into the evolving U.S.-led international order.

International Order and the Rise of Asia: History and Theory

Kenneth B. Pyle

The great, still unresolved issue of our time is how to achieve a legitimate and lasting international order. In a world of sovereign states, how is order created and maintained? Why does it so often break down? Can order be maintained so as to manage changes in the distribution of power? Is war inherent to great-power transitions? And of most immediate concern today, how best can newly rising powers be accommodated into governance of international order? Such questions are complex and have long preoccupied historians and theorists of international relations, but there is greater urgency for answers today in light of the dramatic shifts in power that are underway and a past that demonstrates that redistribution of power often creates conflict. The problem is endlessly debated by theorists, but it is not an academic issue. Rather, it is one with which today's policymakers must constantly wrestle.

The world is experiencing a massive shift of wealth and power from the North Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific region, and this shift is accompanied not only by a redistribution of regional wealth and power but also by the rise of new powers with new ambitions. History has taught us to regard the rise of a new power with great caution. The rise of an entire region and its new powers demands all the more attention. Integrating this new regional power center and its rising states into the international system will require policies of unusual wisdom and whatever useful lessons scholars can offer.

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The rise of the West in modern times was stunning in its extent. The technological changes begun by the Industrial Revolution were of so great a magnitude that they gave Western peoples a military and economic advantage large enough to transform their relationship to other peoples of the world. Asia, which by virtue of its larger population had previously accounted for a far-larger portion of world manufacturing output than Europe, was now abruptly relegated to a position of backwardness. Owing to new economic forces and improvements in transport and communication, Asia was drawn increasingly into an integrated global economy centered on the North Atlantic. Industrial developments translated into greatly enhanced military power, and the West, which in 1800 had controlled 55% of the world's land surface, increased this figure to 67% in 1878 and 84% by 1914.[1]

As stunning as the speed and extent of the rise of the West was, the shift in wealth and power from West to East that began at the end of the twentieth century will be even faster.[2] The end of the Cold War opened a new era for Asia. After being dominated by the Eurocentric world throughout the modern era, Asia began to come into its own—increasingly subject to its own internally generated dynamics. A region that had been a colonial backwater when the Cold War began was the emerging new center of world power and influence. For the first time in modern history, Asian nations acquired the power to adopt active roles in the international system and shape the regional order. Also for the first time, two Asian nations in particular are rising in a fashion bound to have an impact on the issue of order. Asia's share of global output, which was 16% in 1950 and rose to 34% in 1998, is projected to reach 44% by 2030 and be larger than that of Europe and the United States combined.[3]

In the two centuries since the Industrial Revolution, with a huge preponderance in power over Asia and the rest of the world, the West had the capacity to construct the governance of the international system. In the twentieth century, it was principally the United States that used its power to shape the institutions of the system according to its own interests and values. The rapid growth of the wealth and economic power of China and the rest of Asia will challenge the legitimacy of the U.S.-led order and compel it to find ways to accommodate this new distribution of power. The international order faces an impending crisis of governance. Will the

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[1] See D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 178.

[2] To view this shift from West to East on the broadest possible historical canvas, see Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules—For Now: The Patterns of History and What They Reveal about the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

[3] See Ashley J. Tellis, "Power Shift: How the West Can Adapt and Thrive in an Asian Century," German Marshall Fund of the United States, Asia Papers Series, January 22, 2010.

United States agree to relinquish its hegemonic authority and control to include a wider set of states in governing the international system? Will China, the most powerful of the newly emerging states, seek a fundamental revision of the international order to fit its own national aspirations and cultural norms?[4]

The prospect of such rapid power transition from one region of the world to another has brought an unprecedented awareness and examination of this process and the dynamics of international change. Never before, among theorists and statesmen or among commentators in the mass media, has there been such a degree of reflection on the implications of the rise of new powers. The newly rising powers themselves are extraordinarily self-conscious of the historical precedents. In 2003 and 2004, China's most senior leaders set aside time to receive lectures and together study the past history of the rise of great powers. Likewise, over a two-week period in 2006, China Central Television screened a twelve-part documentary entitled "The Rise of the Great Powers" during prime time. Scholars from abroad such as Yale historian Paul Kennedy appeared in the series, which examined the history of nine great powers—Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States. The documentary gave particular attention to Japan, the first modern Asian power, and the lessons of its rise. The television series raised the question of whether war and destruction, which had hitherto been the result of the rise of a new power, would be the future for China. Past experience seemed to confirm such pessimism. In response to the worldwide attention to China's rise, Chinese leaders have been at pains to emphasize that theirs will be a "peaceful rise."

In the United States, the question of whether China's rise is bound to bring conflict was uppermost in the minds of policymakers and commentators when President Hu Jintao made his state visit to Washington in January 2011. In an address on the eve of Hu's visit, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton admitted that "history teaches that the rise of new powers often ushers in periods of conflict and uncertainty," but she dismissed such bleak theorizing. "In the 21st century, it does not make sense to apply zero-sum 19th century theories of how major powers interact." She offered a more sanguine view. Conditions in international relations have changed. In the context of a "new and more complicated landscape," U.S.-China relations

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[4] For an excellent probing of the future of the economic dimensions of world governance posed by the emerging states, see Michael Spence, *The Next Convergence: The Future of Economic Growth in a Multispeed World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

cannot be fitted neatly into "black and white categories like friend or rival."[5] The zero-sum nineteenth-century theories to which Clinton referred are the theories of classical realism that came out of the experience of Europe and that have become the dominant tradition in international relations theory. Her reference to a "new and more complicated landscape" undoubtedly implies the newer tradition of liberal analysts who believe that conditions such as the growth of interdependence, international institutions, and lethal new weaponry have changed the dynamics of world politics and impelled nations to cooperate.

Realists would not disagree that the dynamics of international politics are different today from what they were in the nineteenth century, but would insist, nevertheless, that the continuities in international relations remain stubbornly persistent. As Aaron Friedberg observed in the last volume of *Strategic Asia*,

> Despite changes in technology, patterns of economic exchange, the role of nonstate actors, and the increasing prominence of international rules and institutions, the stability and character of relations in any system of states is still largely determined by the distribution of power among those states… "Hard power"—measured roughly by the size and sophistication of a nation's economic, scientific, and industrial base, and the quality and quantity of its armed forces—remains the essential currency of politics among nations.[6]

If the continuities in the "deep structure" of international order outweigh the changes in the 21st century, the rise of Asia and its powers raises the stark question that Friedberg posed in the title of a recent essay: "Will Europe's past be Asia's future?"[7]

Europe's Past and Realist Theory

Realist thought is commonly traced to the philosophic-historical reflections of Thucydides and to the more concrete prescriptions of Machiavelli, but it was especially during the centuries of conflict in the tightly woven European state system that modern realism was incubated.[8] Statesmen from Richelieu to Bismarck depended on the principles of

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[5] Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Inaugural Richard C. Holbrooke Lecture on a Broad Vision of U.S.-China Relations in the 21st Century," U.S. Department of State, January 14, 2011, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/01/154653.htm.

