

Liberal Democratic Values and Asia Pacific Security: The promise of peace or a path to conflict?

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The past decade has seen the conclusion of a series of bilateral security pacts between the liberal democratic states of the Asia Pacific region. These agreements, between countries including the United States, Australia, Japan and India, have been treated with suspicion by the Chinese government, as evidence of a policy of ‘neo-containment’ led by the US. The common thread that runs through the rationale for each of the agreements is the notion of ‘shared values’ amongst the signatory nations, always referring to human rights, democracy, and open markets. In this context, this paper seeks to investigate the possibility that these liberal values are being used to drive a wedge between the US and its allies and China, effectively establishing a quasi ‘league of democracies’ that has been advocated by some neo-conservatives and liberal hawks in the US. The analysis of these developments has both practical and theoretical significance. First, are the Chinese right to be concerned about these developments and do they represent a Cold War-style policy of containment guided by the US? Second, if the security agreements are intended in this way, what does this tell us about the influence of liberalism in contemporary international politics? Utilising the tools of discourse theory, this paper argues that the security agreements illustrate the problematic place of liberal democratic values in international politics insofar as they promise peace but deliver division and engender hostility toward non-liberal states.

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Introduction

What is the place of liberal values in the development of regional or global security networks? Or, to put it another way, to what extent does a national identity based on liberal values promote or inhibit the realisation of regional or global security? Answers to these questions will, of course, vary according to the lens through which we view international relations. Realists will tend to dismiss the importance of ‘shared values’ in their analysis of power relations between sovereign states, or may suggest that an excess of such values will lead to the destabilisation of international politics and the onset of crusading, imperialist behaviour.¹ Liberal internationalists, on the other hand, will insist that shared liberal-democratic values provide the only sustainable basis for the realisation of world peace. These values-based communities, furthermore, will not impinge upon the pursuit of the individual interests of nation-states, given the intersections between the interests in peace and prosperity held by all

¹ The classical Realist statement to this effect can be found in Morgenthau’s fifth principle of political Realism: Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Brief ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1993), 13.. More recently, the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy restated these Realist concerns in the context of the Iraq war and what they saw as the overzealous moralism of the Bush administration: *The Perils of Empire*, (Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy, 2004 [cited 18 October 2008]); available from <http://www.realisticforeignpolicy.org/static/000027.php>.

peoples everywhere around the globe.² It is around these two dominant schools of thought that debates in international relations have tended to coalesce since the emergence of what has become known as the ‘first debate’ in international relations in the late 1930s and 1940s. While many embraced the notion of liberal victory following the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War,³ the liberal/realist debate was reignited in the context of the war on terror, with argument and counter-argument over the place of ‘universal values’ taking centre stage. The re-emergence of this debate stemmed in large part from what many people saw as an excessive insistence upon the promotion of liberal-democratic values by the Bush and Blair administrations which led to engagement in conflicts (particularly in Iraq) which were contrary to the national interest and unsettling for international order in general.⁴

Beyond the central foci of the war on terror, the insistence on ‘shared values’ as the foundation stone for effective security arrangements reached a new high-point over this period. While moves toward this ‘value oriented diplomacy’⁵ had developed most clearly in the 1990s, it was with the Bush administration, guided by the ‘moral clarity’⁶ of the neo-conservatives and the ‘millennial’⁷ task of winning the war on terror, that the repeated articulation of these values began to impact upon relations between the United States and China. It is the task of this paper to assess these developments and to gain a fuller understanding of the place of liberal values within them.

My method in approaching this question is to analyse the political discourses that surrounded the development of the bilateral and multilateral security agreements concluded amongst liberal democratic states over the past decade. This approach encourages an understanding of the links between representations of the world and the development or maintenance of power. In particular, it sheds light on the terms of inclusion and exclusion that reside within the texts of international politics. In this context, the questions that I will seek to address will include: How did the notion of ‘shared values’ influence the formation of an Asia-Pacific security community over the past decade? How did those implicitly or explicitly excluded from this community – particularly China – react to these developments? In what ways was the development of an overtly liberal-democratic alliance linked to broader theoretical and political discourses over this period? Finally, what were the dangers or problems

² Clear formulations along these lines are present in the security and foreign policy doctrines of most liberal democratic states. See, for example, Tony Blair, *The Doctrine of the International Community* (Institute of International Affairs, Saint Petersburg, 1999 [cited 27th November 2003]); available from <http://data.cirp.info/intervention/blair-chicago.html>; ‘The National Security Strategy of the United States of America’, (Washington, DC: The White House, 2002).

³ The key text in this regard is, of course, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

⁴ *The Perils of Empire*.

⁵ This is the term employed by former Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Aso, in support of his moves toward creating an ‘arc of freedom and prosperity’, which will be discussed further below. See ‘Diplomatic Blue Book 2007’, (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007); *Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar ‘Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons’*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007 [cited 1 September 2009]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/as0/speech0611.html>.

⁶ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, ‘Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy’, *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (1996): 27.

⁷ Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington’s Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 202-06.

in the formation of this alliance and how might this be related to the apparent diminution of references to shared values in more recent regional security politics?

'Value Oriented Diplomacy' in Asia-Pacific Alliances

Writing in 1998, Mike Mochizuki and Michael O'Hanlon called for the realisation of a 'liberal vision for the US-Japanese alliance.' Driven by the need for a more activist Japan in global military affairs, they argued that what was needed was 'a major effort from Washington and Tokyo to strengthen their alliance, not against a military threat but in the name of common interests and values.'⁸ Such an approach would, according to Mochizuki and O'Hanlon, help to defuse concern both within Japan and in the wider region about any expansion of Japanese military activity; smooth the way for 'joint [US-Japan] responses to humanitarian tragedies'; allow Japanese participation in military activities that 'advance liberal objectives'; and provide 'the basis for gradually extending security commitments to a broader community of nations.' Perhaps most importantly, the argument was made that the intensification of a values-based alliance with Japan would provide 'a better guide to relations with China.'⁹ The hierarchical language used in making this point is striking, as Mochizuki and O'Hanlon contend that Japan and the US could 'tell China that, if it continues to evolve into a democratic state that ensures civilian control of the military and agrees not to resolve disagreements by force, it could and should be part of a regional collective-security arrangement with them.'10

Implicitly drawing upon the democratic peace literature, the confidence that Mochizuki and O'Hanlon place in the notion of shared values is based upon the claim that collective security mechanisms amongst liberal democratic states 'are the most reliable mechanisms available for keeping the peace.'¹¹ The shared values are valuable, therefore, precisely because they allow the US and Japan to advance their own (liberal democratic) self-interests as well as providing a springboard for the realisation of a peaceful world. The final claim that is made in the article is that 'the liberal pillar of the [US-Japan] alliance is weak' and that 'it is time to strengthen it and make it real.'12

The question that arises at this point is: what does it mean to 'realise' an alliance built on strong shared values? From the perspective of discourse theory, the 'real' is embedded in our representations of the world, in the collection of words and symbols that generate meaning through classification and hierarchisation. It makes sense, from this perspective, to analyse the justifications and explanations that were offered by political leaders from the late 1990s onwards as to why certain security arrangements were being put in place. In the remainder of this section I will, to this end, explore the 'web'¹³ of security pacts that has developed over the past two

⁸ M. Mochizuki and M. O'Hanlon, 'A Liberal Vision for the U.S.-Japanese Alliance', *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 40, no. 2 (1998): 127.

