

efforts to enhance missile delivery capacity does not augur well for Asia and occurred at least partially because the absence of the prior overarching strategic structure of the Cold War meant that no longer were there key constraints imposed on such precipitous activity. This new South Asian security environment raises the spectre of legitimizing such activities, worries the major nuclear powers (albeit for variously different reasons), and introduces concerns which spill over into Southeast Asia on the east and Southwest and Central Asia to the west and north. The continued festering of the Kashmir question aggravates all this and significantly impedes improvements towards subcontinental peace and security.

- Sixth, the fragility of many of the governing regimes in Eastern Asia came to dramatic and tragic visibility in the wake of the 1997-98 financial crisis. In a perverse way this confirmed the accuracy of the “performance legitimacy” model of government when many of the new middle class found themselves in positions not entirely dissimilar to the urban labourers and the agricultural workers and peasants, and joined in an unholy alliance against those upon whom they had invested their futures. Again, for those who take the position of the overwhelming importance of the Cold War structure as a constraint on local events, this crisis of confidence in the productivity and stability of the “Asian tigers” is linked to the intersection of the forces of globalization and the creeping norm of institutional intervention which has emerged during the past decade.

I agree with many who argue that the ending of the Cold War, though seen primarily as an east-west, transAtlantic phenomenon, did have a profound effect on Asia. The other papers in this modest collection address a number of these in the larger context of global affairs. Their relevance to Asian peace and security in many cases will be obvious. Clearly, the situations on the Korean Peninsula and in Central Asia were most immediately affected by the ending of the Cold War, while the significant degradation in Russian military, diplomatic, and economic capabilities regarding both the Asian continent and its maritime environment provided a catalyst for numerous alterations in interstate relations, perhaps most markedly with China. But all that must wait for another paper another time.

I would caution us not to see all this in an overly deterministic manner. Many of the issues which I have briefly noted are events or policies which are contingent in time and space and may be somewhat transitory. In most cases they have at least partial explanations rooted in the forces and structures of indigenous as well as regional social, political, and economic life. It is too simple to assign causality merely to the alteration — albeit rather significant — in the bipolar strategic environment, though I do think that there is ample evidence to suggest that the ending of the Cold War changed the degrees of freedom within which many Asian countries were able to reposition themselves, thereby affecting policy and spawning a new range of activities, including both challenges and opportunities. What has not been addressed are the longer-term, underlying structural conditions which may constrain or otherwise affect interests and policies of governments, of elite sectors within a country, and of the larger masses.

A number of phenomena are independent of the ending of the Cold War. For example, demographic change — notably uneven rates of growth depending upon family planning programs, domestic economic conditions, changes in education patterns, rural-to-urban migration, accessibility of health care, to name but some of the underlying dynamics — in the largest Asian countries is slowing down, and while the absolute growth is significant,