Identifications: Answer ONLY 2 IDs: based on readings and class lectures, explain the significance of 2 of the following:

1. Kingdom of Ryukyu/Liu-chi’u
Answer: Modern-day Okinawa, a prefecture of Japan, Ryukyu/Liu-chi’u was more or less independent until 1875. Ryukyu is a paradigmatic loyal tributary state to China. It regularly sent tributary missions to China to perform the kow-tow and pay tribute to the Chinese emperor as the true son of heaven. On the other hand, China regularly sent investiture missions to Ryukyu to invest Ryukyu kings as legitimate rulers, enjoying recognition from the son of heaven. The Ryukyu kings used a Chinese made seal (the last one written in Manchu as well as Chinese characters) symbolizing their recognition by the Chinese emperor. Although a very hierarchical relationship, the Sino-Ryukyu relationship nonetheless represented an exchange of legitimacy based upon mutual recognition. The Satsuma Daimyo in southern Kyushu conquered Ryukyu in the early 1600s. From that time till the Meiji Restoration, Ryukyu was placed in the unique position of paying tribute to Japan as well as China, and acted as a de facto intermediary, facilitating trade between Japan and China.

2. Chiang Kai-shek
Answer: The second significant leader of the Kuomintang (KMT), or Chinese Nationalist Party, after its founder, Sun Yat-sen passed away. Chiang received military training in Japan and later headed the Whampoa Military Academy, training the KMT’s military. He led the KMT campaign that more or less unified China in the late 1920s, defeating, or in some cases absorbing, thousands of warlords in the process. Despite allying with the Soviet Union and using the Soviet Communist party as the model for reorganizing the KMT, Chiang turned against his Chinese Communist party allies, massacring thousands during the white terror of 1927. Chiang continued to pursue the remnants of the Chinese Communist Party, reorganizing under Mao Tse-tung, until Japan invaded China proper in 1937. Fighting Japan as one of the Allies during World War II, he returned to his earlier goal of defeating the Chinese Communists after 1945. Defeated by Mao’s communists by 1949, he and the remnants of the KMT fled to Taiwan, where Chiang ruled as a martial-law dictator till his death in the mid-1970s. His son, Chiang Ching-kuo continued to rule Taiwan until the late 1980s.

3. 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis:
Answer: During Taiwan’s first fully democratic presidential election in 1996, China conducted missile tests in waters surrounding the northern and southern tips of Taiwan, bracketing the island, and disrupting shipping and fishing in the region. China intended to send a deterrent message to Taiwanese voters and the pro-Taiwan independence leaning incumbent president, Lee Teng-hui, to desist from further moves toward independence. China’s missile tests provoked the US to send two aircraft carrier battle-groups to waters off Eastern Taiwan, in an attempt to reaffirm the US commitment to defend Taiwan and deter further Chinese military actions. As a long term consequence, both the US and especially China began planning for the possibility of a direct military conflict between the two over Taiwan.

4. EAEC:
Answer: East Asian Economic Caucus, sometimes also known as EAEG, or East Asian Economic Group: Proposed by then Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohammed in 1990, the EAEC was to include only East Asian nations, but exclude Asia-Pacific nations such as the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the then Soviet Union (Russia). Mahathir conceived of the EAEC as a counter-weight to the emerging North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the EU which was then tightening its level of integration under the Maastricht treaty. He promoted the EAEC with a mix of pan-Asian and anti-western rhetoric. The US responded by calling the proposal “racist,” since it excluded so-called “white” nations. The EAEC clearly defined East Asia as a distinct region rather than as part of a larger Asia-Pacific region. Due to US opposition, Japan failed to officially support the EAEC and it was never established. Consequently, there was no multilateral forum before the late 1990s that only included the East Asian nations and excluded the US. This changed in the late 1990s when the ASEAN Plus Three or APT summit brought together the ASEAN countries plus China, Japan, and South Korea, a membership which perfectly overlaps with the proposed membership of Mahathir’s EAEC. However, because the APT was not promoted with anti-western and pan-Asianist rhetoric, it attracted little attention from the US. The Asian caucus of the Asian-European Summit, ASEM, also brings together the same countries that were proposed for the EAEC, and notably does not include the US.

Essay: Based on readings and class lectures, answer ONLY 1 of the following questions:
1. Describe the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and explain what influence it subsequently had on the development of regional cooperation in East Asia.