⁹ Ibid.: 128.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.: 132.

¹² Ibid.: 134.

¹³ The notion of security webs is employed as a substitute for the more prevalent idea of 'hubs and spokes'. The aim is to downplay the idea that the US is at the centre of such security arrangements, sending the message that their alliance partners have equal status and that more is expected of them in

decades between the United States, Japan, Australia and India. The first part will be devoted to analysis of the various bilateral agreements and the second will look at the moves toward multilateral security partnerships between the four nations. In each example I will highlight the centrality of ‘shared values’ of liberal democracy in the text of the agreements themselves as well as in the interviews and media releases that surrounded them. This, I will argue, indicates that the liberal vision proffered by Mochizuki and O’Hanlon was in fact ‘realised’ over the decade that followed the publication of their article, but perhaps not with the positive consequences that they foresaw.

It must be stressed at this point that the discussion to follow will focus on the *predominant* themes of shared values as they have been expressed since the end of the Cold War. The pace and extent of political change in the countries under analysis is such that any definitive declarations on the future of their foreign policies remains impossible. The changes in leadership from Bush to Obama in the US, from Howard to Rudd in Australia and from Aso to Hatoyama in Japan may have dramatic impacts on the future relations between their respective nations. This, however, does not nullify the value of this study, which aims to assess the antagonistic dimensions of liberal-democratic values in international politics. Indeed, the fact that we have seen a move away from ‘values-oriented diplomacy’ in the past two to three years may indicate a shift in Asia-Pacific hegemony in favour of China, a point I will return to later in the paper.

Bilateral Agreements between the US, Japan, Australia and India

It is widely accepted that the alliance with Japan forms ‘the bedrock of American strategy in East Asia’¹⁴ as it has done since the end of WWII. In the context of the Cold War and increasingly in the decades that have followed, this alliance has been grounded, at least rhetorically, in the existence of shared liberal-democratic values. The contemporary articulation of these values was, of course, implanted and fostered by the United States following the defeat of Imperial Japan in WWII and the subsequent occupation under General McArthur, during which the Japanese Constitution was formulated. As Tadashi Iwami and myself have argued elsewhere,¹⁵ the erosion of the pacifist clause contained in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution has been closely associated with the American acceptance of Japan as a trustworthy liberal-democratic partner, a development which raises questions about the pacifying effect of liberal values in international affairs. While there is no scope for rehearsing the full extent of this argument in the context of this paper, it is necessary for the purposes of this paper to reiterate the persistence of shared values as the foundation for US-Japan relations in the 21st century.

Indeed, it may be said that Japan, particularly under Prime Ministers Koizumi, Abe and Aso, have been the most enthusiastic proponents of a values-based security arrangement with the United States and have worked as the core driver of the values

promoting regional security. For a discussion see Dennis C. Blair and John T. Hanley Jr, ‘From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements’, *Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (2001).

¹⁴ G. John Ikenberry and A. M. Slaughter, ‘Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century’, (Princeton, NJ: The Princeton Project on National Security, 2006), 50. See also Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, ‘The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020’, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 15.

¹⁵ J Moses and T Iwami, ‘From Pacifism to Militarisation: Liberal-Democratic Discourse and Japan’s Global Role’, *Global Change, Peace and Security* 21, no. 1 (2009).

based security community in the Asia-Pacific. Following a meeting between Junichiro Koizumi and George W. Bush on July 29, 2006, a joint statement was released that contained the subheading ‘The US-Japan Alliance Based on Universal Values and Common Interests’. This section of the joint statement contained a clear example of the values/security linkage that is the subject of this paper, claiming that:

The United States and Japan stand together not only against mutual threats but also for the advancement of core universal values such as freedom, human dignity and human rights, democracy, market economy, and rule of law. These values are deeply rooted in the long historic traditions of both countries. The United States and Japan share interests in: winning the war on terrorism; maintaining regional stability and prosperity; promoting free market ideals and institutions; upholding human rights; securing freedom of navigation and commerce, including sea lanes; and enhancing global energy security. It is these common values and common interests that form the basis for U.S.-Japan regional and global cooperation.¹⁶

Further, this statement of shared values and interests was followed by the claim that the Asian continent as a whole was now undergoing a transformation in line with these universal values. This, consequently, would be a transformation that would take place under the leadership of the US and Japan. Hence:

Asia's historic transformation is underway, creating a region that increasingly embraces the universal values of democracy, freedom, human rights, market economy, and rule of law. The two leaders pledged to work together to shape and support this transformation. In this regard, the two nations will continue to work on common challenges in the region such as (a) promoting individual freedoms; (b) increasing transparency and confidence in the political, economic, and military fields; and (c) protecting human dignity, and resolving humanitarian and human rights problems including the abduction issue.¹⁷

The rhetoric of liberal change and democracy promotion in the alliance between the US and Japan continued under the leadership of Shinzo Abe. Indeed, Abe is credited by some as having pushed the constitutional reform agenda forward to a greater extent than any previous Japanese Prime Minister. This led neo-conservative commentators Dan Blumenthal and Gary Schmitt to applaud Abe’s commitment to what they called a ‘liberal nationalism’ and give him credit for equating ‘Japan’s well-being with the spread of the universal values associated with liberal democracy and human rights’.¹⁸ Following a meeting between Bush and Abe in Washington in November, 2006, Abe commented that:

Japan and U.S. share an alliance which is based on fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law. And we agreed with each other that strengthening our alliance would be a good in maintaining peace and security of not just Japan and the region surrounding Japan, but the entire world.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting: The Japan-U.S. Alliance of the New Century*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2006 [cited 6 December 2008]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/summit0606.html>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Dan Blumenthal and Gary Schmitt, 'A Japan That Can Say Yes', *The Weekly Standard* 12, no. 4 (2006): 12.

¹⁹ *President Bush Meets with Prime Minister Abe of Japan*, (The White House, 2006 [cited 20 November 2008]); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/11/20061118-2.html>.