[6] Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Asia, 2000–2020," in *Strategic Asia 2010–11: Asia's Rising Power and America's Continued Purpose*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis, Andrew Marble, and Travis Tanner (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010), 25.

[7] Aaron L. Friedberg, "Will Europe's Past Be Asia's Future?" *Survival* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 147–60.

[8] See Ashley J. Tellis, "Reconstructing Political Realism: The Long March to Scientific Theory," *Security Studies* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1995/96): 3–94.

realpolitik, *raison d'etat*, and balance of power to regulate relations among states. Order became dependent on assessing power relations and the opportunistic adjustment to changing circumstances. There were periods when equilibrium was achieved; for example, Voltaire observed in 1751 that Europe was "a sort of great republic divided into several states, some monarchical, the others mixed…but all in harmony with each other, all possessing the same religious foundation…all possessing the same principles of public and political law, unknown in other parts of the world." The European states were "above all…at one in the wise policy of maintaining among themselves as far as possible an equal balance of power."[9] During the decades after the Napoleonic Wars, the Concert of Europe succeeded in solidifying a balance by agreeing on principles designed to keep the peace. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Great Britain's role as a balancer, pragmatically intervening on the continent when equilibrium was threatened, became a matter of conscious British strategy and contributed to the maintenance of order.

Nevertheless, as the historian Leopold von Ranke's famous 1833 essay on *die grossen Machte* (the great powers) stressed, interstate conflict and competition were persistent. States were committed to pursuing power at each other's expense, he wrote, and must give constant attention to the balance of power. The existence of the state depended on constant struggle: "The world has been parceled out. To be somebody you have to rise by your own efforts. You must achieve genuine independence. Your rights will not be voluntarily ceded to you. You must fight for them." Counseling the Prussian state, Ranke and his disciples urged *der Primat der Aussenpolitik* (the primacy of foreign policy): the dangers of war and defeat required that foreign policy take precedence. Domestic policy must be subordinated to the exigencies of foreign affairs and the state must organize itself internally so as to succeed externally. "The position of a state in the world," Ranke wrote, "depends upon the degree of independence it has attained. It is obliged, therefore, to organize all its internal resources for the purpose of self-preservation. This is the supreme law of the state."[10]

The unification of Germany and the aspiration of the newly formed state to enhance its military power and catch up with the early industrial nations brought new turmoil to the European state system. Bismarck worked a balance of power strategy with deftness during his tenure as the shaper of foreign policy. After aggressively pursuing German unification,

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[9] F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations between States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 163.

[10] Theodore H. Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 167.

he subsequently acted with notable restraint to tend the balance in the European state system, understanding the limits imposed by the wariness with which other states regarded Germany's growing power. His successors after 1890 lacked the same prudence.

By the end of the nineteenth century, great-power rivalries were playing out in a much wider arena. Far from Europe, they were contested in Asia and Africa over markets and territorial control. Inherent in the imperialist international system was the interrelationship of economics and security, of wealth and power. The advent of industrial civilization made the sustained economic growth that came from modern science and technology essential to the power of the state. According to Robert Gilpin, "economic wealth and military power became increasingly synonymous." As the relative importance of productive technology in the generation of wealth and power grew, "the position of the state in the world market (the so-called international division of labor) became a principal determinant, if not the determinant, of its status in the international system."[11]

As the Industrial Revolution made possible greater wealth and power, swift changes in the distribution of power resulted in new territorial ambitions, armament races, and unrestrained, all-encompassing contests for primacy. The political awakening of the masses and their mobilization as a matter of national strength provoked a nationalism that eroded any sense of shared values that remained from the Concert of Europe.

New powers Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. The challenge of integrating these new rising powers and their conflicting ambitions into a stable order ultimately proved beyond the capacity of statesmen. On the eve of World War II, British scholar E.H. Carr, observing that "the science of international politics is in its infancy," questioned whether it was possible to achieve peaceful change in the face of such rapid shifts in the distribution of power.[12]

Realist Theory in the United States

It was in the United States after 1945, when scholars became preoccupied with American world power and the onset of the Cold War, that the academic field of international relations flowered. As Stanley Hoffman observed, the study of international relations theory became a

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[11] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 124, 134.

[12] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939* (London: MacMillan, 1962), 1.

quintessentially American social science. Born and raised in the United States, the discipline grew up in the shadow of the immense U.S. role in world affairs. But it drew early inspiration from Hans Morgenthau and other realist scholars who had immigrated from abroad:

> They often served as conceptualizers, and blended their analytic skills with the research talents of the "natives." Moreover, they brought with them a sense of history, an awareness of the diversity of social experiences, that could only stir comparative research and make something more universal of the frequently parochial American social science…In addition to Morgenthau, there was a galaxy of foreign-born scholars, all concerned with transcending empiricism: the wise and learned Arnold Wolfers, Klaus Knorr, Karl Deutsch, Ernest Haas, George Liska, and the young Kissinger and Brzezinski, to name only a few. They…wanted to find out the meaning and the causes of the catastrophe that had uprooted them, and perhaps the keys to a better world.[13]

In the time since the pioneers in this emerging field wrote in the early post–World War II era, a rich and burgeoning body of realist theory on the problem of international order—how it is devised and sustained, why it breaks down, and how it is re-established—has grown, replete with controversies and competing theories. Most notably, the realist school in the United States developed an approach to interstate relations that answered major questions of international order by treating its dynamics as operating like a system in which states pursue strategies of self-interest according to observable patterns.

How Is Order Created?