Answer: The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, or Dai toa kyouei ken, originated as a Japanese Pan-Asianist concept that advocated the expulsion of European colonies and the white races from East Asia so the region could “freely” develop under the leadership of Japan. This concept was closely connected with the writings of Ishiwara Kanji, a Japanese military historian and Pan-Asianist; the early concept was sometimes known as the Ishiwara line. In some ways this Pan Asianism echoed that of Chinese Nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen, and his famous “Great Asia Policy” speech given in Kobe Japan in 1924, in that Sun saw Japan as a possible source of defense against Western imperialism. Yet, in the same speech Sun warned Japan against following the Western powers in pursuing imperialism. As Japan moved from invading Manchuria in 1931, and then China in 1937, toward expanding in the Southeast Asia and toward war with the US and the UK, the concept became government policy with the proclamation of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1940. Eventually, the sphere came to include not only Japan, but also its occupied and ostensibly independent allies: Manchukuo, the Wang Ching-wei Chinese government, the Philippines, Thailand, and Burma. The leaders of these countries all gathered for the multilateral Greater East Asia Conference that was held in Tokyo in November 1943. Others countries, such as Korea, Singapore, and Indonesia, were not represented as they were ruled directly by Japan and thus did not even enjoy the fiction of independence. The purpose of the Conference and the Co-Prosperity Sphere itself was largely a product of wartime propaganda efforts to win the hearts and minds of local populations and elites, mobilizing them for a liberating struggle against “Western Powers.” In implementation even more than in concept the Co-Prosperity Sphere became increasingly a fig leaf for Japanese domination, the exploitation of East Asia’s human and natural resources, and attempts to Japanize other East Asian nations (e.g. by promoting worship of the Japanese Emperor). The Co-Prosperity Sphere thus came to be seen as an example of hierarchical, unequal, and exploitative regional multilateralism led and dominated by Japan. As such, it cast a long shadow over subsequent attempts at multilateral cooperation in East Asia. Most importantly, it essentially disqualified Japan as a regional leader in post-war Asia, even among countries that like Japan, were aligned with the US. It meant that any Japanese proposal for promoting regional multilateral cooperation tended to be treated with suspicion, and Japanese attempts to
assert regional leadership and promote regional cooperation were seen as efforts to recreate the hierarchical and exploitative relationship of the East Asian Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere. The riots in Southeast Asia against visiting Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, and more generally against perceived Japanese economic dominance and exploitation, and the regional skepticism that initially greeted Japan’s 1991 Nakayama Proposal for creating a regional security dialogue, and skepticism about Japan’s 1997 proposal to create an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF), are three examples of the long-shadow cast by the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

2. In the early 1950s, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru opposed isolating communist China. Yoshida believed that communism was an alien western import and that China would gradually abandon communism if offered the opportunity of profitable economic contacts with capitalist countries. Looking back from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, assess the possible impact of Yoshida’s idea on China and East Asia, had it been tried from the early 1950s, in light of more recent developments.

Answer: Looking back from today, Yoshida’s contention in many ways looks prescient. Yoshida was advocating a policy of economic engagement to wean China off of communism. However, the US, which after a period of internal debate, had decided upon a policy of isolating communist China, refused to trade with China and forced Yoshida to abandon his plans for Japanese economic and diplomatic relations with China. Although China had limited access to western trade as a result of the early establishment of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom (which established relations to help ensure its smooth and continued control of Hong Kong), and later France, China nonetheless remained largely cut off from trade with western countries. This isolation became an additional reason for China to align with the Soviet Union and direct its trade toward the communist bloc. However, following the Sino-Soviet split of the 1960s, President Richard Nixon began the process of normalizing Sino-US relations with his visit to Communist China in 1972. Sino-US normalization would take six more years, but Japan moved quickly to fully normalize relations with China in 1972. By 1979 the US and China finally established diplomatic relations and Japan began extending Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China. These external developments coincided with the death of Mao Tse-tung, the end of the leftist Cultural Revolution, and the coming to power of reformist leader Deng Xiaoping. At the end of the 1970s Deng began market reforms and the concept of market socialism. He established Special Economic Zones, SEZs, along China’s coast that were located in
approximately in the same areas as the old imperialist enclaves of the western powers and Japan. The SEZs became enclaves of western capitalism where western companies could freely invest and operate businesses with limited taxation and little regulation. Gradually these expanded and spread over the length and breadth of China. It is important to remember that Deng’s reforms were only really possible because relations with the US, Japan, and other western countries had been fully normalized. As a counter-factual speculation, we can consider the possibility that had the US, Japan, and its allies not isolated China, Mao and his colleagues would have been willing to establish trade links with capitalist countries and would not have moved in a radical leftist direction. Thanks to US policy, Mao never had this option. If the US had listened to Yoshida, and not isolated China, the PRC might have turned toward market socialism much sooner. On the other hand, so far, market socialism has not led to the collapse of communist rule in China. Nonetheless, China is a more open and freer society than under Mao, and arguably, than any previous ruler in the country’s history of several thousand years.