The 2007 ‘Armitage Report’, published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, also places repeated emphasis on values as the foundation stone for US-Japan relations.²⁰ Importantly, this report also uses this commonality of values as an explicit point of differentiation from China. The possibility of a ‘condominium between the United States and China’ as the ‘logical future [security] structure for the region’ is considered by the authors to be unlikely for ‘as long as the United States and China have different value systems.’²¹ The Armitage Report also makes a strong case for extending the regional alliance structure ‘based on partnerships with the United States and shared democratic values’ to other like-minded states, including Australia, India and New Zealand.²²

Similar themes have underpinned the US-Australia alliance since the mid-1990s. Building upon the relatively ‘value-free’ ANZUS Treaty of 1951, government representatives of both countries have enthusiastically incorporated references to culture, values, and traditions in more recent statements and communiqés relevant to security in the Asia-Pacific. In the ‘Sydney Statement’ of 1996, for example, the two countries committed themselves to joint action that would ‘contribute to the development of a regional security environment which promotes democracy, economic development and prosperity, and strategic stability.’²³ This was followed in 1998 by Madeline Albright’s statement of ‘unshakeable’ commitment to ‘the freedom and welfare’ of the Australian people; a commitment, she argued, that ‘is consistent with enduring principles of democracy and law.’²⁴ The joint commitment to democracy promotion then reappeared in the communiqué following the Australia-US Ministerial (Ausmin) talks in 1999, in which ‘Australia and the United States affirmed that the spread of political and economic freedom, growth of democratic institutions, and respect for human rights’ are vital for ‘the achievement of genuine long-term stability and lasting peace’.²⁵

The notion that the US-Australian alliance is founded upon ‘shared values’ also found an expression in the 2000 Australian Defence White Paper and the 2003 Foreign Affairs and Trade White Paper. Whilst acknowledging that the white papers emerge from different ministries which may embrace different vocabularies, there is a notable increase in the references to values between the 2000 and 2003²⁶ papers that can most obviously be explained by reference to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the subsequent intensification of pro-liberal democratic discourses on the

²⁰ Armitage and Nye, ‘The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020’.

²¹ Ibid., 14.

²² Ibid.

²³ *Sydney Statement: Joint Security Declaration: Australia-United States: A Strategic Partnership for the Twenty-First Century*, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1996 [cited 23 November 2008]); available from http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/sydney_statement.html.

²⁴ *Address by secretary of state madeleine k. albright to the australasia centre of the asia society*, (Embassy of the United States (Australia), 1998 [cited 22 November 2008]); available from <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/irc/us-oz/1998/07/30/address.html>.

²⁵ Tony Blair, ‘Broadcast to the Nation’, (London: BBC, 1999).

²⁶ There are around thirty distinct references to Australia’s values – as well as an entire chapter devoted to ‘Projecting Australia and Its Values’ – in the 2003 White Paper, as opposed to five in the 2000 paper. See ‘Advancing the National Interest : Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper’, (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003); ‘Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force’, (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2000); ‘Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030’, (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009).

part of the United States and her allies. The clearest statement of this and its meaning for the alliance can be found in the 2003 White Paper, with the declaration that:

Australia and the United States share values and ideals that underpin our strong relationship. We both have deep democratic traditions and aspirations, elements of a common heritage and a lasting record of cooperation and shared sacrifice. Our security alliance is a practical manifestation of these shared values.²⁷

This location of the alliance within a framework of shared values was reiterated following the 2005 Ausmin consultation.²⁸ Interestingly, however, the values language appears to have evaporated altogether in the 2009 Australian Defence White Paper, as the Rudd Government pursues a closer relationship with China, an issue to which I will return in the final section. Suffice it to say at this point that US-Australian security arrangements and the political statements surrounding them have dwelt, as Tow and Albinski argue, ‘on similar values, shared histories, languages and outlooks within the so-called Western community of states.’²⁹

Values discourse is also evident at the heart of the security relationship between Australia and Japan. In a joint statement to the press following the meeting of Prime Ministers Howard and Koizumi in 2002, the ‘long-standing close ties and cooperation between Australia and Japan’ were recognised as being ‘based on their shared values of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and market-based economies.’³⁰ It was in the context of these cordial relations that increased military cooperation rapidly developed, reaching a peak with the signing of the formal Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in March, 2007. Here again we find references to shared values underpinning the agreement as a whole, as the document affirms ‘that the strategic partnership between Japan and Australia is based on democratic values, a commitment to human rights, freedom and the rule of law, as well as shared security interests, mutual respect, trust and deep friendship’ and commits ‘to the continuing development of their strategic partnership to reflect shared values and interests.’³¹ Statements following the subsequent meetings between the foreign and defence ministers of both countries (also known as the 2+2 meetings) have reinforced the claim that the alliance was founded upon ‘shared democratic values, common interests in peace and stability in the region, and respective alliance relationships with the United States.’³²

²⁷ ‘Advancing the National Interest : Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper’, 86.

²⁸ Here, it was stated that ‘both sides emphatically affirmed the enduring significance and relevance of the alliance and its firm basis in shared values, interests and sacrifice.’ *2005 Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations Joint Communiqué*, (Embassy of the United States (Australia), 2005 [cited 29 November 2008]); available from <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/irc/us-oz/2005/11/18/communique.html>.

²⁹ William Tow and Henry Albinski, ‘Anzus-Alive and Well after Fifty Years’, *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 48, no. 2 (2002): 171.

³⁰ *Joint Press Statement by Prime Minister John Howard and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi: ‘Australia-Japan Creative Partnership’*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2002 [cited 18 November 2008]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0204/joint.html>.

³¹ *Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007 [cited 12 December 2008]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0703.html>.

³² *Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations Joint Statement 2007*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007 [cited 12 December 2008]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0706.html>.

Finally, and briefly, it is worth addressing the US-India relationship, given the slightly different issues that it raises. In general, the language of shared values in dealings between the US and India mirrors almost exactly the examples I have already described. Former Director of Policy Planning for the Department of State, Richard Haass, argued in 2001, for example, that the US-India partnership was ‘not based on narrow self-interests but first and foremost on common values, on a shared understanding of right and wrong and a shared vision for a future world that is safer more prosperous, more democratic and more just’.³³ Such an approach was reaffirmed in the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States³⁴ and a further speech by Haass in 2003.³⁵

What is unique about recent moves toward greater security cooperation between the United States and India, however, is the fact that shared democratic values are iterated as being of greater importance than any potential tension over India’s possession of nuclear weapons. A 2003 deal to allow greater ease of weapons trade between the US and India had the effect, according to then-US Ambassador Robert Blackwill, of putting India ‘in the same category with American Treaty Allies such as...Japan’.³⁶ The *New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship*, agreed in 2005, is also significant in this regard. In this document, the ‘world’s two largest democracies’ agree to build more strategic partnership for ‘political and economic freedom, democratic institutions, the rule of law, security and opportunity around the world’, as their defence relationship ‘derives from a common belief in freedom, democracy and the rule of law’.³⁷

In response to critics of the 2007 *US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative*, which allows nuclear technology transfer between the two countries despite India’s possession and testing of nuclear weapons, the White House issued a press statement declaring that ‘it is not credible to compare the rogue regimes of North Korea and Iran to India. Unlike Iran or North Korea, India has been a peaceful and vibrant democracy with a strong nuclear non-proliferation record’.³⁸ President Bush later expanded on this line of argument, claiming in 2008 that ‘nations that follow the path of democratic and responsible behavior will find a friend in the United States of America.’³⁹ It is statements such as these that illustrate the different standards that are expected of states that are democratic as opposed to those that are not. While there is not *necessarily* anything wrong with having different standards for different regime

³³ Tow and Albinski, ‘ANZUS-Alive and Well after Fifty Years’: 172.

