

# A PACIFIC CHARTER

A BLUEPRINT FOR  
U.S. POLICY IN THE PACIFIC  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

*By Representative Benjamin A. Gilman*



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*The B. C. Lee Lectures*

**A Pacific Charter:  
A Blueprint for  
U.S. Policy in the Pacific  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*By Representative Benjamin A. Gilman*

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***B. C. Lee Lecture***

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THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Heritage Foundation is honored to present the B.C. Lee Lectures on international affairs. These annual Lectures focus on U.S. relations with the Asia-Pacific region. They are funded by an endowment grant from the Samsung Group in honor of the late B.C. Lee, founder of the prominent Korean corporation.

The Asian Studies Center of The Heritage Foundation was established in 1983 to focus the attention of policymakers in Washington on U.S. economic and security interests in the increasingly dynamic Asia-Pacific region. Its purpose is to promote mutual understanding and enhance cooperation between the United States and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

The Heritage Foundation also has taken great pride in dedicating an executive conference room to the memory of the late B.C. Lee. Mr. Lee was a true visionary. Through his leadership, the Samsung Group contributed greatly both to the economic development and well-being of the Korean people and to the development of mutually beneficial relations between the people of the Republic of Korea and the United States.

# *The Third Annual B.C. Lee Lecture*

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**Invocation**

*Fr. Vincent Rigdon*

**Dinner**

**Introduction**

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**The B.C. Lee Lecture**

*The Honorable Benjamin A. Gilman*  
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# A Pacific Charter: A Blueprint for U.S. Policy in the Pacific in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

By Representative Benjamin A. Gilman

**T**hank you for your kind introduction. It is a distinct honor and privilege to participate with such distinguished company this evening to present the Third Annual B. C. Lee Lecture on U.S.–Asian Relations. Permit me first, however, to express my appreciation to our host organization—The Heritage Foundation—and to its leader, Ed Feulner.

The important contributions to public policy by Ed Feulner and The Heritage Foundation merit the high recognition that Heritage has earned. The reports and studies produced by the foundation are valuable resources for many of us in Congress.

This evening, as we focus our attention on Asia, I am reminded of the Asian Studies Center of The Heritage Foundation, headed by our good friend Richard Allen, which is just another example of the outstanding work of the foundation. The B. C. Lee Lecture is one of the many ways by which The Heritage Foundation brings Asia and the Pacific to the forefront of the public policy debate.



No region of the world is more vital to the future of our nation than Asia. Over the past 50 years, Asia has become a significant center of international economic and military power. Asia includes four of the world's most powerful nations, economically and militarily—Japan, India, Russia, and the newest emerging power, China.

Although Asia today is more stable and peaceful than at any time this century, there is deep concern about its future. Regional developments have consequences for American and global security that are more significant than at any time in the past. Some commentators have said that when Asia sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold.

No other nation has the capability of influencing the future of Asia as does the United States. At the same time, no other region of the world presents U.S. policymakers with such diverse economic, security, and diplomatic challenges as does Asia. Asia has been experiencing unprecedented economic growth that is bringing the center of the world economy to the Pacific. It is the most economically dynamic and fastest-developing region in the world.

Consider for a moment the following: 40 percent of the global bank reserves are in seven East Asian nations; Asia is the second largest consumer of oil after North America; Asia's population growth is the highest in the world, China has a population of 1.2 billion and India is rapidly approaching a billion; and by the year 2010, one-third of the world's economic activity, not including the United States, will center in Asia!

From a security standpoint, the military strength of the region is unprecedented and growing by the day. Eight of the world's largest armies are in Asia. Three of these nations—Russia, China, and India—are confirmed nuclear powers. In our information age, events that take place tonight in Asia have repercussions around the world by tomorrow.

The United States has long been involved in the Pacific. In 1784, the *Empress of China* sailed from New York to establish commercial ties with China. In the 1850s, Commodore Perry opened Japan's commercial markets, and in 1905, Teddy Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the end of the Russo-Japanese war.

The United States has seen the blood of its sons and daughters shed on Asian soil in defense of our national interests and in fighting tyranny. America has fought three wars in Asia since 1941 and this very evening American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are engaged in ensuring peace across the Pacific. Our basic interests in Asia have remained virtually the same for the past 200 years: regional stability; access to markets; and freedom of the seas. They are as important to us now as they were in 1784 to the master of the *Empress of China*.

