This collection began its life in discussions held in Canberra in August 2001 between the School of Politics of the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy (UNSW @ ADFA) and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies. A number of other scholars and foreign-policy professionals joined the discussions, which were opened by the Australian Foreign Minister, The Honourable Alexander Downer. In the months following those discussions, the contributors revised their essays for publication, taking into account the rapid developments in the world scene.

Much has changed in the field of international relations generally and in Asia-Pacific affairs in particular since August 2001. Above all, the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent 'war on terror' headed by the United States, has compelled analysts of Asia-Pacific security to assess the possible sources and impacts of terrorism upon the region.

At the same time, much has remained the same. The underlying dynamics, the long-term challenges, and the regional repercussions, of relationships between the major powers—which are the focus of this book—are in our view fundamentally unchanged. The threats of terrorism in the region are genuine, but they should not be exaggerated, and nor should they overshadow the continuing efforts by regional players to engage in genuine and fruitful security dialogue.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the revival of North Korea’s nuclear threats, though they have occurred since September 11, continue to be illuminated by the insights and analyses in this volume. For this reason, we have chosen not to shift the emphases from where they fell when it was first developed.

The resulting collection is a tribute to the participants. I have been grateful for their good spirit in the discussions, and for their efforts in contributing to a better understanding of the Asia-Pacific region, and particularly China’s view of the region, and Australia’s role in it. Our views may be diverse, but the discussions and the results were nevertheless rewarding.

I want to record here my thanks to the participants, and to the support staff of my own School, for the help I have received in bringing this work to completion. I am also indebted to the advice and professionalism of the editorial staff of ISEAS in Singapore. Any errors that remain are, of course, my responsibility.

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