³⁴ ‘The National Security Strategy of the United States of America’.

³⁵ Richard N. Haass, *The United States and India: A Transformed Relationship* (Remarks to the Confederation of Indian Industry, Hyderabad, India, January 7, 2003, 2003 [cited November 10, 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/16399.htm>

³⁶ Robert D. Blackwill, ‘Opinion’, *The Hindu*, May 13, 2003.

³⁷ *New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship*, (Embassy of India, June 31 2005 [cited 15 November 2008]); available from http://www.indianembassy.org/press_release/2005/June/31.htm. In the joint press statement that followed the signing of this agreement, a similar wording appeared: ‘As leaders of nations committed to the values of human freedom, democracy and rule of law, the new relationship between the United States and India will promote stability, democracy, prosperity and peace throughout the world’. *India-United States Joint Statement*, (Embassy of India, 2005 [cited 19 November 2008]); available from http://www.indianembassy.org/press_release/2005/July/21.htm.

³⁸ *India Civil Nuclear Cooperation: Responding to Critics*, (The White House, 2006 [cited 19 November 2008]); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/>.

³⁹ *President Bush Signs H.R. 7081, the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act*, (The White House, 2008 [cited 12 March 2009]); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/10/20081008-4.html>.

types, what this illustrates is that the references to shared values are not just examples of rhetorical window-dressing, but in fact have real consequences in terms of determining the rules and norms of the international order. In particular, attention must be paid to the fact that the values are being invoked in order to justify military cooperation and validate the joint exercise of force. I will return to this issue below.

It is clear, then, that in the bilateral security arrangements that have been agreed between the United States, Japan, Australia and India over the past decade, the place of values discourse is central. I will now briefly turn to the related development of multilateral frameworks between the four countries to further illustrate the influence of ‘shared values’ as well as the hostile Chinese reaction to these developments.

Multilateral agreements between the US, Japan, Australia and India

Over the same period that saw the development of the bilateral security arrangements discussed above, moves were made to intensify cooperation along trilateral and quadrilateral lines. These developments began with a 2001 agreement to hold trilateral security talks in 2002 at the vice-ministerial level, a move welcomed by then Australian Prime Minister John Howard⁴⁰ and later by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who commented that ‘we are all democracies, we’re all concerned with the fate of Asia and it seems to me a perfectly reasonable proposition that we ought to get together and talk...the United States is 100 per cent willing to take part.’⁴¹ With regard to the strengthening of the Trilateral Security Dialogue (TSD) to ministerial level, John Howard claimed in 2005 that:

Today, the three great Pacific democracies – the US, Japan and Australia – are working more closely than ever on shared security challenges – especially terrorism and weapons proliferation. Our Trilateral Security Dialogue has added a new dimension to the value all sides place on alliance relationships.⁴²

The elevation of the TSD to ministerial level in 2006 illustrated the increasing importance with which it was viewed in Washington, Tokyo and Canberra. The meeting of the group, held in Sydney in March, 2006, followed in the wake of comments by Condoleezza Rice suggesting that all allies in the Asia-Pacific region had a ‘responsibility’ to ensure that the rise of China would not be a ‘negative force’ in international politics.⁴³ Again beginning with a reference to the democratic nature of the three parties, the joint statement released at the end of the discussions focused

⁴⁰ Howard commented at the time that ‘We are both liberal democracies. We have cooperated very closely in the fight against terrorism. We see the security relationship between our two countries vis-à-vis the United States as extremely important. And we again endorse the value of a trilateral security dialogue at a senior level, Vice-Minister, Foreign Minister-level, Foreign Affairs head-level rather, between Australia, Japan, and the United States.’ *Opening Statements by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia at the Joint Press Conference*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2002 [cited 10 December 2008]); available from http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0204/op_0501.html.

⁴¹ ‘U.S. Deputy State Secretary Backs U.S.-Australia-Japan Security Talks’, (*The British Broadcasting Corporation*, 2001).

⁴² John Howard, *The Lowy Lecture: Australia and the World* (The Lowy Institute for International Affairs, 2005 [cited 17 June 2006]); available from <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=396>.

⁴³ Purnendra Jain, *A ‘Little Nato’ against China* (Asia Times Online, 18 March 2006 [cited 20 November 2008]); available from <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HC18Ad01.html>.

mainly on cooperation in humanitarian, counter-terrorism and anti-proliferation initiatives, with a brief mention of China's 'constructive engagement in the region'.⁴⁴

The importance of the TSD took on sharper contours with the emergent Japanese commitment to 'values oriented diplomacy' and promotion of 'the arc of freedom and prosperity' from late 2006. In a speech to the Japanese Institute for International Affairs in December, 2006, then Foreign Minister Taro Aso argued that:

I firmly believe that Japan must make its ties even firmer with friendly nations that share the common views and interests, namely of course the United States as well as Australia, India, and the member states of the EU and NATO, and at the same time work with these friends towards the expansion of this 'arc of freedom and prosperity'.⁴⁵

'This arc' according to the 2007 Japanese Diplomatic Blue Book:

would start from Northern Europe and traverse the Baltic states, Central and South Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, then cross Southeast Asia finally to reach Northeast Asia. Here, a region of stability and plenty with its basis in universal values – the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity – would take shape.⁴⁶

It was on these grounds that the Japanese Government enthusiastically embraced the TSD and courted the participation of India in an enlarged democratic grouping in the region. To this end, a spokesman for the Japanese Foreign Minister announced at the TSD talks in 2007 that 'India shares common interests – liberalism and democracy – with us', as the reason behind Japan's desire to see India included at future meetings.