Drawing on the experience of the European state system, a systemic approach to international relations emerged out of the application of theories of economics to the framework of state action. In this view, nation-states that come into regular interaction constitute an international system. The interaction of states, seeking wealth and power in the struggle for survival, could be analyzed like the competitive behavior of firms rationally seeking out of self-interest to maximize profits by cost-benefit analysis. The interactions are generally anarchic—not in the sense that they are chaotic but rather in that there are no formal organs of government that are supreme. In the absence of a central authority to maintain order, states cannot be sure of other states' intentions. They have no choice, therefore, but to seek constantly to maximize their own power, even though these actions will increase the insecurity of other states and cause those states to take further steps to protect themselves. In this anarchic environment,

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[13] Stanley Hoffman, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (Summer 1977): 41–60.

the strongest nations will try to establish order by using their power to construct a framework of rules and practices that will secure their interests. In this way, a stable order may be attained. The unequal distribution of power among states results in a recognized hierarchy of prestige, which is an essential element in a stable order. Countries respect and are reluctant to challenge a nation known for its power. Prestige is akin to authority in domestic politics.

The dominant states, relying on their military, economic, and even cultural power and prestige, shape the system's fundamental rules, principles, and institutions. The values and interests of the dominant states establish the prevailing mores or ideology that gives the system its distinctive character and serves to legitimate the authority exercised by the dominant states. That is, once an order is established, ordinarily through the exercise of raw military power in war, the dominant powers underwrite their position through a legitimating ideology. The weaker states in the system are compelled to play by the rules of the game that are established by the dominant powers. The realist tradition holds that the international system shapes the pattern of behavior of an individual state. Structure influences behavior.

In his influential approach, known as structural realism, Kenneth Waltz sometimes sounded very much like Ranke. Waltz saw the international system as "a self-help system…in which those who do not help themselves, or who do so less effectively than others, will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer."[14] Structural realism held that states act primarily out of the strategic needs of the international system rather than to further domestic ends; external pressures weigh more heavily than domestic politics in determining a state's international behavior. That is, "states conduct their foreign policy for 'strategic' reasons, as a consequence of international pulls and pushes, and not to further domestic ends."[15]

The realist claim that a nation's foreign policy is determined less by domestic politics and more by a state's position in the international system gives realism a predictive ability, but lays it open to the criticism that it is deterministic and underrates the role of domestic factors in the determination of a state's foreign policy. Realists such as Waltz strongly disagreed with their critics who held that the internal organization of states was the key to understanding their external behavior. Although he would not deny the influence of domestic politics, Waltz contended that in the

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[14] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 118.

[15] Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," in *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security*, ed. Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 464.

formation of foreign policy "the pressures of [international] competition weigh more heavily than ideological preferences or internal pressures."[16]

Nevertheless, many theorists insist on retaining an important role for domestic politics as the source of foreign policy, observing that in different countries statesmen react differently to the same environment. No historian could discount the role of an occasional leader (a Bismarck, for example) in changing the direction of events. In other words, even where the influence of the external environment is the strongest, a considerable margin of choice remains. Therefore, after assessing the influence of international structure, one must turn to domestic politics—to the role of elites, their values and perceptions, their definition of national interest, their distinctive sense of national identity—or to the occasional decisive leader.

How Do Systems Change?

An international order is dynamic, and its power relationships change and shift over time. At momentous times in modern history, the structure of the international system undergoes profound changes as pressures build. The systemic approach explains such moments as resulting from shifts in the distribution of power among states. The relative strength of nations is subject to constant change, which has become more rapid since the rise of industrial civilization. The interplay between economics and strategic power became especially defining as industrialization became the foundation of military power. As Robert Gilpin put it, "a distinguishing feature of the modern world has been that superior economic competitiveness and superior military power have tended to accompany one another."[17] States keenly recognize the need to be both rich and strong, to enhance their wealth and power, and to use their productive economic resources as efficiently as possible. Nations, therefore, rise and decline, owing to their uneven rate of growth and to the technological and organizational breakthroughs that bring advantage to one state or another. Some states grow more rapidly than others. The strong states must constantly see to their sources of power lest they become wedded to the status quo and lose their vitality.

For an international system to be stable and enduring, the most powerful states must be satisfied with the existing territorial, political, and economic framework. They must be committed to upholding the status quo, and its governing institutions and norms, through their prestige and their willingness to use force to preserve the order. The legitimacy of the rules and institutions

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[16] Kenneth Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 323.

[17] Gilpin, *War and Change*, 139.

must continue to be widely accepted. Legitimacy implies, as Kissinger observed with regard to the Concert of Europe, "the acceptance of the framework of the international order by all the major powers, at least to the extent that no state is so dissatisfied that, like Germany after the Treaty of Versailles, it expresses its dissatisfaction in a revolutionary foreign policy."[18]

What Is the Character of Rising Powers?

As the distribution of power changes among the major states, rising powers test the stability and equilibrium of a system.[19] As they become stronger and richer, they expect to exercise a greater influence, commensurate with their new capabilities. If this is denied to them, if they are not accommodated, they may turn revisionist. Rising powers may be tempted either by opportunities offered to them where obstacles are surmountable to expand their access to new territories, new sources of raw materials, and markets or by the lure of intangible gains in prestige, leadership, and security. Depending on many factors, including the degree of alienation, the nature of domestic politics, and the willingness and skill of the other powers to cope with dissatisfaction, a rising power may be prepared to seek the overthrow of the existing system.

As Gilpin observes, using terms of cost-benefit analysis, "the critical significance of the differential growth of power among states is that it alters the cost of changing the international system and therefore the incentives for changing the international system."[20] A rising power may seek to revise that order and may even come to believe that its interests lie in contesting and overthrowing the order along with its rules and institutions. If that state succeeds in challenging the old order, often through warfare that results in a new distribution of power among states, a fundamental change in the organization and governance of the international system occurs.

Nationalism as a characteristic of rising powers is a wild card that realists have generally not found ways to incorporate as a powerful motivating force. As economic growth brings newly awakened masses into politics, the role of nationalist emotion and its power to drive national behavior become powerful dynamics not readily captured by rational cost-benefit analysis. Bland references to problems of national identity and ideology do not reveal the explosive and volatile force of nationalist

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[18] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 1.

[19] For a thoughtful discussion of the future of China from the perspective of rising powers in history, see Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000), 199–229.

[20] Gilpin, *War and Change*, 95.

emotion that historically is intrinsic to rising powers with past grievances and status ambitions.

Rising states tend to be driven by distinctive complexes of ideas, norms, and values. Their construction of national purpose and mission is a powerful determinant of their international behavior. In the words of Alexander Wendt, "anarchy is what states make of it."[21] Wendt is a leading scholar among the so-called constructivists, who have faulted realism for underplaying the role of ideas and culture in driving change in world politics.

