

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Problem Statement, Objective, Methodology, Scope, and Limitation

Geographically, the Asia-Pacific region for the purpose of analysis and discussion in this thesis is defined as encompassing China, Japan, Korea and the ten-nation grouping called the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Politically, Asia-Pacific also includes the United States and the Russian Federation. Although in international relations literature the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand among others are included in the broader term 'Pacific Basin', American and Russian interests and capabilities in Asia-Pacific require that they politically belong to the region. In this research 'Asia-Pacific' is used in a geo-political context, so that 'Asia-Pacific', 'Asia-Pacific region', 'Pacific Region', 'Pacific Rim', and 'Pacific Basin' are used interchangeably in this thesis.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research examines one overriding assumption. The end of the Cold War brought about the challenge of renewed great power tension in the Asia-Pacific region. Underlying this assumption are a number of relevant propositions, namely, (1) the traditional balance of power mechanism that existed during the Cold War era has been disturbed when the former Soviet Union collapsed; (2) the region lacks an effective security regime; (3) some traditional actors are being pushed to the periphery while new actors are moving to occupy centres of power in the region. However the conflicting interests of the major powers in the Pacific Rim add to the region's vulnerability. The American notion of "free market" embodied in its vision of a "Pacific Community" is

being steadily challenged by the Japanese “economic model” aimed at the creation of “Pax Nipponica”. The Japanese economic model, also known as “amended capitalism”, advocates the notion of a big government and not small government. It justifies governmental interference on the pretext of market failure. The Chinese aim of creation of “Greater China”—a term with political, economic, and obviously territorial connotations, or Russia’s reassertion to revive its Eurasian character and reconstruct the Russian Federation into a “Super-State”—are just other dimensions of major powers’ conflicting interests in the region. While the region is strategically and economically in transition, small and medium powers in Asia-Pacific are increasingly concerned about the Chinese and Japanese military strength. China and Japan struggle to assume greater military roles as the United States and Russia have committed themselves to some sort of relative military disengagement. Despite American strategic withdrawal from the region, some academics speculate that the United States also postulates on how the Chinese and Japanese could be contained and Russians prevented from reassertion. Therefore, the real question is, despite the prevailing uncertainty about regional security, would the major powers agree on some kind of cooperative enterprise that could help maintain order and stability in the Asia-Pacific region? This study addresses this question by examining the foreign policy structures and trends of the major Asia-Pacific powers in the post-Cold War era.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this research is to identify the foreign policy structures and trends of the four powers—the United States, Japan, China, and Russia—in the Asia-Pacific

region. It is essential to note at the outset of this thesis that it is the Russian Federation (RF) and not the Soviet Union, which is considered a major power in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific region. In August 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) disintegrated and the Russian Federation replaced it. Therefore, in this study, Soviet Union refers to the USSR that existed between 1922-1991. Russian Federation refers to the Successor State of the USSR that became defunct after August 1991.

Identification of foreign policy trends of these powers is necessary for construction of general observations related to the post-Cold War status quo in the region. These powers traditionally have some economic and strategic interests in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, their participation in prospective economic and strategic arrangements in the region is essential. Thus, this research attempts to study the nature of interaction among the four powers, as well as to examine whether the four powers would develop competitive, cooperative, or conflictual relations; or whether the new regimes that are being formed in the Asia-Pacific region are based on a preponderant balance of power system.

It is also the aim of this study to investigate the nature of institutional transformation in the Asia-Pacific. In the post-Cold War era new regimes are being formed while old ones are redesigned. Old actors are pushed to the periphery and being replaced by new centres of power. Would these powers cooperate in regime formation and distribution of power in Asia-Pacific?

The third objective of this study is to identify core governmental foreign policy making institutions. It is essential to differentiate between the core and peripheral foreign policy institutions. Numerous peripheral sources of influence may constrain foreign policy behaviour of a nation, but it is the core institutions that formulate actual foreign policies and even manipulate peripheral sources of influence. Knowing who are the real policy makers in Washington or Moscow enables policy makers in Tokyo or Beijing to deal with essential decision-makers in the United States or Russia on issues of vital interests. Interactions among the core policy makers could create a good deal of understanding among them on issues of vital interests. In this way the regional order and stability could be preserved, and any disturbances within the system avoided, if not minimised.

### 1.3 Methodology of the Study

The methodology of this research has two dimensions. The first involves how the research is conducted. The second involves the nature of the study and the technique of data collection applied. In an attempt to identify the foreign policy trends of the United States, Japan, China, and Russia, this thesis examines three essential elements of foreign policymaking of these four powers. In other words, foreign policy-making in Washington, Tokyo, Beijing, and Moscow is the outcome of interaction between (1) national power status, (2) national interests, and (3) internal and external determinants of foreign policy of these powers. Internal determinants include the constitutional institutions directly or indirectly involved in foreign policy formulation in a country. External determinants refer to the constraints imposed on foreign policy makers by the

outside environment (i.e. other powers). All these three closely inter-related elements of foreign policy in this thesis are collectively referred to as foreign policy structures of the four major powers under discussion. However, prior to the examination of foreign policy structures of individual powers, the study also presents an analysis of a theoretical framework of foreign policy structures and patterns of interactions among the four powers during the Cold War era. Therefore, structurally, this thesis is composed of eight chapters.

