PS 358 Midterm Exam Answer Key

I. Multiple Choice (45 %):
1. B
2. C
3. A
4. C
5. D
6. B
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. A
11. B
12. B
13. D
14. C
15. D

II. Fill in the blanks (15%):
1. multi
2. sunshine
3. MITI
4. 9
5. James Lilley

III. Essay (40%):
Sample Essay 1:
For years, United States foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region has been wavering between focusing on the containment or engagement of China and the strengthening of relations and interdependence in Japan. Throughout the Cold War, a Chinese friendship was extremely important to the US as the geopolitics quickly changed from anti-Communism to anti-Soviets with Nixon’s visit to China. With this historic change in Cold-War dynamics came continuous inconsistencies in US policies and values concerning China and the region as a whole. Democratic values were compromised, such as the tradition of containing Communist countries and defending human rights across the world, allies like Taiwan were practically abandoned, and economic and military aid was given to a Communist country with a history of mistrust and threatening behavior throughout the region. Japan, although having a history of militarism, was destroyed and given a new chance after World War II, which they embraced with vigor and gave the US the opportunity to create an economic superpower with little potential of military threat, similar democratic values, and a mutual perspective on security and stability in the region.

During the Cold War, the US decision to place a relationship with China first in the Asia-Pacific region was based on necessity and the need for global security. Friendly relationships must be based on a common interest; in this case, dissolving the threat of the Soviet Union was a priority for US national interests at the time and establishing relations with China was a beneficial decision. But with the end of the Cold War, the differences between the US and China and the lack of a common interest between the two have placed the Chinese as a lower priority to US national interest, less essential to US power and concerns and more unpredictable and unreliable as an ally. The US can no longer conceal inconsistencies in foreign policies, ignoring of human rights violations, and secret diplomacy with the need to ensure US national security and the containing of the Soviet Union. The Tiananmen Square incident and recent episodes have demonstrated the inaccuracy of our assumption that human rights conditions are improving in China, while the slow economic progress, although worthy of investment, have failed to become essential to US business. Our policy on the Pacific Rim should not be one of conceding to possible future threats but one of cooperating with present political and economic allies such as Japan.

In contrast to China, Japan has grown into an economic superpower solely with the aid and support of the United States. Our democratic values are instilled in the Japanese society, and our history is not one of mistrust but of mutual sharing. In a world where interdependence is growing and economic power is a basis of global position, the US and Japan have the potential to become economic superpowers while encouraging democracy, stability, and human rights. With such close military, political, and economic ties with this regional ally, the US can maintain its influence in Asia. While China continues to view the US as a threat and guides its foreign policy against total alliance with the US, Japan is secure in its military relationship with the Americans and recognizes the importance of a US friendship. Therefore, it is almost certain that focusing on building Japan both militarily and economically as a regional superpower will not ultimately backfire on the US, a possible consequence of aiding and supporting China of which the future is uncertain. Although Japan and the US hold differing capitalistic views, the mutual sharing of technology and ideas is beneficial to both countries, whereas China has yet to realize much technological advancement or a true capitalistic system.

In conclusion, focusing on a Japan-first policy in the Asia-Pacific region will ultimately prove more beneficial for the US by focusing on the economic advantages, reducing the future threat of an unfriendly superpower, and encouraging stability and democratic security in the region. The US should allow Japan the capabilities to become an area of strength in the region by continuing to help Japan rearm and become more militarily self-sufficient as their economy continues to grow. In this way, the US will have a powerful and
trustworthy ally to maintain stability in the region. We should push to further open their markets to provide for mutual sharing of technology and capitalist ideas and a balance of trade between the two countries. Meanwhile, the United States must continue its diplomatic relations with China. We cannot place them first, however, and continue to concede to their “show us that you care” policy because we are now not in the position of needing them as much as they need us. The Chinese are an emerging power, however, and continuing relations with them is essential to the stability of the region and the world. The US must strive to ensure this security, and the most efficient and certain policy to achieve this goal is to maintain our influence in the region through strengthening our allies.

Sample Essay 2:

United States policy toward the Asia-Pacific region has historically, post-1945, been anchored on its relationship with Japan. Although the United States has given a great deal of attention toward establishing relations and trade agreements with Communist China and occasionally has taken the U.S.-Japan security and economic arrangements for granted, the United States should continue to support an Asia-Pacific policy based upon the bilateral partnership with Japan. A Japan-first relationship will allow America to project its power, both military and diplomatic, and its interests, both economic and security, throughout the region.

Japanese and Americans share many ideals and goals in achieving a perfect world and can easily work together. Both countries would base such a world on democracy, human rights and free trade. Japan’s long-standing democracy and economic superpower status make it the ideal partner. Economically, Japan is more stable than China. Although Chinese markets have enormous potential for American companies, the underlying communist economic system is proven less than ideal. Linking the American economy with China is an unwise decision. Any American conflict with the rising power, be it over Taiwan, North Korea or Chinese proliferation, will likely sever economic ties with U.S. companies and severely damage the American economy. Similarly, it seems illogical to build strong economic dependence with a nation whose government its fundamentally against American philosophy, especially when a major U.S. goal is the eventual undermining of the communist regime and democratization of China. If this goal is to be achieved through economics, a governmental collapse and system change will likely hinder economic growth and development sending the country into deep recession, as was the case with Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, and possibly bringing the U.S. economy with it.

Strategically, an alliance with Japan has been the cornerstone of U.S. Asia-Pacific policy. American bases and forward-deployed troops in Japan allow timely response to a multitude of possible military scenarios in the region and beyond. In contrast, a China-first policy would entail new security arrangements and the relocation of American bases. Before any such arrangement could come into existence, a diplomatic breakthrough with China would have to occur. The Chinese have historically been wary of the American presence in the region and have viewed the U.S.-Japan alliance as threatening to the rise of China, not to mention the U.S. support of Taiwan further irks the Chinese. Thus, the Chinese have developed a military posture aimed at undermining the American presence, through conventional and unconventional means. Cyber-warfare and Soviet military technology have begun to form the backbone of the Chinese aggressive response toward America. Although the U.S.-Japan alliance makes relations with China more difficult, it manages the stability of the region with greater sophistication than could a relationship with China. Developing a China-first policy would significantly alter the balance of power. Abandoning Japan would require increased militarization and possible development of nuclear capabilities as the American nuclear umbrella fell. Such developments would spur an arms race in the region, as fear of future and remembrance of past Japanese aggression spread.

Rather than solely forming a Japan-first, the U.S. needs to find ways to incorporate China, as well as other nations in the region, into a multilateral relationship that would make conflict both undesirable and unrealistic, much as the interdependence of the European Union has done for European nations. However, the cornerstone of such a policy would still maintain the strong U.S.-Japan alliance that has successfully sustained stability in the past. It would be important to build upon an already strong relationship to construct a multilateralism that could incorporate the entire region.