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**EMERGING LEADERS IN EAST ASIA:
WHAT GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN ASIA MEANS FOR THE FUTURE OF U.S.-ASIA POLICY**

In September, The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) released a new report, “Emerging Leaders in East Asia,” that examines the rising generation of political leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, and what the increasing influence of that leadership means for future U.S. interests in the region.

Following on the heels of recent elections in Taiwan and South Korea, the sudden resignation last month of Japanese prime minister Yasuo Fukuda has highlighted the importance of the leadership transitions sweeping through East Asia. In order for the United States to effectively maintain its leadership role in the Asia-Pacific, Washington must gain an understanding of the emerging generation of leaders in Asia. Kenneth Pyle, NBR’s founding president and contributor to the report, states that “the American role as an engaged balancer will require a firm grasp of the domestic politics of each regional state and of their emerging leadership.” Dr. Pyle notes that “generations are one of the producers of historic change. Generations are the creatures of history, but they are also the makers of history.”

This point is reinforced when looking at China’s rising leaders, often referred to as “the fifth generation,” who in the coming decade will take over the steering of China’s security and economic policies. “Though Chinese nationalism is rising—perhaps most noticeably among young leaders—this does not necessarily mean that China intends to take an aggressive stand toward the United States, Japan, or Taiwan,” comments Cheng Li of the Brookings Institution and author of the report’s China chapter. “The political survival of the CCP is the most important consideration for this new generation of leaders.” In order to reach the pinnacles of power, these leaders will be required to identify new and innovative ways to manage successfully the many emerging challenges and opportunities facing their nation.

However, it is not just China’s rising leaders who are grappling with how to maintain their party’s prominence. Across the strait, in Taiwan, “a transfer of power is at hand and is bringing to the forefront a generation of politicians who are less emotional and ideological than the current generation of leaders,” writes Shelley Rigger, a specialist on Taiwan’s politics at Davidson College and author of the report’s Taiwan chapter. “For the United States, the new generation’s approach—which is sketched not in black and white but in shades of gray—offers opportunities and challenges.”

The report also highlights emerging leaders in each country who are most likely to ascend to major political positions in the coming decade.

Please visit www.nbr.org for more information about the report.

Founded in 1989 with a major grant from the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, NBR is an independent, nonpartisan research institution committed to informing and strengthening policy. NBR also helps train the next generation of scholars who concentrate on Asia