From the US side, the publication of the 2007 Armitage Report, entitled *Getting Asia Right*, advocated increased cooperation 'with Japan and other like-minded countries to advance an agenda that supports democracy, rule of law, and modern norms for internal regime behavior'.⁴⁷ More specifically, the report contended that:

An open structure in which Japan, India, Australia, Singapore, and others are leading by example, based on partnerships with the United States and shared democratic values, is the most effective way to realize an agenda for Asia that emphasizes free markets, continued prosperity based on the rule of law, and increasing political freedom.⁴⁸

While many may question the place of Singapore amongst these 'like-minded' liberal democratic states, this approach went beyond mere discussions in late 2007 with the conduct of joint naval exercises amongst the five countries in waters off India. The exclusion of China from these developments was also explicitly justified in the report,

⁴⁴ *Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement Australia-Japan-United States*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2006 [cited 27 November 2008]); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0603-2.html>.

⁴⁵ *Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons'*.

⁴⁶ The Blue Book also contained a graphic image of this arc, illustrating the near-encirclement of China that it would represent: 'Diplomatic Blue Book 2007', 2.

⁴⁷ Armitage and Nye, 'The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020', 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

based on the argument that the ‘values gap’ between the countries would necessarily lead to a ‘trust deficit’. The lack of trust, it was argued, was made evident by China’s dealings with countries such as ‘Iran, Sudan, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, and Uzbekistan’, which appeared to allow for the continuation of ‘irresponsible’ behaviour on their behalf.⁴⁹

Values discourse has, therefore, been at the centre of moves toward multilateral security arrangements between the US, Japan, Australia and India. These moves have, however, run up against Chinese resistance in a much more obvious way than the bilateral agreements discussed above. As Australian Broadcasting Corporation correspondent Graham Dobell suggested in 2007, China ‘was unsettled enough by the new trilateral security dialogue’ but was ‘positively agitated by the idea that it could be transformed from three to four, with India joining up.’⁵⁰ Prior to the first exploratory meeting of the four parties during the ASEAN Regional Forum in May, 2007, the Chinese government had sent diplomatic notes to each of the countries seeking clarification on the purpose of their discussions.⁵¹ In addition, despite a fairly muted response from higher levels of Government in China, D. S. Rajan has suggested that ‘the Party and State-controlled media in the country seem to be given a free hand to comment on the subject.’⁵² Citing Chinese-language media reports and commentary on the quadrilateral initiative (QI), Rajan suggests that:

The Chinese analysts have come out with a firm rejection of the QI, alleging that it resurrected a cold-war mentality and is designed to deliberately divide Asia into two camps, based on social systems and ideology as well as to counter-balance the rising influence of China in the region... Any grouping without China [they argue], is ridiculous, irresponsible and impractical and marks formation of a small NATO to resist China.⁵³

In response to Chinese concerns, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer downplayed the significance of the talks and argued that the relationship between Australia, the US and Japan was ‘a very natural relationship, a very natural thing for Australia’ that ‘shouldn’t be interpreted as an act of conspiracy against China.’⁵⁴ Later, John Howard remarked, using similar language, that:

It's natural that we should relate to each other through the prism of that common practice of democracy... That's not anti-Chinese... the trilateral security dialogue is in no way anti-Chinese, that is just a complete furphy.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁰ Graeme Dobell, *Correspondents Report - China Concerned by 'Alliance of Democracies'* (ABC Online, 24 June, 2007 2007 [cited 15 August 2009]); available from <http://www.abc.net.au/correspondents/content/2007/s1959831.htm>.

⁵¹ Frank Ching, ‘Asian Arc of Democracy’, *Korea Times*, 24 February 2008; Dobell, *Correspondents Report - China Concerned by 'Alliance of Democracies'*; D. S. Rajan, *China: Media Fears over India Becoming Part of Western Alliance* (South Asia Analysis Group, 2007 [cited 15 July 2009]); available from http://www.saag.org/common/uploaded_files/paper2350.html.

⁵² Rajan, *China: Media Fears over India Becoming Part of Western Alliance*.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Downer Downplays Talks' China Focus*, (ABC News, 28 March, 2006 2006 [cited 11 December 2008]); available from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2006/03/18/1595073.htm>.

⁵⁵ *Howard Denies Trilateral Talks 'Anti-Chinese'*, (ABC News, 2006 [cited 11 December 2008]); available from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/09/09/2027960.htm>.

In September, 2007, announcing a massive new deal for the provision of natural gas from Australia to China, John Howard claimed that the TSD between the United States, Japan, and Australia was ‘not directed at anyone’.⁵⁶ The question remains, then, as to why ‘shared values’ need to come in to the picture at all. If, indeed, this ‘web’ of security relations is purely concerned with counter-terrorism, humanitarianism, non-proliferation and disaster relief, why should China not be involved at the highest levels? It is at this point that it becomes useful to turn away from diplomatic relations between the states in question and turn instead to an analysis of the intellectual currents, particularly in the US, that ran in tandem with the centralising of liberal-democratic values in Asia-Pacific security debates.

A Concert (or League) of Democracies?

Regardless of the intentions of the four parties, the equation of the TSD (and the efforts to include India) with a ‘democratic alliance’ immediately draws attention to the academic literature and politics surrounding the idea of a ‘Concert of Democracies’, an idea which gained some influential advocates in the 1990s and found its most formal expression in the final report of the Princeton Project on National Security (PPNS).⁵⁷ In combining the analysis of the Asia-Pacific security pacts founded upon shared values with an analysis of the academic literature on the possibility or desirability of a concert or league of democracies, I aim to generate a deeper appreciation of the potential concerns that might arise in non-democratic societies when such values-based alliances are mooted.

The idea of a broad alliance of democratic states gained traction in the context of Russian and Chinese opposition to proposed humanitarian interventions in the 1990s. Emblematic in this regard is the work of Geoffrey Robertson, who, in his 1999 book *Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice*, railed against what he saw as the obstructionist veto of Russia and China, which was stultifying efforts to promote humanitarian ‘justice’ through the exercise of military force under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council. In this vein, Robertson argued that:

The radical possibility occurs that human rights might have a healthier future if it parted company with the United Nations, if that body were replaced or marginalized by a democratic ‘coalition of the willing’: an organization comprising only countries which are prepared to guarantee fundamental freedoms through representative government, independent national courts and by pledging to support an independent international justice system... Might it now be worth constituting a world government of ‘parliamentary peoples’ which would safeguard human rights by being premised upon them, a kind of global NATO, no longer lumbered with backward or barbaric states.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Chris Uhlmann, *Howard Hails \$35 Billion Gas Deal with China* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 6 September, 2007 2007 [cited 11 December 2008]); available from <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2007/s2026329.htm>.

⁵⁷ A. M. Slaughter and G. John Ikenberry, ‘Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century’, (Princeton, PA: The Princeton Project on National Security, 2006), 61.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 447.