Chapter two examines the theoretical framework of foreign policy structures. Some fundamental concepts such as balance of power, national interests, domestic and external foreign policy determinants as well as direct and indirect sources of pressure on foreign policy are discussed. Chapter three puts Cold War relations of the four major powers into historical perspective. It discusses historical patterns of relationships among these powers along with their respective foreign policy objectives in Asia-Pacific during the Cold-War era. The subsequent chapters examine the post-Cold War foreign policy structures of the four major powers individually. Chapter four examines American foreign policy structures. Chapter five discusses Japanese foreign policy structures. Chapter six provides an analysis of Chinese foreign policy structures. Chapter seven examines Russian foreign policy structures. In discussing foreign policy structures of individual powers, the order of discussion runs as follows: first, analysis of their respective power status is presented, then their interests in Asia-Pacific are examined. Their internal structures are discussed before a discussion of their external structures.

### 1.3.1 Nature of the Research and Techniques Applied

This study is comparative, textual, analytical, and historical in nature. It uses the technique of content analysis specifically to analyse post-Cold War literature on the subject under discussion. In addition to library work as a vital method of data collection, the research uses the observation method by taking account of the views of friends and colleagues who showed interest in discussing some basic issues relevant to this study. These discussions, though informal, have enriched the study by bringing certain issues and ideas to the researcher's attention. However, close follow up of events in the media and conferences and seminars have also exposed the researcher to new ideas and issues relevant to this study.

The sources of data or materials referred to in this study are divided into two categories namely, primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources include official documents, materials published by specialised agencies, newspapers, Internet, and electronic media. Radio and television were important in that the researcher could listen to policy statements released in Washington, Tokyo, Beijing, or Moscow. These policy statements were rich sources of analysis. Radio and television are not used as sources for material facts. They generally help in the construction of some views and ideas. Secondary sources include two categories of literature on the subject under discussion. The first category includes literature that examines historical patterns of relations among the four major powers in Asia-Pacific. This kind of literature includes scholarly works, primarily books and journals, published before the end of the Cold War or collapse of the Soviet System. The second category includes literature that examines

the post-Cold War patterns of relations among the four major powers as well as literature that discusses internal institutional transformation in each country in the realm of foreign policy. This research has, therefore, heavily depended on this second category of secondary sources in addition to primary sources as it examines the post-Cold War foreign policy structures of the major powers.

#### 1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research examines only the foreign policy structures of the respective powers in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, in treating foreign policy structures of individual powers it does not strictly follow the pattern of analysis examined in the chapter on theoretical framework. The study rather has adopted a simple pattern of examination of foreign policy structures of respective powers. It examines their power status first. Then, it presents analysis of the interests of the powers concerned. In the third stage, it discusses internal structures and in the fourth, the external foreign policy structures of the respective powers are examined. The reasons below explain this approach. First, some of the foreign policy structures discussed in chapter two such as regime type are too obvious to call for examination. Secondly, in some way all foreign policy structures discussed in chapter two are grouped or included within the four categories of foreign policy structures applied to chapters four, five, six and seven. For instance, the level of economic development and national military stature of each power are grouped under the power status category of respective powers. Third, some of the foreign policy structures such as size or literacy rate have negligible influence as this study focuses on analysis of actual foreign policy structures. In addition, foreign policy is largely the work of a small

group of elites. It is necessary to mention that national interests of some powers such as the United States or Russia in Asia-Pacific are examined within the context of their global priorities. The main reason for treating their interests as such is that the United States is the sole power with global interests. Therefore, its priorities in Asia-Pacific is part of its global interests. On the other hand, Russia, though downgraded, still considers itself a Eurasian nation whose interests are relatively broader than those of other regional powers such as China and Japan at this moment in history. Therefore, treatment of their interests in Asia-Pacific necessarily presupposes an examination of their goals in a broader context.

Academics argue that the international system is still anarchic. There does not exist a supranational government. Nations often do not adhere to international legal obligations in the conduct of their foreign policies. Powerful nations deliberately violate international law if its enforcement hampers attainment of their national interests. They invoke international law only to protect if not promote national interests. In addition, powerful nations invoke international law to secure legitimacy for their actions which are undertaken in pursuit of national interests. The above argument indicates that major powers pay lip service to international law and international organisation. They are used by major powers to justify their foreign policies. They do not serve as major constraints in foreign policy decision-making. Therefore, one could argue that it is power in pursuit of national interests and not legal obligations, which governs relations among nations. Thus, while recognising the importance of international law as part of external foreign



policy structures, its influence on the respective powers discussed in this thesis is left out. Instead the emphasis is on the power status and national interests of each power.

In conducting this research, the writer encountered some unavoidable problems including financial constraints, which deprived the researcher of the possibility of visiting some foreign policy institutions as well as getting access to declassified official documents, archival materials or officials involved in foreign policy formulation in the respective countries. In addition, unfortunately, material assistance from diplomatic missions of some of the countries under discussion was also not forthcoming. However, the Lincoln Resource Centre of the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur is an exception. Had it not been for the assistance of the Lincoln Resource Centre, this work would not have been complete.

Inaccessibility or rather lack of official documents and primary materials at times virtually hampered the undertaking of this research. However, the problem of lack of hard data or facts was an acute one, especially the facts needed for the measurement of the power status of the respective powers. The author has tried to provide the most recent and up-to-date information wherever possible. Therefore, in the presentation of data in measuring the power status of the respective powers, some degree of inconsistency was unavoidable. Thus, inaccessibility to the relevant primary sources has to some extent hampered a more substantive treatment of certain ideas and concepts. Nevertheless, a serious effort has been made to fully access and utilise available sources including the internet to support the main arguments in this work.