

East Asia remained relatively quiet in the second half of 2005, with the world's eyes trained on America's endeavors in Iraq and an increasingly menacing Iran. The avian flu was in and out of the headlines, claiming lives in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam this year, always threatening to turn into a global pandemic.

In China, two toxic river spills, a month apart, caused panic in the provinces of Heilongjiang and Guangdong, highlighting China's lack of environmental safety standards for industry and the government's tight-lipped opacity with regard to public health concerns. However, Michael Pares argues rather optimistically in this issue that the government has made gradual progress through the promulgation of new laws to meet international human rights standards in China's prison-labor camps. Meanwhile, Chinese oil giant, UNOOC, made a bold US\$18.5 billion bid to buy Unocal, trumping Chevron and setting off alarm-bells in Washington D.C., although it eventually withdrew its bid in August in the face of hostility on Capitol Hill. Across the Atlantic, China's dispute with Europe over textiles ended with an agreement in September to unblock \$500 million of garments that had been sitting in European docks due to a recent June quota. The event seems now but a small stutter on the path to greater bilateral trade between the European Union and China, which topped \$200 billion in 2005. In his article, Ameer Patel explores the potential influence of competing economic interests on international relations, specifically the implications of economic competition on future Sino-Indian relations.

Amid relatively little fanfare, Japan's economy turned a corner and looks to be emerging from its deflationary doldrums, with prices finally rising and consumer confidence returning. American beef is also finding its way back into Japanese stores as the government lifted a two-year ban on imports triggered by incidences of mad-cow disease, although consumers remain skeptical as American ranchers try to win back what was once their largest overseas market. In the political realm, Koizumi's landslide re-election in October allowed him to push ahead with his agenda to privatize the Japanese Post (valued at \$3 trillion), due to happen in 2007. Controversial constitutional reform got underway in November, as the Liberal Democratic Party wrapped up a draft constitution that aims to increase the role of Japan's military in international affairs, even as the US reduced its troop presence

SJEAA P R E F A C E

in Okinawa and offered help in constructing a Japanese missile defense system. The LDP's decision to step up its military involvement in foreign affairs has significant implications for Tokyo-Taipei relations; Jason Chen predicts in his article that Japan will continue to provide and possibly increase its political and security support for Taiwan in the coming years.

The Korean peninsula remained troubled, if out of the spotlight; much of these six months were spent in intermittent six-way talks amid verbal sparring between American and North Korean officials. After admitting last February that it was seeking nuclear weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreed in September to give up its program in exchange for aid and security guarantees, but hopes for change collapsed again when it demanded a civilian nuclear reactor. Shadowed by the highly publicized attempted and failed negotiations, human rights violations in North Korea received significantly less attention, but which nonetheless is also of urgent concern. Cara D. Cutler suggests that China's temporary visa program, which allows North Koreans to temporarily enter China without granting them refugee status, serves not only China's interests, but also meets the basic needs of North Korean migrants. In the meantime, South Korea has become the biggest foreign investor in China, overtaking Japan (an economy four times as large) with its hand mainly in steel and auto-manufacturing. The 2005 APEC summit, held amidst demonstrations by farmers and trade unionists in South Korea, however, achieved little: Europe kept its agricultural markets closed despite pressure from many Asian countries.

In Singapore, the execution of a young Australian man, accused of smuggling heroin en route to Cambodia, was done in secrecy early in December,

despite appeals for clemency from the Australian government and threats of a boycott. Next door in Malaysia, the worst haze since 1997 shut down schools and airports again, as government officials went into crisis talks with their Indonesian counterparts over how to control the damage.

Even as these events are being written into history by news groups, policy makers, or as part of dissertations, new scholarship continues to debate the approaches to historiography. Challenging the application of rational-choice theory in understanding the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese conflict, Todd MacEgan West makes a case for prospect theory as one that produces a more coherent narrative for the events culminating in China's decision to enter war with Vietnam. Kenji Hasegawa revisits the experiences of student-soldiers who participated in the student movements in postwar Japan, and attempts to reconstruct, from the perspective of these students, a historical narrative that was largely omitted from Japanese Communist Party history. Finally, Seanon Wong challenges traditional perceptions of globalization, and proposes that, far from being a threat to indigenous culture, globalization stimulates cultural diversity.

The Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs has entered its sixth year of semi-annual publications. The number and quality of submissions has met and even exceeded our expectations, even as we are actively seeking the contribution of those who find satisfaction, and even necessity, in understanding and examining the developments, past or present, in Greater East Asia. We welcome and appreciate your contributions, and hope that the Journal continues to inform our readers, and to invite a more diverse readership in the coming years.

Betty Luan & Shameel Ahmad
Editors-in-Chief, 2006



CHINA

In “*The End of the Unipolar International Order? Implications of the Recent Thaw in Sino-Indian Relations*,” Ameer Patel examines the warming relationship between the two most populous countries in the world. He shows that the theoretical frameworks of power transition and balance-of-power, while useful for situating this bilateral relationship in the broader global system, ultimately prove inadequate. By failing to take into account the extent to which economic competition might hinder a theoretically-viable strategic alliance, they overstate the future evolution of this new cooperative friendship.

Seanon Wong reverses traditional narratives about globalization as homogenization in “*What’s In A Dumpling? The Chinese Fast Food Industry and the Spread of Indigenous Cultures under Globalization*.” Critics of globalization who bemoan the corruptive effects of McDonald’s and KFC on fragile local cuisines overlook the interesting corollary that globalization also serves to export local cuisines, stimulating instead of stifling cultural diversity. Taking as his major example Chinese fast-food, Wong makes a strong case that, far from being subsumed, local cultures have thrived in today’s globalized environment by benefiting from enlarged markets and modern business management.

The world’s biggest prison system is undergoing serious reform, argues Michael Pareles. In “*Hard Times, Hard Labor: Prison Labor Reform in the People’s Republic of China from 1978 to the Present*,” he discusses the steps that the government has taken to reduce human-rights abuses and corruption within the laogai, the nation’s system of prison-labor camps. New laws have been promulgated and are being enforced, and Pareles makes the case that China is finally beginning to legally internalize a notion of human rights compatible with international standards.

SJEAA
EDITORIAL

JAPAN

Kenji Hasegawa revisits the Japanese Community Party (JCP) of the early 1950s in “*Student Soldiers in the Japanese Communist Party’s ‘Period of Extreme Leftist Adventurism,’*” during a militant phase in which students headed to rural villages to prepare for a Maoist revolution. This strategy was rejected outright in 1955 and, since then, the experiences of these student-soldiers have largely been forgotten in histories of the JCP, student movements and post-war Japan. Hasegawa attempts to reevaluate and reconstruct the historical narrative from the perspective of the students and activists of the time, using their memoirs as primary sources.

Japan has significantly increased its political and security support for Taiwan in recent years. Jason Chen explains why in “*Japan’s Policies Toward Taiwan: Recent Trends, Causes, and Implications for the Future of Tokyo-Taipei Relations,*” analyzing trends in US-Japanese relations, Japan’s own realist interests and popular domestic support for Taiwan in Japan. He forecasts that these developments show no signs of changing and that Japan will continue to grow closer to Taiwan in the year.

KOREA

Faced with rising levels of illegal immigrants from North Korea, China has implemented a visa program that allows North Koreans to enter China temporarily without granting them refugee status. In “*China’s Provision of Temporary Visas to North Koreans: Reconsidering the Protection of Migrants in the 21st Century,*” Cara Cutler suggests that this program serves both China’s security and foreign-policy interests and the basic needs of North Korean migrants. She argues forcefully that the current international scheme for dealing with refugees is broken, serving neither the needs of host-nations nor migrants, and is in need of urgent reform.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

In “*Failed Deterrence: The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Conflict,*” Todd MacEgan West sheds new light on the incident by bringing to bear prospect theory, a new mode of understanding decision-making under risk, on the problem of explaining the Chinese decision to attack Vietnam. This decision makes little sense according to rational-choice theory, which relies strictly on expected cost-benefit calculations. Prospect theory generates different implications for the analysis of military deterrence and a more coherent narrative for the lead-up to the conflict.