Nationalism is a modern phenomenon constructed by leaders to provide a motivating identity for a people arriving in the international state system and pursuing rapid industrialization. It is an instrument to maintain social cohesion in the midst of the turmoil and tensions accompanying rapid catch-up industrialization. Nationalism is not simply a top-down phenomenon. The mobilization of nationalism is first a tool of leaders, but it easily slips beyond the control of state leadership. It has its most combustible moments when a people is in a rising, nation-building phase and is being drawn into heightened political consciousness. At this stage, nationalism inevitably spills over to have a strong influence on foreign policy. Historically, industrialization has often been accompanied by expansionist impulses. As Samuel Huntington observed, "The external expansion of the U.K. and France, Germany and Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States coincided with phases of intense industrialization and economic development."[22] This is the work of nationalism.

Is Peaceful Change Possible?

Great-power transitions historically have almost always been accompanied by conflict. When mismanaged, as they most often are, power transitions can have cataclysmic consequences. They typically have been accompanied, Gilpin argues, by warfare:

> In these situations, the disequilibrium in the system becomes increasingly acute as the declining power tries to maintain its position and the rising power attempts to revise the system in ways that will advance its interests. As a consequence of this persisting disequilibrium, the international system is beset by tensions, uncertainties, and crises…Throughout history the primary means of resolving the disequilibrium between the structure of the international system and the redistribution of power has been war, more particularly what we shall call a hegemonic war.[23]

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[21] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391–425.

[22] Samuel P. Huntington, "America's Changing Strategic Interests," *Survival* 33, no. 1 (January/February 1991): 12.

[23] Gilpin, *War and Change*, 197.

War need not be inevitable, however. British willingness to appease the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century is an exception that will be discussed below.

The challenge for statesmanship is how to avoid war and maintain peace in the midst of such fundamental shifts in relative power among nations. Often the primary issue is whether the status quo powers are willing to make concessions generous enough to satisfy the revisionist power without seeming to appease or confess weakness. The political historian David Calleo, reflecting on the onset of World War I, wrote that "geography and history conspired to make Germany's rise late, rapid, vulnerable, and aggressive. The rest of the world reacted by crushing the upstart…Perhaps the proper lesson is not so much the need for vigilance against aggressors, but the ruinous consequences of refusing reasonable accommodation to upstarts."[24] Status quo powers always find not only their interests but also their values endangered by compromise with the rising states. Statesmanship continues to be challenged to find peaceful means to adjust to the consequences of the uneven growth of power among states.

Evolution of the Modern System in East Asia

International relations theory has been built largely on the study of the West. As Gilpin observed pointedly,

> for a profession whose intellectual commitment is the understanding of the interactions of societies, international relations as a discipline is remarkably parochial and ethnocentric. It is essentially a study of the Western state system, and a sizable fraction of the existing literature is devoted to developments since the end of World War II….In large measure…this is because of the paucity of reliable secondary studies of non-Western systems.[25]

Since these words were written, the advance of studies of the non-Western world has begun to repair that shortcoming. Nevertheless, theorists have only made limited efforts to study the way Asian states have acted within the international state system since it was established nearly two centuries ago, when the arrival of the modern world created for the first time a single international system. The Industrial Revolution brought waves of technological advances in transportation and communication that made possible the first truly global international system into which Asia was integrated. During this time, the Sinocentric system was overwhelmed and

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[24] David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 6.

[25] Gilpin, *War and Change*, 5.

the West imposed order in the region until Asian states (beginning with Japan) began to rise and challenge the existing order.

Structural realism provides useful categories of analysis with which to trace the evolution of the international system and the successive efforts of the great powers to impose order in East Asia. **Table 1** summarizes the historical record of successive orders in modern Asia and shows their characteristics, their legitimating norms and values, and the dynamics associated with systemic transitions. The distribution of power has provided the effective basis upon which order has been created. The dominant power has set the rules by which nations have been influenced to act and has legitimated its position with an ideology that claims universality. In each case, the dominant powers have constructed a framework of rules, institutions, and practices to secure their interests. The rules of the system cover the conduct of diplomacy and political relations as well as economic and trade relations. Differential growth rates lead to the rise of new powers as challengers and to systemic change.

Destruction of the Sinocentric Order

The Sinocentric order that had governed relations among East Asian states for centuries centered on the theory of the universal preeminence of the Chinese emperor. In the Sinocentric order, the Chinese emperor had to be acknowledged not only as the preeminent temporal power but also as a power of cosmic significance who mediated between heaven and earth. In contrast to the Westphalian concept in Europe of a number of independent nations recognized as theoretically equal with their own independent legitimacy and sovereignty, the Sinocentric concept was one of countries in East Asia subsumed within the Chinese sphere of civilized society. Rulers of the various countries within this sphere were expected to present themselves to the Chinese emperor and be invested with his authority, to receive a seal symbolizing the authority granted, to date all memorials according to the Chinese calendar, and to make regular visits to the Chinese imperial court to reaffirm their subordination. In return these rulers could receive trade benefits, legitimacy, and sometimes security. When put to the test, this system could not cope with the raw military might that the powers of industrial civilization brought to bear.

The First New Order

The first new order in modern Asia, the imperialist system, was the longest lasting of the successive orders. Owing to the huge preponderance of power that the Industrial Revolution gave to the Western powers and

TABLE 1 East Asian orders

Types of structure	Sinocentric	Imperialism (1840–1918)	Washington system (1922–33)	East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (1938–45)	Cold War (1950–89)	Post–Cold War order (1989–)*
Character	• Hierarchical	• Informal control for commercial ends • Spheres of influence and colonies	• Multinational cooperation to ensure regional stability	• Japan-centered hierarchy, East Asian autarky	• Bipolar/ hegemonic • Ideological and military stalemate • Asian growth under the U.S. umbrella	...
Dynamics of creation	• Premise of the supremacy of Chinese civilization	• Industrial Revolution in the West • The search for trade and materials	• Rise of Japanese power and the Anglo-American desire to contain it	• The Great Depression • Japanese military expansion • Japan's pursuit of regional hegemony	• Rise of Asian Communism • Chinese revolution • The Korean War	...
Dominant actors	• China	• Western powers • Japan	• United States • United Kingdom • Japan	• Japan	• U.S. and Soviet blocs	...
Legitimacy (claim to "universality")	• Ideology of Confucianism and beneficent rule	• The European "standard of civilization" and its formalization in international law	• Wilsonian ideals • Self-determination • Territorial integrity • Open Door policy • Collective security	• Pan-Asianism • anti-Western imperialism • anti-capitalism	• Democratic capitalism vs. Communism	...

Table 1 continued.