In fact, Asia today is even more integral to our economy. Trade with the region comprises 36 percent of all American trade and was responsible for 3.8 million American jobs in 1995, up 700,000 from 1994. Asia represents the fastest-growing market in the world for U.S. exports—which totaled \$193 billion in 1995, \$50 billion more than our exports to Europe. U.S. exports to Asia in 1995 increased 26 percent over the previous year, a rate of increase that was greater than that to all other regions of the world.

America has made substantial investments in Asia these last 50 years and our nation is responsible for the peace and much of the prosperity that Asia has enjoyed since the end of World War II. Today, 7 million Americans trace their ancestry to Asia and the Pacific. Unquestionably, America is a nation with Asian roots, and some have stated that America's very future lies in that region.

Yet, despite these facts, most Americans remain, in the words of author and journalist Frank Gibney, “woefully ignorant of this strong and growing Pacific relationship.” In his 1992 study of the history of the political development of the Asia-Pacific countries, Gibney says this of Americans:

Still prisoners of national self-sufficiency and Eurocentric education, we have barely begun to think of the Asian countries across the great ocean as neighbors, not curiosities. It is a small wonder that the history of our Pacific inter-

connection has been characterized by appalling misconceptions, gross undervaluations and needless wars.

Shortly after World War II, the great American soldier and statesman George C. Marshall said that a safe and free America depends on a safe and free Europe. Marshall, of course, was emphasizing the importance of Europe to the United States at the time. Permit me to suggest that Marshall's paradigm has changed. Today, he could have stated that a safe and free America depends on a safe and free Asia.

Just as we could not take Europe for granted during the Cold War, we cannot take Asia for granted as we enter the 21st century. It is incumbent upon us as a great nation to provide the leadership that will both protect our interests in this vital region of the world and, at the same time, keep the peace.

But our leadership and our role in Asia are being questioned. Many in Asia have come to view the United States as a troubled nation that may be in decline. Asians see the American approach to foreign policy as being marked by uncertainty. They question our sincerity and commitment to the region.

Militarily, they have watched as American troop strength declined from 135,000 in 1990 to as low as 85,000 in 1996. They have questioned the closing of our strategic bases in the Philippines in 1992. The shifting signals emanating from President Clinton's Administration have sent a confused message to Asian leaders.

We all remember Beijing's campaign of intimidation last spring on the eve of elections in Taiwan—the first democratic elections in the 5,000 years of Chinese history. The House of Representatives adopted a resolution calling on the Administration to come to Taiwan's defense. Shortly thereafter, the Administration sent aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait.

Nine months later, the same Administration invited to Washington to visit the White House and the Pentagon none other than the Chinese Minister of Defense, the same individual who also was responsible for the Tiananmen massacre as well as the missile firings off Taiwan. Regrettably, the Administration failed to respond to his statement at the National Defense University that not a single student died in Tiananmen Square.

Asians fear that signals such as these may presage a retrenchment by the United States. Most nations want us to stay in Asia. Many are concerned that the nation they consider to be the only honest broker in the region will withdraw into a shell of isolationism. Regrettably, this Administration has provided some grounds for those fears.

Asia is a region not only of great diversity—ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and, of course, geographic—but also of historic rivalries—ancient in their origins but no less severe today. Such rivalries can become serious threats to Asian stability.

Potential flashpoints range from the 38th parallel on the Korean peninsula to the Taiwan Strait to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea to Kashmir on the Indian subcontinent. Weapons proliferation and regional arms races that are fueled by territorial, maritime, and ethnic disputes only add to the possibility of a major conflagration.

The challenge to the United States is to maintain and advance our national interests amid these relationships. It is a situation in which U.S. leadership is constantly being put to the test. Further challenges to U.S. interests include access to markets that are obstructed by trade barriers, violations of intellectual property rights, and other trade-related issues. Nor can we ignore the growth of transnational criminal activities that range from the threat to America's youth from narcotics produced in the Golden Triangle to the smuggling of illegal aliens onto our shores.

However, perhaps the most significant challenge to peace and prosperity in Asia is the rise of a regional hegemon. The People's Republic of China is the most likely candidate in that role. China is already an economic power and is seeking to become a military power as well. In the absence of a countervailing presence, Asia could well find itself within a Chinese sphere of influence in the not-too-distant future.