This type of argument, influenced heavily by the democratic peace literature of the 1980s and 1990s, foresaw the formation of a ‘separate peace’ amongst liberal states as being the necessary foundation for a more activist approach to the promotion of human rights and democracy, through military force if necessary.⁵⁹

Importantly, such proposals did not wither in the face of the unilateralist tendencies of the Bush administration, but rather reached a peak around the same period that the abovementioned security pacts were being put in place. In the Final Report of the PPNS, entitled *Forging a World of Liberty Under Law*, the authors write that:

While pushing for reform of the United Nations and other major global institutions, the united States should work with its friends and allies to develop a global ‘Concert of Democracies’ – a new institution designed to strengthen security cooperation among the world’s liberal democracies. This Concert would institutionalize and ratify the ‘democratic peace.’ If the United Nations cannot be reformed, the Concert would provide an alternative forum for liberal democracies to authorize collective action, including the use of force, by a supermajority vote.⁶⁰

Such a proposal indicates the scope and power of ‘democratic league’ thinking in the period between 2005-2008. In specific relation to China, the PPNS report suggests that uncertainty over China’s future intentions gives weight to the idea of strengthening ‘ties with democratic allies in the region’ on a bilateral and multilateral level.⁶¹ In an appendix to the report, from the ‘Working Group on Grand Strategic Choices’ co-chaired by John Ikenberry and Francis Fukuyama, it is proposed that strategies of inclusion and exclusion are adopted ‘simultaneously’ in order to ‘hedge against an aggressive China.’⁶² These proposals are interesting insofar as they seek to deny full international agency to a power as large as China and indeed speak as if the Chinese are deaf to the implications of the proposals.

This logic finds expression in an even clearer form in an article published by Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay in 2007, entitled ‘Democracies of the World Unite.’ In making their case for a Concert of Democracies that could circumvent the Russian and Chinese vetoes on the UNSC, Daalder and Lindsay offer three key tasks for the democratic bloc: ‘First, the Concert would be a vehicle for helping democracies confront their mutual security challenges... Second, the Concert would promote economic growth and development... Third, the Concert would promote democracy and human rights.’⁶³ While the setting of these tasks is perhaps unsurprising, what is noteworthy is the very close correlation between these goals and the explicit aims of the various security arrangements I have discussed above. This gives further weight to the claim that the conclusion of these agreements had much in common with the agenda for a ‘Concert of Democracies’, a point which would surely not have gone

⁵⁹ For an example of this approach, see Fernando R. Tesón, ‘The Kantian Theory of International Law’, *Columbia Law Review* 92, no. 53 (1992); Fernando R. Tesón, ‘The Liberal Case for Humanitarian Intervention’, in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J Holzgrefe and R. O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ Slaughter and Ikenberry, ‘Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century’, 7.

⁶¹ Ibid., 49.

⁶² Ibid., 63.

⁶³ Ivo H. Daalder and James Lindsay, ‘Democracies of the World Unite’, *Public Policy Research* 14, no. 1 (2007): 55.

unnoticed in Beijing and Moscow. Indeed, Daalder and Lindsay explicitly single out Russia and China as being the ‘foremost defenders’ of a principle of ‘absolute sovereignty’ that is ‘unsustainable in an age of global politics.’⁶⁴ From their perspective, it is only democratic states, sharing a common dedication to ‘the life, liberty, and happiness of free peoples’,⁶⁵ who can effectively recognise and deal with contemporary threats to humanity.

A final point of note surrounding the idea of the Concert is the support it has received from influential neoconservative figures Robert Kagan and Charles Krauthammer. For his part, Krauthammer, responding to John McCain’s campaign proposal to establish a league of democracies in early 2008 – enthusiastically endorsed the idea, celebrating what he sees as its ‘hidden agenda’ which ‘is essentially to kill the UN.’⁶⁶ Kagan has been particularly prolific on the subject and has not been shy about presenting such a league as a direct opponent to an ‘League of Dictators’ led by China and Russia.⁶⁷ As Will Hutton suggested in his review of Kagan’s book *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, this division into separate alliances would result in the formation of two distinct, opposing blocs:

One, centred on the Shanghai Co-operation Council, would be the authoritarian states of China, Russia and others; the second, under US leadership, would be the European and American democracies, Australasia, Japan and India. Instead of struggling for unachievable UN resolutions blocked by the authoritarians, the democracies would be free to go head to head in ideological and political competition.⁶⁸

The appeal of this kind of Manichaean division of world politics for neoconservatives has been evident for many years and has been the subject of intense criticism.⁶⁹ What is perhaps most fascinating about it, however, is the conjunction that it represents between liberal internationalist and neo-conservative thought within the US foreign policy establishment.⁷⁰ In this regard, proposals for a ‘Concert of Democracy’ must be taken seriously as being representative of a powerful bipartisan current in US politics. Having sketched the contours of these ideas, I can now turn to a discourse theoretical critique of both the references to shared values in Asia-Pacific security pacts and the theoretical arguments about a Concert of Democracies with which they share so much in common.

⁶⁴ Ibid.: 49-50.

⁶⁵ Ibid.: 48.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Thomas Carothers, ‘A League of Their Own’, *Foreign Policy*, no. 167 (2008): 48-49.

⁶⁷ Robert Kagan, ‘League of Dictators?’, *Washington Post*, 30 April 2006. For a more detailed account of Kagan’s vision of US foreign policy and the division between autocracies and democracies, see Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 53-80.

⁶⁸ Will Hutton, ‘Book Review: The Return of History and the End of Dreams’, *The Observer*, 8 June 2008.

⁶⁹ See, for example Gary J. Dorrien, *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Smith, *A Pact with the Devil*, Chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Inderjeet Parmar, ‘Foreign Policy Fusion: Liberal Interventionists, Conservative Nationalists and Neoconservatives — the New Alliance Dominating the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment’, *International Politics* 46, no. 2/3 (2009); Smith, *A Pact with the Devil*.

Liberal Antagonism in Asia-Pacific Security

In critiquing the advocates of a democratic alliance, Gideon Rachman has argued that ‘the formation of a league of democracies would harden antagonisms and might even be seen as the launching of a new cold war.’⁷¹ Whilst this is an argument which could be made from a realist position, critical discourse theory enables a ‘deeper’ critique that addresses the hidden dangers of an alliance based on ‘shared values’ but does not then insist upon a return to ‘prudent self-interest’ as the only possible response. In undertaking this analysis, I will examine the problems of universality, hierarchy, legitimacy and the relation of these to the use of force.