Types of structure	Sinocentric	Imperialism (1840–1918)	Washington system (1922–33)	East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (1938–45)	Cold War (1950–89)	Post–Cold War order (1989–)*
Rules, government	• System of tributary relations	• Unequal treaties • Cooperative imperialism (MFN)	• League of Nations • Washington treaties • Gold standard	• Proper place • Familial relationships • Division of labor	• Bilateral alliances • Collective security	…
Institutions	• Investiture of rulers of tributary states	• Treaty ports, tariff control, and extraterritoriality • Spheres of influence • Leaseholds	• League of Nations • Naval limitation treaties	• Military control • Great East Asia Conference	• GATT • IMF • World Bank • SEATO • ANZUS	…
Causes of decline	• The inability to cope with Western power	• World War I and the destruction of the old balance of power	• Lack of U.S. leadership • Japanese and Chinese nationalism • The Great Depression • Economic nationalism	• Defeat in war	• Decline of the Soviet Union • Sino-Soviet split • Relative decline of the United States in face of East Asian growth • The rise of economic nationalism	…

N O T E : Asterisk indicates that the post–Cold War era is in a kind of interregnum, lacking a fixed structure and a recognized legitimate order.

to the cooperative framework that they worked out among themselves, the system lasted nearly 80 years from the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, which ended the Opium War, to the end of World War I. The institutions of this order, a subsystem of the Pax Britannica, were devised initially by the British to satisfy the demands of commercial opinion in the House of Commons. British merchants wanted unfettered access to trade in East Asia, not territorial control. Instead, the British brought to bear sufficient force to exercise "informal imperialism" through imposing treaties that assured "free trade." The imperial powers shaped a distinct body of rights and rules that reflected the values and interests of Western civilization. They called this system "international law" and considered it a code of conduct providing the basis for cooperation among modern states. By the middle of the nineteenth century, they had formulated a "standard of civilization" that must be met if non-European states were to be admitted to this society. A "civilized state" guaranteed the rights of private property and freedom of trade, travel, and religion through an effective system of law, courts, and political organization.

The imperialist system proved durable because the shared values and interests of the powers underwrote the multipolar system. The system took on a multilateral, cooperative, and collaborative character as a result of the most-favored-nation (MFN) clause inserted in treaties, which provided that rights and privileges granted to one power would be extended to the others. For a time at the end of the century, the system teetered on the edge of a scramble for separate spheres of influence, but cooperation was restored, and on the eve of World War I the imperialist order had achieved a kind of equilibrium with the various powers recognizing each other's interests through a series of treaties.

A Peaceful Great-Power Transition

For more than 60 years after the Napoleonic Wars, Britain "ruled the waves," maintaining its primacy in the world's first truly international system by virtue of naval supremacy. In East Asia the British dominated the cooperative system of imperialism until the end of the century. Britain's clear-cut worldwide naval supremacy began to slip, however, as the power of other navies grew. The rise of German naval power posed a growing threat in European waters, and in the western hemisphere the rising naval power of the United States jeopardized Britain's ability to be the unchallenged arbiter of its imperial possessions. In Asia the growing power of Japan eroded British domination of the system of informal imperialism.

As the realization of the relative decline of Britain's naval power sank in, British leaders quietly made momentous decisions that in effect ended their nation's "unique role as the independent, detached arbiter of world affairs."[26] Giving priority to maintaining dominance in European waters, they reduced their naval strength in North America and in East Asia, making diplomatic agreements that would permit the British a reduced presence. In 1901, Britain acquiesced in what it had long resisted: the U.S. ambition to build independently a trans-isthmian canal. The undeniable power of the U.S. Navy was an important part of this decision to appease the Americans. The Spanish-American War in 1898 demonstrated the U.S. military's increased power and gave the United States new possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific. With the Panama Canal providing the U.S. Navy the ability to move at will between oceans, and with the acquisition of the Philippines and Guam and the annexation of Hawaii, the United States was becoming a power in the Asia-Pacific region.

Only months after this decision to appease the United States, Britain abandoned its "splendid isolation" and entered into an alliance with Japan in 1902. By this diplomatic arrangement, Britain was able to withdraw some of its naval strength on the China coast, balance the rise of Russian power in the region, and still ensure the security of its imperial possessions and trading privileges.

The decision to appease the United States in 1901 and to conclude the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 represented one of the smoothest great-power transitions in modern history. At the time, however, it was a change within the imperialist system rather than a change of the system itself. Undoubtedly, Britain's decision to accommodate the United States was driven by shared values and cultural heritage as well as by the realist appraisal of the cost that a hard-line stance against American ambitions would entail. Within a generation, Britain became the second-ranked naval power, but by establishing a "permanent friendship" with the United States, it prolonged British influence and protected its vital interests. As for Asia, Britain's decision marked the rise of two new great imperial powers in the region, the United States and Japan, whose relations did not proceed as smoothly. Rather, their competition and confrontation ultimately led to the greatest conflict in the history of Asia.

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[26] Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 152.

Asia's First Rising Power

The devolution of British power in East Asia and the defeat of Russia in 1905 left Japan and the United States facing each other as potential rivals in the region. In many ways, Japan's rise readily fits the classic pattern of realist theory. Whereas other Asian states took refuge in their traditional values and institutions in resisting the imperialist system, Japan's ruling elite, with realist predilections inbred by the longest experience of feudalism in world history, readily grasped the norms and practices that the imperialist system prescribed. With a remarkable pragmatism, Japan accommodated itself to the prevailing structure, adopted the institutions of the great powers, and accepted the principles of "civilization" at the same time that it built its military and industrial power by importing the science and technology of the West. By its pragmatic approach, Japan was readily socialized by the prevailing practices of the international system and emerged as an imperialist power itself. Structural realism could find no better example of its theoretical principles.

As a rising power, Japan became increasingly assertive, expansionist, and challenging to the stability of the international order. Following its success in the Russo-Japanese War, regional hegemony became the goal of an influential segment of the Japanese leadership. After annexing Korea in 1910, Japan occupied German colonial possessions in China and the Pacific when war broke out in Europe in 1914, imposed its "21 Demands" designed to dominate the fledgling Chinese republic in 1915, and dispatched an army force of 70,000 troops into the Russian Far East in 1918. Japan's unilateralism undermined the balance in the Asian system and provoked the animosity of the other powers.