Writing in the January 20 issue of *The Weekly Standard*, Robert Kagan, the Alexander Hamilton Fellow in History at the American University, states that "There is a Marxian foolishness to the argument that the transformation of China into a liberal democracy is historically inevitable." Kagan goes on to say that "The iron laws of modernization can be broken by a ruling elite that is ultimately more interested in power than modernization."

The Chinese nation rightfully seeks a level of respect commensurate with its newly acquired economic might. The question is, what does the unelected government in Beijing seek? And are those goals commensurate with a region that is increasingly characterized by democratic societies with free-market economies, such as those we now see in much of Europe and Latin America?

Much of Asia is looking to the United States for answers to these and other questions regarding the future of the region. But if the answers do not come from Washington, be assured they will come from elsewhere, and they may not be to our liking. Resolving all of these challenges will require a continued and significant American presence in the region.

The wind favors a ship whose course is marked. In the years following World War II, America was the indispensable leader and peacekeeper of the Pacific. But America's position is now being challenged. The political, economic, and security challenges our nation faces require principled and consistent leadership from Washington. The wind will favor our ship of state, but only if our course, or strategy, has been clearly set.

Regrettably, this Administration lacks a coherent national strategy to address the significant challenges our nation faces in Asia. As of this evening, we still do not know who is to be the new Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific. The Administration's actions have been ad hoc and short-term. Too often, it has drawn a line in the sand, only to step away from it.

In this regard, the Administration has acted like a business whose only goal is immediate profit, with no regard for long-term relationships with customers or suppliers. Any business executive understands that most companies that seek only immediate profit do not last very long. A successful company has a plan that charts out its long-term goals and objectives and the means intended to accomplish them. It seeks to build stable relationships with customers and suppliers.

In similar manner, the time has come for the Administration to break free from its ad hoc approach, and to reassure all nations of the region of our long-term intentions. It is time for the Administration to articulate a set of principles that will provide a framework for our future relationships in Asia.

In 1941, the United States and Great Britain laid down a set of principles of conduct. It was called the Atlantic Charter. Similarly, I propose that this Administration consider a "Pacific Charter" that lays out the principles for our policies in Asia in the 21st century. Such a Pacific Charter would articulate America's long-term goals and objectives in the Pacific and link them with the means for implementation.

It would be a comprehensive model for our involvement in the region, supporting our national interests and assuring others of our intention to remain a Pacific power. Further, it would demonstrate that the United States is placing its relations with Asia in the 21st century on a par comparable to that which has informed its relations with Europe over the latter half of the 20th century.

The principles of a Pacific Charter would provide for effective security; prevention of regional hegemony by one nation; promotion of democracy and the rule of law; respect for human and religious rights; and expansion of trade on a reciprocal basis.

Such a charter could strengthen security arrangements by providing a basis for a long-term U.S. presence through basing and access agreements, for regional security agreements, and for an American presence following the reunification of the Korean peninsula. It could provide the basis for the continuation of a credible forward presence of U.S. forces to deter aggression, help resolve crises, and protect and defend our interests as well as those of our allies and trading partners.

A Pacific Charter could provide a framework for U.S. policy in the region toward Russia. We have tried to exclude Russia from Korea and have done nothing to help resolve Russia's territorial dispute with Japan. Too often, we view Russia as being part of Europe, and far away at that. Yet, with nearly 2,800 miles of coastline, Russia is very much a Pacific nation. After Canada and Mexico, it is our next-closest neighbor, just 68 miles across the Bering Strait from Alaska.

A Pacific Charter could also provide a basis for Japan to participate more fully in regional security arrangements, as well as for exploring new cooperative approaches that foster security in the region. As Mike Mansfield, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, has stated, the U.S.–Japan relationship is—in his words—the “single most important bilateral relationship, bar none.” I agree. The security environment in Asia in the 21st century will be shaped largely by our relationship with Japan. Our relationship is strong today. We must ensure that it remains so.

Another great democracy of Asia that we have neglected is India, which, like many nations in the region, is undergoing dramatic economic change as it embraces a market economy. Although located in the heart of an area largely characterized by



national political institutions that are authoritarian or totalitarian, India adheres courageously to the same core values that we also hold dear.