From a discourse theoretical perspective the concern is not with the very existence of an antagonism between liberal and non-liberal – as every social group is necessarily premised upon some form of antagonistic relation with outsiders – but rather the representation of the ‘shared values’ as universally applicable. Drawing upon the Enlightenment metaphysics of Kant and his understanding of a humanity united by reason, the conclusion is drawn that liberal democratic politics and the associated principles of human rights are right and good for all people in all places and in all times.⁷² The danger of such universal values is that – despite the inherent denial – they cannot be anything other than contingent. If the goal of spreading universal values was to be universally achieved, the notion of a liberal-democratic security community would cease to have any value as a justification. ‘Shared values’ only matter, therefore, as a point of differentiation. They gain their value, meaning and substance through differentiation from those who do not share the values in question.

The use of shared values and the advocacy of a league of democracies must, therefore, be understood as being *inherently* antagonistic, in that the case is presented from a platform of universal morality and yet is necessarily premised upon exclusivity. Invoking fundamental values as the basis for security agreements, expresses a sense of superiority and an at least implicit – and in many cases, as shown above, explicit – desire to change those states that do not currently share the values in question. The discourse established in these agreements, as well as in ‘league of democracies’ thought more broadly, is necessarily exclusive of non-liberal democratic states until such time as they *become* liberal democratic. While this may sound like a desirable principle, in practice it engenders antagonism and division that may work against both short-term security interests as well as longer term political change in authoritarian states. In this case, China represents the ‘constitutive outsider’ *par excellence* and it should come as little surprise that the repeated references to ‘shared values’ were a source of upset for the Chinese administration and have been a hindrance to the realisation of a broader security community in the Asia-Pacific region.

⁷¹ Gideon Rachman, *Why McCain’s Big Idea Is a Bad Idea* (Financial Times, 6 May, 2008 [cited November 28 2008]); available from <http://blogs.ft.com/rachmanblog/2008/05/column-why-mccain%E2%80%99s-big-idea-is-a-bad-idea/>.

⁷² The most emblematic recent political statement to this effect was made by George W. Bush in his West Point address in 2002, in which he argued that ‘Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place.’ George W. Bush, *President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point* (The White House, 2002 [cited 18 September 2005]); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

References to shared values are, moreover, central to the identity formation of the states involved as well as being a major element of their claim to authority in international dealings. Of particular interest in this regard is the claim by John Howard and Alexander Downer that security talks with Japan should not be regarded with suspicion because they are ‘natural’.⁷³ In a similar vein, Daalder and Lindsay suggest that ‘working with fellow democracies is our native language’.⁷⁴ The use of such phrases, while perhaps intended to assuage concerns in non-democratic states, generates the implicit idea that dealings between democracies and non-democracies are in some way *unnatural*. This assumption is reinforced by references to ‘values gaps’,⁷⁵ and the explicitly preferential treatment for countries that ‘follow the path of democratic and responsible behaviour’,⁷⁶ all of which are underpinned by Daalder and Lindsay’s contention, drawn from the large but contentious body of democratic peace literature, that ‘relations between democracies and non-democracies are *invariably* infused with suspicion and mistrust’.⁷⁷

Democratic states are, from this perspective, not only more peaceful and trustworthy than non-democracies, they are also the only truly *legitimate* states within the international arena. On this point, Daalder and Lindsay suggest that ‘real’ state legitimacy ‘must rest in the democratically chosen representatives of the people, not in the personal whims of autocrats or oligarchs’.⁷⁸ At the international level, this translates as conferring legitimacy on those actions that meet certain ‘normative’ standards, rather than ‘the number of states or votes one can marshal in support of a given action’.⁷⁹ This apparent disjunction in democratic practice, which supports elected representation at domestic level but denies the validity of democratic practice at international (United Nations) level is made possible through an understanding of states not as analogues of free individuals in a state of nature, but as guardians of a particular piece of ‘common humanity’. In this regard, once again, we can see how universal values impact upon questions of power and legitimacy, establishing a distinction and a hierarchy between those states that adhere to the innate values of humanity and those that do not.

Such criticisms of a liberal values-based security community take on an even greater significance when it is recognised that their main purpose is to expedite the use of force by the countries involved. All of the security pacts discussed above relate in some way to enhanced military cooperation, whether that be through the joint development of anti-ballistic missile systems, greater interoperability of military forces, or greater access to military technology amongst the party states. In the theoretical work on the Concert of Democracies, we can also see the use of force as the primary driver, as the aim of such a concert is to ‘free up’ those states that want to breach the sovereignty of other states (for the protection or promotion of universal human rights and democratic politics) from the constricting authoritarian vetoes on the UN Security Council. Intensifying the sense of division between the world of authoritarian states and the Concert of Democracies is the notion that the former are

⁷³ Downer Downplays Talks’ China Focus.

⁷⁴ Daalder and Lindsay, ‘Democracies of the World Unite’: 56.

⁷⁵ Armitage and Nye, ‘The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020’, 4.

⁷⁶ President Bush Signs H.R. 7081, the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act.

⁷⁷ Daalder and Lindsay, ‘Democracies of the World Unite’: 52.emphasis added

⁷⁸ Ibid.: 53.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 52.

inherently conflictual, while the latter share in an assured peace. The first article of the proposed Charter for a Concert of Democracies in the PPNS report formalises this liberal peace in the form of a legal obligation.⁸⁰ Yet this peace is promised only among the democratic states, a declaration that carries with it the implication that war is sometimes acceptable – even necessary – against outsiders. Movements toward military interoperability amongst democratic states, in combination with this implied tension with and mistrust of outsiders, must again be seen as at best problematic and at worst provocative.

The danger of these discourses is that may represent the precondition, to borrow from Hans Morgenthau, for ‘that moral excess and political folly’ that can lead to ‘the blindness of crusading frenzy’ that ‘destroys nations and civilizations.’⁸¹ Concerns over the imperialistic use of liberal-democratic justifications for the use of force can also be seen in the work of Beate Jahn⁸² and in Tony Smith’s analysis of the collision between neo-conservative and neo-liberal thought in the context of contemporary US foreign policy.⁸³ So while there may well be compelling rationales for the promotion of liberal democratic ideals on a global scale, the suspicion remains that the use of force for these purposes will prove damaging to that cause and, in a broader sense, will prove contrary to the very principles that are supposedly being promoted. It is for these reasons that states should be very hesitant in their use of ‘shared values’ as a foundation for the development of joint security measures. As I will argue in the following section, it appears that this lesson may indeed have been learned (at least for the time being) and that the bonds that brought together the US, Japan, Australia and India, particularly between 2005 and 2008, are now being loosened in the interests of building stronger relations with China.

Conclusion: Beyond ‘Shared Values’?