The United States, itself a rising world power, set out not only to contain Japanese expansionism but to bring its own historically shaped values to bear on the workings of the international system. The Americans sought to transcend reliance on the balance of power with a new Wilsonian set of rules and practices to govern the regional system. Applied to Asia at the Washington Conference of 1921–22, the American agenda of liberal internationalism included the establishment of principles of self-determination, respect for territorial integrity, free trade, arms limitation, and collective security. A naval arms limitation agreement, a treaty to guarantee the territorial integrity of China, and a treaty to "consult" should there be any threats to peace in the Pacific constituted the new U.S. order that was to bring stability to the region. For the remainder of the 1920s, the Japanese, in the midst of opening to liberal democratic reforms at home, were willing to accommodate to this new order, seeing their interests as best

ensured by cooperation with the established powers—or as one might say in recent parlance, by a "peaceful rise."

Trimming its sails to the demands of the Washington Conference system, however, engendered a deep division within Japan's elite military and political leadership between the accommodationists and the revisionists. The former believed Japanese interests were best served by accommodating to the Anglo-American order while the latter were enraged by the system's containment of Japanese ambitions and determined to challenge the established order. The role of nationalism in domestic politics became a key factor in tilting this debate among the elites. In Japan's modern history, the determination to recover from the humiliation that Western imperialism had brought to Japanese civilization and the drive to catch up with the advanced countries and restore pride in Japanese values were persistent motivations. Through generations of indoctrination, these themes were inculcated in the politically awakened masses. By the 1930s, nationalism had become an all-pervasive influence on decisionmaking.

A combination of the economic vulnerabilities of the United States and Britain, brought on by the Great Depression and the isolationist mood of the Americans, gave the revisionists their opportunity to test the viability of the Washington Conference system. Japan's seizure of Manchuria in 1931, in violation of treaties signed in Washington, revealed the weakness of the system, giving the emboldened revisionists the opportunity to gain power at home and push on to further continental expansion, as well as the determination to shape a new Japan-designed regional order.

In contrast to the transcendental, universal ideals that were written into the Washington system, Japan adopted its own values of respect for hierarchy and status as a basis for international order. It was this principle of observing a just ranking that the Anglo-American powers were accused of violating. On the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese diplomats handed to Secretary of State Cordell Hull a memorandum breaking off negotiations and declaring that "it is the immutable policy of the Japanese Government to insure the stability of East Asia and to promote world peace and thereby to enable all nations to find each its proper place in the world."[27]

As the "leading race" of Asia, Japan would create a hierarchical order in which there would be a division of labor with the people of each nation in Asia performing economic functions for which its inherent capabilities prepared it. Nationalist writings often contained themes of pan-Asianism and the liberation of Asians from Western imperialism, and for a time these themes appealed to Asian nationalists seeking liberation from their colonial status.

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[27] U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931–1941*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 786.

Mismanaging Asia's First Rising Power

U.S.-Japan relations provide a case study of how not to manage the rise of a new great power. American leaders made a series of missteps that helped to bring on a great hegemonic Japanese-U.S. conflict. First, the attempt to create a new regional system at the Washington Conference of 1921–22 was flawed in its conception. While asserting new legalistic principles to replace the balance of power, the U.S.-inspired regional order failed to provide an enforcement mechanism, instead relying on the sway of international opinion and moral suasion to maintain these principles. For an international system to be stable and enduring, the most powerful states must be committed to upholding the governing institutions and norms through their prestige and their willingness to use force to preserve the system. While declaring ratios of naval strength, the United States neglected to maintain these ratios, whereas Japan built up to and beyond the agreed levels. At the Washington Conference, the United States had signed the Nine Power Treaty, which committed the country to upholding the territorial integrity of China, but when the order faced its ultimate test in Japan's 1931 seizure of Manchuria, the United States chose to let the violation stand and for the remainder of the decade disengaged from Asia, creating a vacuum of power that Japan was ready to fill.

Second, the United States failed to engage a proud and sensitive nation—a nation that it had little interest or capability to understand or appreciate. The treatment of the immigration issue at Versailles and in the Immigration Act of 1924, which in effect singled out the Japanese for no further immigration to the United States, was a continuous source of antagonism that played into Japanese nationalist feeling. Rising states present a special challenge to a system. As one writer observes, "the status quo powers must exhibit empathy, fairness, and a genuine concern not to offend the prestige and national honor of the rising power."[28] This the Anglo-American powers had not done. They failed to reach out to, much less understand, this proud but highly vulnerable and insecure new power. The psychic wound inflicted by Western imperialism at the time Japan entered the modern international system was repeatedly reopened by experiences it had in this system.

Third, the United States was inconsistent and unpredictable in its policies toward Japanese expansionist ambitions. After first establishing a framework at the Washington Conference designed to contain these ambitions, the United States retreated into isolationism and protectionism

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[28] Randall L. Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory," in *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert Ross (New York: Routledge, 1999), 15.

and abandoned the liberal principles of the Western-imposed East Asian order. After Japan's success in seizing Manchuria and when it became clear that the Washington system could muster no credible opposition to Japan's flouting of the system's principles, revisionist sentiment gained ascendancy among Japan's leadership. Emboldened by its success, Japan openly defied the Washington accords and set out to establish a regional hegemony. Belatedly in the summer of 1941 the United States sought to reinstate the liberal principles upon which it originally created the order. Too late the Americans constructed a deterrent strategy, using Japan's trade and resource dependence to exercise leverage over its foreign policies. Lurching from prolonged neglect of Japanese expansion to imposing an embargo and requiring total Japanese capitulation—withdrawal from Southeast Asia and China—as the price for lifting it, the administration managed policy in such an inconsistent and clumsy fashion that it helped to bring on war. It failed to negotiate in a step-by-step process that might have averted conflict. U.S. policymakers did not see that they had presented Japan with "two equally repugnant alternatives," as Scott Sagan has aptly described the situation.[29] Japan was confronted not simply by the prospect of war with a country eight to ten times as powerful as itself but also with the prospect of accepting a settlement that would deny the very self-image that it had of itself as a great power, the prime goal it had pursued for a century. A reading of the records of the conferences of Japanese leaders in the autumn of 1941 makes it clear that the Japanese felt their sense of national identity endangered. It is probably true that "no nation will submit to a settlement…that totally denies its vision of itself."[30]

Finally, as a further mismanagement of its relations with Japan, when war did break out the United States framed war goals in absolute terms. Ruling out any confidential discussion with the enemy as a basis for ending the conflict, Roosevelt cast the war in moral terms as a crusade to rid the world once and for all of militarism. As such, there could be no room for compromise. Rather than fight the war to an armistice and a negotiated peace agreement as all other foreign wars in U.S. history have been waged, this would be fought to total victory. Rather than a war, as the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz would have it, waged to achieve the concrete goals that diplomacy had failed to achieve, the Asia-Pacific War would be fought until the enemy agreed to surrender its sovereignty,

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[29] Scott D. Sagan writes aptly that "if one examines the decisions made in Tokyo in 1941 more closely, one finds not a thoughtless rush to national suicide, but rather a prolonged, agonizing debate between two repugnant alternatives." See Scott D. Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 324.