The United States needs to reach out to India beyond our friendship and mutual respect and become close partners in a struggle that assures that Asia's security, economic growth, and market economies are protected by the rule of law and democratic institutions. A Pacific Charter could provide a framework for advancing such ties.

Francine Frankel, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania, writing in the Autumn 1996 issue of *The Washington Quarterly*, states that

The new global context gives reason for both countries to want better ties. U.S. and Indian policymakers have converging geopolitical interests in establishing a rough equilibrium in Asia, particularly as China's military modernization increasingly threatens neighboring countries, including those in Southeast Asia, in the coming century.

India's democratic institutions, advanced educational system, and millions of highly educated citizens could form an important hub in a new Asia—an Asia that supports economic growth but allows for the rights of workers to be protected; an Asia that supports development but permits nongovernmental advocacy groups to speak out against exploitation of the environment; and an Asia that integrates traditional values with a deep regard for the rule of law and human and religious rights.

A Pacific Charter could invigorate U.S. efforts to advance a dialogue between North and South Korea that would eventuate in unification and a final peace. Such a charter could also lay out U.S. policy with regard to weapons proliferation, narcotics

trafficking, terrorism, environmental degradation, and other transnational issues.

In short, by clearly enunciating U.S. policy toward Asia, a Pacific Charter would establish a bright line clearly understood by all nations in the region. It would provide a basis for sound long-term relations with China. The present government in Beijing may have a fundamental misapprehension of U.S. intentions in the Pacific, stemming in no small measure from the shifting signals that have been emanating from the Clinton Administration.

Most agree that China presents the greatest challenge to the United States in the Pacific, with the potential to be a major destabilizing force in the region. One reason that the United States has difficulties in its relations with China is because the latter is governed by a totalitarian regime. It is not a democracy. We do not have comparable problems with such other Asian democracies as Japan, India, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines, or Pakistan.

A Pacific Charter could clarify what are the real interests of both China and the United States in the Pacific. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated in testimony before the House International Relations Committee on February 11 that "China's emergence as a world power and the evolution of its relations with other nations will do much to determine the history of our era."

The question of China's intentions is as important as the clarification of our own. To some, it is clear that the Beijing government is bent upon a policy of regional expansion and domination, and to eventually expelling the United States from the Western Pacific.

Those who espouse this view believe that any improvement of relations with Washington on the part of Beijing is purely tactical. They note that senior U.S. officials arriving in the Chinese capital for talks are almost invariably greeted by editorials in

the government-controlled press denouncing American “hegemonism.”

Others believe that the Chinese government views America in such a light because of our occasional criticisms regarding what it views as “internal matters,” such as its violations of internationally recognized human rights; its illegal occupation of Tibet; its repression of any dissent; or its transfer of nuclear weapons technology to rogue regimes such as Iran despite a commitment not to do so.

The position of the Clinton Administration with regard to these matters can be summed up in one word: trade. There seems to be a belief that enhanced trade, even at a cost to the United States of a deficit approaching \$40 billion a year, will bring economic prosperity to China; and that, in turn, will improve the prospects for democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Missing from this calculation, however, is an understanding that trade alone does not bring democracy and the rule of law, and that trade flourishes best under the umbrella of democracy’s rule of law.

A Pacific Charter would make clear the importance that the United States attaches to such principles as these. To paraphrase something the Dalai Lama of Tibet recently said, our concerns are not about the Chinese people or Chinese culture, but about the Chinese communist government. A Pacific Charter could help to encourage China’s participation as a fully responsible and constructive member of the international system.

America’s interests in Asia and the Pacific are relatively simple and straightforward. They include the promotion of democracy and the rule of law; human and religious rights; market economies; and regional security for all. Many nations in the region look to the United States for continued leadership, but, despite any high-sounding rhetoric, the Clinton Administration has been short-sighted and inconsistent in its approach to Asia.

The time has come to lay out an architecture of policy that will establish our intention to remain engaged in Asia and the terms of our continued engagement. A Pacific Charter for the 21st century would provide the framework for such a U.S. policy. It would assure the entire region—allies and otherwise—of the continuation of a leadership that is consistent, coherent, and coordinated.





# A Pacific Charter: A Blueprint for U.S. Policy in the Pacific in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL B.C. LEE LECTURE

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