



Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia (Princeton Studies in International History and Politics)

By Victor D. Cha



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While the American alliance system in Asia has been fundamental to the region's security and prosperity for seven decades, today it encounters challenges from the growth of China-based regional organizations. How was the American alliance system originally established in Asia, and is it currently under threat? How are competing security designs being influenced by the United States and China? In *Powerplay*, Victor Cha draws from theories about alliances, unipolarity, and regime complexity to examine the evolution of the U.S. alliance system and the reasons for its continued importance in Asia and the world.

Cha delves into the fears, motivations, and aspirations of the Truman and Eisenhower presidencies as they contemplated alliances with the Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and Japan at the outset of the Cold War. Their choice of a bilateral "hub and spokes" security design for Asia was entirely different from the system created in Europe, but it was essential for its time. Cha argues that the alliance system's innovations in the twenty-first century contribute to its resiliency in the face of China's increasing prominence, and that the task for the world is not to choose between American and Chinese institutions, but to maximize stability and economic progress amid Asia's increasingly complex political landscape.

Exploring U.S. bilateral relations in Asia after World War II, *Powerplay* takes an original look at how global alliances are achieved and maintained.



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Editorial Review

Review

"*Powerplay* is an illuminating and important book that should help to guide policy makers as they try to cope with the greatest challenge to the American alliance system in Asia since it was created some seven decades ago: the rise of a power, China, that wants to shake it up."--**Richard Bernstein, *Wall Street Journal***

"Cha has embedded a lively narrative of post-World War II diplomatic history inside a thought-provoking analytic framework."--**Andrew Nathan, *Foreign Affairs***

"Masterful. . . . Deft and seamless mixture of theory, historical analysis, and policy prescription."--**Ben Rimland, *Washington Free Beacon***

"Cha's *Powerplay* demonstrates an incredible depth and breadth of knowledge, solid research, and accessible analysis. It is an excellent backgrounder for context on the history and evolution of U.S. alliances in Asia. . . . *Powerplay* successfully answers its central question: Why aren't America's Asian alliances built the same as in Europe?"--**Daniel Runde, *Foreign Policy***

"An important contribution to the literature on alliance politics and regional security in Asia."--**Yukari Iwanami, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific***

"This book is an important contribution to the literature on alliance politics and regional security in Asia."--**Yukari Iwanami, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific***

"Timely. . . . It provides a clear-eyed, historical perspective on the emergence, significance and continued relevance of the alliance structure. Cha persuasively argues that security arrangements in Asia possess both a different structure and rationale for their existence than security arrangements in Europe."--**Olivia Enos, *The National Interest***

From the Back Cover

"For any who are interested in thinking about American grand strategy in Asia from a historical or contemporary perspective, Cha's book is worth picking up. We cannot understand the future of U.S.-China relations in Asia without thinking deeply about its past."--**Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Counselor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies**

"Making important arguments about alliance behavior, *Powerplay* presents the history of critical cases of U.S. alliance behavior during the Cold War, and cleverly links that history to contemporary challenges in U.S. policy. The book's coverage of tense relations between the Republic of Korea and the United States in the 1940s and '50s is especially impressive. This is a great book."--**Thomas Christensen, Princeton University**

"This excellent and fascinating book explores the nature of and logic behind America's choice of bilateralism for its security relations with Asian states in the aftermath of World War II. Combining thoughtful and thought-provoking theoretical discussions with in-depth historical research, *Powerplay* is exemplary of what

good IR research should look like."--**Galia Press-Barnathan, Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

About the Author

Victor D. Cha holds the D. S. Song-Korea Foundation Chair in Government and is the director of Asian Studies at Georgetown University. He is also senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC, and formerly served as director of Asian Affairs on the White House National Security Council. His previous award-winning books include *The Impossible State* and *Alignment Despite Antagonism*.

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