[30] Kissinger, *A World Restored*, 146.

accept permanent disarmament, and have its leaders tried as war criminals, its government re-engineered, and its society re-educated. Demanding unconditional surrender most likely lengthened the conflict, ignored the effect on the postwar balance of power, and contributed to the onset of the next cycle of great-power conflict. In sum, the U.S. management of its competition with Japan for leadership in Asia offers a textbook example of deeply flawed great-power leadership. Whether conflict with Japan of such total and traumatic character could have been avoided remains an issue for counterfactual history.

Is the Fundamental Nature of International Relations Changing?

The example of Japan as Asia's first rising modern power provides a great deal of confirmation of realist theory. The liberal internationalist order, as Wilson and his successors had administered it, was a failure. Liberals, however, are optimistic that there has been learning and progress in managing the problems of the changing distribution of power. Rather than sharing with realists the tragic view of competition for power as inevitable and a cyclical pattern of rise and fall, liberals believe that progress is possible. The failures of Wilson and the shortcomings of Franklin Roosevelt have provided lessons from which an enduring order can be devised.[31]

Liberal analysts believe that realism is growing less persuasive as a way of understanding the fundamental dynamics of international relations. Conditions in the world have changed or are changing in fundamental ways that improve the possibilities of peaceful change. Liberals place great hope in an evolving U.S.-led liberal international order left standing after the collapse of the Soviet system. They point to a number of factors that make war less likely, including the advent of nuclear weapons, the increasing number of democratic states, and the growth of economic interdependence as a result of globalization. But their greatest hope is placed in the development of international institutions. This evolving liberal order has "an unusual capacity to accommodate rising powers. Its sprawling landscape of rules, institutions, and networks provide newer entrants into the system with opportunities for status, authority and a share in the governance of

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[31] G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (March 2009): 71–87.

the order."[32] This order, writes John Ikenberry, "is easy to join and hard to overturn."[33] The mechanism of hegemonic war as the means to achieve great-power transition is, liberal analysts conclude, no longer necessary.

Another new aspect of international relations that liberals see as significant is a change in the nature of what constitutes security. Rather than the military threats of the past, globalization has brought with it a host of new threats that confront not just the United States but other countries as well: global warming, health pandemics, dwindling energy sources, jihadist terrorism, and so forth. These common threats to the security of all states hold the potential to impel cooperation and encourage integration in a liberal order designed to confront these problems. "All the great powers," Ikenberry avers, "have alignments of interests that will continue to bring them together to negotiate and cooperate over the management of the system. All the great powers—old and rising—are status quo powers."[34]

Liberals see a reformed international order as requiring new or reorganized institutions that will have a more universal aspect in the sense that states are no longer dependent on a unipolar, hegemonic power. The impending crisis of international governance, however, will require the United States to cede a considerable amount of its hegemonic authority and control—much more than Britain did at the beginning of the twentieth century. In that case, Britain's accommodation of the United States was made easier because of shared values and because it prolonged British power and did not immediately change the international system. The impending crisis cannot be settled by simply adjusting voting rights in international organizations such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The new nature of security threats together with "the human rights revolution" will increasingly require a capacity for the international community to establish rules and institutions that will intrude on domestic politics and erode Westphalian sovereignty.[35] Some new form of constabulary security force that is not dependent on a single country or small group of nations will be required to ensure the legitimacy of the international order.

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[32] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 345. See also G. John Ikenberry and Thomas Wright, "Rising Powers and Global Institutions," Century Foundation, February 6, 2008, http://www.centuryinstitute.org/list.asp?type=PB&pubid=635.

[33] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 9.

[34] Ibid., 341.

[35] Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0."

Will the Rise of Asia Be Different?

Asia in the post–Cold War era is still in a kind of interregnum (as Table 1 indicates). It lacks a fixed regional structure, a recognized legitimate order to cope with its diverse cultural and political systems, vast differences of wealth and population, competition for energy resources, arms races, border disputes, conflicting historical legacies, rampant nationalisms, and limited experience with multilateral organizations. The future of this rapidly rising region inevitably provokes immense controversy about its future. In addition to the liberal critique of realism's value in viewing the future course of international order, there is the contention of some theorists that because realism has been based on the experience in the West, it will not prove appropriate to forecasting the future of Asia. It was essays by Aaron Friedberg suggesting that Europe's experience held ominous implications for Asia's future that provoked their reaction. Writing in 1994, Friedberg observed that while post–Cold War Europe was finding solutions to its long-term problems with multipolarity, the complex multipolar structure of Asia was "ripe for rivalry." With a group of major powers, including China, Japan, Russia, India, and the United States, and a number of middle-ranking powers, Asia could experience the competitive struggles and rivalries that Europe underwent. He observed that "the half millennium during which Europe was the world's primary generator of war (as well as of wealth and knowledge) is coming to a close. But for better and for worse, Europe's past could be Asia's future."[36] Friedberg and other realists argued that Asia will be characterized by sizeable power asymmetries. Economies will grow at differing rates. Resources, military power, and productive efficiency will be distributed unevenly. Emerging multpolarity in Asia is likely to make the region prone to conflict. Balances of power may emerge, but this is an uncertain process. Coalitions can shift. Occasions for miscalculation can increase. Arms races, border disputes, historical animosities, and nationalisms are apparent. In fact, post–Cold War Asia exhibits much greater complexity than did the historical European state system.

Friedberg's assertion that Asia is likely to become the cockpit of great-power conflict, for all the reasons (and more) that Europe had been, provoked a variety of responses that viewed Asia's future as being determined by different fundamentals from Europe. The theoretical arguments for Asian exceptionalism take different forms. The most common of these is the assertion that Asia is both geographically and culturally distinct from Europe. In this view, the emphasis is on the great size and resources of

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[36] Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/94): 5–33. See also Friedberg, "Will Europe's Past Be Asia's Future?"

China as well as on the cultural values of hierarchy that predispose East Asian countries to bandwagon with China. In his influential work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington concluded that

> the choice for Asia is between power balanced at the price of conflict or peace secured at the price of hegemony. Western societies might go for conflict and balance. History, culture, and the realities of power strongly suggest that Asia will opt for peace and hegemony….China is resuming its place as regional hegemon, and the East is coming into its own.

