



Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies



SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

DECEMBER 2003

Asia's China Debate

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Editor's Note

S A T U P . L I M A Y E

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Asia's China Debate is the second publication in the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Special Assessment series. It follows a March 2003 Special Assessment entitled *Asia-Pacific Responses to U.S. Security Policies*, which examined how regional countries were reacting to U.S. security policies in the context of 9/11 and the release of official documents such as the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and National Security Strategy (NSS), in the lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and amidst debate about North Korea's nuclear provocations. *Asia's China Debate* constitutes part of an ongoing examination of key features of the Asia-Pacific security environment. It is generally acknowledged that next to the United States, China is today the most significant economic, political and military power in the region.

Much attention is being paid to China's changing regional diplomacy and more generally its rise in the Asia-Pacific and the implications of these developments—including for the United States. Less attention has been paid to the related topic of how Asian countries regard China and the meaning of Asia's responses for U.S. interests. While the majority of papers in this Special Assessment deal with individual country debates about China, other papers address issues such as China's historical role in the region and the likely weight of that past on Asia's China debate today, regional responses to China as the center of economic growth and integration, China's cooperation with neighbors on road and rail links, and its participation in multilateral organizations. *Asia's China Debate* thus comprises both country and functional issue approaches to understanding China's evolving place in the region. However, not every country or every issue relevant to Asia's China debate has been examined.

Given the range of countries and issues, a single template for each analysis was deliberately avoided. However, each analysis addresses some common questions. First, what are the principal drivers or considerations (e.g., economic, security, ethnicity, history, border or territorial disputes) shaping policies and attitudes toward China? What are the relative weights of these drivers and how have they changed in a particular country or on a specific issue? Second, who are the main stakeholders or

players (e.g., foreign ministry, defense ministry/military, business community, public opinion) in a country's debate about China? Third, what are the main schools of thought regarding China in a particular country or on an issue? Finally, what are the implications for the United States of specific debates about China? By offering a framework within which to analyze individual country or issue debates about China, but avoiding a template straitjacket, it was felt that the tone and content of the debate about China could be more accurately assessed.

These analyses are the contribution of an APCSS teaching and research faculty with keen insights, expertise and experience on Asia-Pacific security issues. We hope this and other APCSS publications will inform the deliberations of policy-makers and the analytical community on both sides of the Pacific.