



Orbis, Fall 2010, At a Glance

By Mackubin T. Owens

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This issue of Orbis features a cluster of articles focusing on East Asia: China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The first five articles are based on papers delivered in Washington, D.C. at a January 2010 conference, "Power in East Asia: What Is It? And Who Has It?" jointly sponsored by FPRI and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA).

The conference attempts to answer such questions as: what types of power ("hard" vs. "soft" power) matter in East Asia today and in the future? Who possesses power in the region? Has U.S. power in the region declined relative to other players? What are the implications of China's rising power and influence and its "charm offensive"? What do such developments portend for China's cooperation and conflict with the United States, Japan, and others? Where do Japan's long-term economic troubles, long-debated constraints on its security role, a new government and a changing environment leave this major regional power? What are the consequences for smaller powers, including Taiwan and Korea, of changes in their external environments?

Jacques DeLisle, professor of Law and Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of FPRI's Asia Program, examines China's use of "soft" power in its relations with Taiwan and offers some observations about the implications of China's approach for U.S. policy. Robert Ross of Boston College discusses the rise of Chinese economic and military power, arguing that while substantial, Chinese power should not be exaggerated.

David Kang, Professor of International Relations and Business at the University of Southern California and Director of USC's Korean Studies Institute, examines the concept of "status" as it manifests itself in international relations, with special emphasis on the role of status and leadership on the Korean peninsula. Thomas Berger of Boston University returns to the theme of soft power, applying it to the case of Japan and its relations with the other countries of East Asia.

Alan Wachman, Associate Professor of International Politics at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, examines the place of small states in the international system by looking at Mongolia and its relations with its more powerful neighbors, Russia and China. Finally, James Kendall, an active duty Marine Corps officer, supplements the conference papers with his discussion of post-Cold War changes in Japan's defense strategy and force structure.

Two other articles in this issue of Orbis examine events in Central Asia and Africa respectively. Regarding the former, Martin and Dina Spechler evaluate Russian attempts to reassert dominance in that region of the world, concluding that while Russia is not "winning" in Central Asia, neither are outside powers such as China and the United States. James Hentz of Virginia Military Institute argues that our understanding of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa is wrong because we tend to view events in that region in terms of Westphalian categories that do not apply in this case: African conflicts such as those in Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are neither purely inter-state or intra-state (civil wars) but reflect what Hentz calls wars across states.

In the summer 2010 volume of Orbis, we published a critique of International Criminal Court (ICC) by a military lawyer (David Bolgiano, "A Nationalist's View of Lawfare"). In this issue, Scott Zipprich, also a military lawyer, argues that the United States, rather than rejecting the ICC, should adopt a more cooperative, less hostile policy.

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