In short, "Asia's past," as Huntington put it, "is Asia's future."[37]

Similarly, David Kang argued that realism "gets Asia wrong" by failing to understand the distinctive cultural mores of Asia. Discerning a trend of Asian countries to cast their lot with a rising China, he traced this to historic traditions of deference to Chinese hegemony. A strong China had been a source of order and as a consequence "East Asian regional relations have historically been hierarchic, more peaceful, and more stable than those in the West."[38]

Still, while one must acknowledge the undeniable differences of Asia's geography and history, these factors are not necessarily enough to dismiss the claims of realist theory. Bandwagoning may be seen as the realistic response to the distribution of power, and therefore, as Friedberg observed in the last volume of *Strategic Asia*, "there is no reason to believe that Asian decisionmakers are any less rational than their counterparts in other parts of the world. If balancing appears fruitless, and possibly dangerous, it should come as no surprise that many will opt for bandwagoning instead."[39]

The liberal optimism that international institutions can succeed in Asia is widely held, especially among Asian scholars. Amitav Acharya, for example, is critical of both the Huntington/Kang thesis and the pessimism of Friedberg: "Western realist pessimism need not be countered by Asian cultural historicism." Faulting Kang for excluding South Asia from his analysis and thus ignoring India's growing role in balancing China, he finds little evidence of genuine bandwagoning with China and argues that "Asia's future will not resemble its past." Acharya draws his optimism from a liberal

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[37] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1996), 238.

[38] David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 66. See also David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and David C. Kang, *East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

[39] Friedberg, "Geopolitics of Strategic Asia," 41.

confidence in "shared regional norms, rising economic interdependence, and growing institutional linkages."[40]

It is true that Asian countries are seeking their own norms and will not be satisfied to have them imposed from outside. Asian leaders since 1989 have with increasing frequency asserted alternative values, institutions, and rules of order. These assertions reject Western claims of universalism as dogmatic and legalistic, and against the "Washington Consensus" they advocate an Asian form of capitalism with a legitimate role for state-led economic growth and, in the cultural sphere, social goals beyond individualism. What this means, of course, is that Asian countries are seeking a greater say in determining the rules and institutions that govern international economic and political affairs.

What Is the Prognosis?

Popular assertions of Asia's distinctive values over those of the West by no means can give confidence to the hopeful expectation of regional cooperation and international harmony. On the contrary, they are more accurately seen as evidence of nationalism arising out of the decolonization struggles and the subsequent process of nation-building. When the Cold War began, most of these countries were newly liberated colonies or, as in the case of China, had newly escaped from imperialist domination. Only Japan had been an industrial nation and had experienced nationalist mobilization of its people. Decolonization, however, completed the modern state system in Asia. During the Cold War, the process of state-building—forming a central state structure, extracting resources, organizing a military, establishing mass education, undertaking rapid catch-up industrialization—inevitably promoted nationalism in Asian countries, but it was restrained and muted by the overlay of the ideological superpower conflicts between democratic capitalism and Communism. With the end of the Cold War, the age of full-blown nationalism arrived in Asia, and it has become the most powerful political emotion. The sheer number and diversity of Asian actors are likely to make agreeing on governing rules and institutions more difficult. The fact that these new actors are experiencing the rise of mass nationalism will further complicate matters.

No historian of the modern world can gainsay the disruptive potential of nationalism. All the rising powers in the last two centuries, especially Asia's first rising power, have been driven by some form of nationalism

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[40] Amitav Acharya, "Will Asia's Past Be Its Future?" *International Security* 28, no. 3 (Winter 2003/04): 149–64.

that has spilled over into foreign policies pursuing power and advantage. This prospect now seems most germane to the future role of China. China is a "swing state" so far as the liberal expectation of achieving a reformed global order is concerned. The question is: "Will China seek to oppose and overturn the evolving Western-centered liberal international order, or will it integrate into and assert authority within that order?"[41] In the awe and excitement over China's rise, it is easy to overlook the staggering problems in its future. As Michael Spence points out, China is the first country to become a major power at a time when its per capita income is quite low.[42] It still faces the acute problems of nation-building, especially the challenge of incorporating the newly awakened masses into the political community. With the collapse of Marxian socialism, China's leaders face a challenge to their legitimacy at the very time that the social system itself is undergoing massive change, including urbanization that "involves more people leaving the land in a shorter period than at any previous time in human history."[43] Although Minxin Pei has argued that China may be in for a prolonged developmental autocracy, the day will arrive when economic growth slows, social problems become unmanageable, and the leadership will be tempted to turn to a more strident form of nationalism in order to save the regime.[44] Perceived policy failures of the regime might be blamed on foreign treachery or domestic rivals. Unity will be sought to meet the crisis of the state. Under such conditions, a smooth integration into the evolving liberal international order will be unlikely.

Conclusion

This very brief summary of theoretical debates about great-power transitions, especially the realist-liberal stand-off, cannot do justice to the complexities and nuances of the writings that produced them. Yet it is clear enough that inquiry into the rise of new powers is one of the most thoughtfully considered aspects of international relations theory; and in Asia, we confront the rise of the world's two new rising powers, China and India. Theoretical sophistication, however, has brought anything but consensus, and theory is often upended by surprise. The purpose of theory is to make the complexity of the past comprehensible and useful. The danger

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[41] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 343.

[42] Spence, *The Next Convergence*, 48, 195–96.

[43] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (New York: Norton, 1995), 315.

[44] Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

in making theory is that it will oversimplify the past in order to anticipate the future.[45]

The historian John Lewis Gaddis, for one, has been highly critical of the scientific claims of international relations theory. He observes that

> the efforts theorists have made to create a "science" of politics that would forecast the future course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results: none of the…approaches to theory…that have evolved since 1945 came anywhere close to anticipating how the Cold War would end….If their forecasts failed so completely to anticipate so large an event as that conflict's termination, then one has to wonder about the theories upon which they were based.

Gaddis quoted approvingly the wry remark of the distinguished historian of the Soviet Union Robert Conquest, who when he was asked what lesson people might learn from the surprise ending of the Cold War replied: "If you are a student, switch from political science to history."[46] Nevertheless, whatever its limitations in anticipating the future, international relations theory at its best provides us with perspectives and conceptual tools to apply to our thinking about the complex reality of the new era in Asia. We can draw on what international relations theorists tell us about patterns of state behavior extending across time and space. Theory can sharpen the kinds of questions we should be asking about the objective conditions with which policymakers must deal.

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[45] See the extended discussion of this danger in John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), especially chap. 5.

[46] John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992/93): 5–58.