

A Comparison of the Defense Acquisition Systems of Australia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and the United States

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As we start the new Millennium, it is worthwhile to look back to the early years of the last century in the Pacific to provide a backdrop for the security environment in this century. Japan emerged as an international power flexing its military muscle by defeating both China and Russia. Korea, as an independent vassal of China, became a protectorate of Japan. Australia declared its freedom from Great Britain and became an independent nation in 1905. Singapore, however, was still an entrepot and remained with the British Empire. Its independence was more than a half century away. As the Century evolved, the Pacific region saw devastating wars, the disappearance of empires, revolutions and political changes. But new economic powers arose in the Pacific—Japan with the second largest economy in the world, a resurgent China, and the economic "Asian Tigers" — South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. As we left the Century, the "Asian Tigers" had stumbled, but South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia seemed to be on the road to recovery. Japan was still struggling to resuscitate its economy. Political change saw the "winds of democracy" sweep across the Pacific. Technology—aircraft, telephones and the Internet—contributed to a changing social and cultural landscape of these nations. Much of this can be seen as progress, but peace has yet to "break out." The Korean peninsula still has two armies poised for combat. North Korea's actions concern the Japanese. Southeast Asian conditions—possible political disintegration in Indonesia and the, sometimes contentious, relations with Malaysia—worry Singapore. While Australia has no immediate regional threats, United Nations efforts in East Timor stretch their military resources. China has contentious territorial issues in the South China Sea with its Southeast Asian neighbors and its relationship with Taiwan worries decision-makers throughout the region. With our "futuristic glasses" on, it is still difficult to know potential security threats—intimidation may come from a variety of sources—missile launches by North Korean or Iranian terrorist attacks, a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan, or cyber attacks on military organizations. Each of the nations in this book responds to these threats in different ways. One constant however, is the recognition of the need for technologically sophisticated weapon systems to respond to the threats. But, technologically sophisticate weapon systems are costly. Accordingly, in each of these nations, domestic needs continually conflict with the need to maintain an adequate military capability. Since the 1970s, cooperative armament projects have offered the often-unrealized hope of leveraging national resources. For the United States, international cooperation began with the Atlantic Alliance members. "These (cooperative) programs help strengthen the connective tissue, the military and industrial relationships that bind our nations in a strong security relationship. The political dimension of armaments cooperation is becoming increasingly important in an uncertain international security environment." While international cooperation efforts began in the Atlantic, our allies in the Pacific have also become partners in cooperative efforts. Cooperative research and development projects are being carried out with Japan for the ACES II ejection seat, with Australia for the Over the Horizon Radar, and with Korea for the Advanced Jet Trainer/Light Combat Aircraft.

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