Over the past two years, there has been a marked decline in the references to ‘shared values’ in the security relations between the US, Japan, Australia and India. This may have been a result of a number of factors, including the ongoing difficulties in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the global economic crisis and, perhaps most importantly, the changes in government in Australia, the US and Japan, all of which have contributed to the decline of an overtly values-based security architecture in the region. I will first look to how the discourse has changed in recent times before briefly considering future directions in Asia-Pacific security that might avoid the ‘hard edges’ of a liberal democratic security community.

The most obvious starting point in charting the decline of liberal democratic values rhetoric is the departure of George W. Bush from office in the US. While Barack Obama has been equally enthusiastic about the role of the US in promoting democracy globally, it appears that the US is moving into a period of relative introspection and caution in foreign policy matters. This is reflected in a report published by the 2008 Asia-Pacific Strategy Project entitled ‘The United States

⁸⁰ Slaughter and Ikenberry, ‘Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century’, 62.

⁸¹ Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 13.

⁸² Beate Jahn, ‘Kant, Mill, and Illiberal Legacies in International Affairs’, *International Organization* 59, no. Winter (2005).

⁸³ Smith, *A Pact with the Devil*.

and the Asia-Pacific Region: Security Strategy for the Obama Administration'. In this report, under the sub-heading 'Values-Based Architecture', the authors show an awareness of the divisive nature of the Bush-era developments and argue that 'America's first priority should not be to establish a 'league of democracies' in Asia, but to reset and rebalance our influence and strategic presence in the region, with good governance as a more mutually acceptable goal.' Furthermore, the report argues that the new administration 'should repackage its democracy promotion efforts' in order to avoid antagonising China.⁸⁴ In practical terms, the development of a US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, which held its first meeting in July this year, provides a further indication of a move away from a strategy based on shared values. Of particular interest is the agreement to 'expand exchanges at all levels' in 'military-to-military relations.'⁸⁵ While this apparent retreat from the assertive and confrontational liberalism advocated by neo-conservatives and liberals alike is to be welcomed, it is notable that Hilary Clinton recently declared, in response to the equivocal 2009 Australian Defence White Paper, that 'the United States is not ceding the Pacific to anyone. We are a trans-Pacific power as well as a transatlantic power.'

The Australian White Paper that provoked Clinton's statement of US commitment to Pacific power provides further evidence of the slide away from the alliance of 'great democracies' envisioned by John Howard in 2005. Indeed, one of the first acts of the Rudd government was the clear renunciation of Australian participation in the emergent quadrilateral dialogue with the US, Japan and India – a move that was announced by the Australian Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith, on his inaugural visit to Beijing in early 2008.⁸⁶ Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the 2009 White Paper is notable for the near absence of shared values as justification for its policy proposals, a dramatic change from the 2000 Defence White Paper and the 2003 Foreign Affairs and Trade White Paper. While some commentators have suggested that the new White Paper signifies a suspicion toward China's future role in the region,⁸⁷ it is clear that the Rudd government is placing far greater emphasis on security and economic cooperation with China than the Howard government and feels that excessive reference to shared values may be a hindrance to further developments along this path.

Finally, the political upheaval in Japan following the defeat of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) also looks likely to produce a diminution in the significance of a values-based alliance from the Japanese perspective. While the foreign policy intentions of the new Prime Minister, Yukio Hatoyama, remain somewhat unclear, the publication of his article 'My Political Philosophy'⁸⁸ gives an indication of future directions. Invoking a concept of 'fraternity' as central to his economic, social and foreign policy, Hatoyama argues

⁸⁴ R. A. Cossa et al., 'The United States and the Asia-Pacific Region: Security Strategy for the Obama Administration', (Pacific Forum CSIS; Institute for Defense Analyses; Center for Naval Analyses; Institute for National Strategic Studies; Center for a New American Security, 2009), 52.

⁸⁵ *Joint Press Release on the First Round of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue*, (US Department of the Treasury, 2009 [cited 10 August 2009]); available from <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/tg242.htm>.

⁸⁶ Ching, 'Asian Arc of Democracy'.

⁸⁷ See, for example 'White on White: Professor Picks Apart Paper', in *The World Today* (Australia: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2009).

⁸⁸ Yukio Hatoyama, *Yukio Hatoyama: 'My Political Philosophy'* (Financial Times, 13 August, 2009 2009 [cited 10 September 2009]); available from http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/99704548-8800-11de-82e4-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1.

that Japan must ‘must steadfastly adhere to...principles of independence and coexistence not only in the context of personal relationships within Japanese society but also in the context of the relationships between Japan and other nations.’ Based on this general principle, Hatoyama argues in favour of greater independence from the US in economic and security matters as well as the formation of an East Asian Security Community that would not seek to exclude China. Once again, the avoidance of Japanese dependence upon an exclusive, values-based security community appears to be at the heart of these developments and Hatoyama’s insistence upon the maintenance of a pacifist foreign policy, as required under the Japanese constitution, is likely to provoke the consternation of the neoconservatives and liberal internationalists who have been agitating for a more forceful role for the Japanese military in global affairs.

While these changes could certainly be characterised as a return to a more ‘realist’ foreign policy approach on the part of the US, Australia and Japan, they may also be indicative of broader changes in global power. Approaching these developments from the discourse theory perspective, it may be argued that the change in vocabulary we have witnessed over the past two years is a direct consequence of the weakening of US global hegemony, or at least of regional hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. This decline is signified by the increasing reluctance on the part of other regional powers to fall in line with the shared values and democracy promotion rhetoric that is so central to US policy in the region. In seeking to manage and influence the future politics of China, the United States clearly still speaks as a hegemonic force in the Asia-Pacific region and, indeed, globally. It still insists that other states can only be considered responsible and legitimate on its own terms. This insistence, however, may be losing some of its force and appeal. This being the case, the need for genuine, open and constructive dialogue with China over the future of regional and global security is stronger than ever. To retreat into a more closed and antagonistic set of security arrangements based on shared values would be extremely problematic and unproductive in this context.

This paper has charted the rise and fall of values discourse in Asia-Pacific security over the past decade and a half in relations between the US, Japan, Australia and India as well as in the work of neoliberal and neoconservative scholars who advocated in favour of a Concert of Democracies. I have suggested that there are some intrinsic problems within that discourse that were generating an unnecessary degree of antagonism with an increasingly powerful China and argued that the decline of such rhetoric may be linked to a decline in US hegemony more broadly. What the role of liberal powers can or should be in promoting their own values has not been subject to discussion. Suffice it to say that if liberal democratic powers are indeed committed to the maintenance of international (or global) peace and security, they would be well advised to sever the overt links between their values and the exertion of their military power on non-liberal democratic states. It is perhaps through the exercise of a more open and self-reflexive liberal international politics – democracy promotion through setting a good example rather than through the use of force – that we may begin to see a more responsive and less hostile response from the non-liberal democratic world.

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