

Trilateral Dialogue
on Northeast Asian
Security

Cooperation and Collaboration for the Northeast Asian Security Challenges

July 18, 2011

Session 1

Moderator

Fu-Kuo Liu

Presenter

Jaewoo Choo
Chaesung Chun

Discussants

Tuan-Yao Cheng
Seungjoo Lee
Hiroshi Nakanishi

Session 2

Moderator

Chaesung Chun

Presenter

Yoshihide Soeya

Discussants

Ming Lee
Seungjoo Lee
Ken Jinbo

Session 3

Moderator

Yoshihide Soeya

Presenter

Cheng-Yi Lin

Discussants

Jaewoo Choo
Francis Yi-hua Kan
Masayuki Tadokoro

This product presents a policy-oriented summary of the Trilateral Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security.

The East Asia Institute
909 Sampoong B/D
310-68 Euljiro 4-ga
Jung-gu
Seoul 100-786
Republic of Korea

© EAI 2011

www.eai.or.kr

The Trilateral Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security was prepared by three institutions from South Korea, Taiwan and Japan to utilize the track II format of exchanging ideas on regional security issues. On July 4, 2011, scholars and experts from the East Asia Institute (EAI) of Korea, MacArthur Center for Security Studies (MCSS) of Taiwan, and the Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS) of Japan gathered in Taipei and discussed the security challenges in the region derived mainly from the rise of China and the following changes in the U.S.-China relations.

Consisted of three sessions covering the issue-specific area of concern for each country, the Dialogue rendered an opportunity to better understand the current position and the desired future direction presented from the different perspectives. The participants also shared the ideas and visions on the cooperative and collaborative measures to deal with the regional security issues.

The following is a summary of the presentations and discussions by leading scholars and experts from three institutions.

Session 1: The Rise of China and Its Impacts on Northeast Asian Security

The first presentation by Korean participant focused on how to interpret Chinese security intention in the Northeast Asian region. Rather than analyzing the reason or the background of China's behavior, it is better to look into the consequence or the probable end state

of its action to understand Chinese intention. The influence and the limitation of Chinese recent security behaviors shown in the cases of sinking of *Cheonan* and shelling of Yeonpyeong island present four patterns in China's restrained reactions – failure to extend condolence, prompting suspicion on China's good neighbor policy; aversion from security case associated with North Korea; maintaining the cold peace and the status quo in the region; and aggressiveness in employing countermeasures after it finds itself isolated. Professor Choo states that these limitation on Chinese strategic security behaviors leads to security dilemma causing the sense of insecurity of its own, while it has failed to provide an alternative security structure for the region.

In the following presentation by another Korean participant, more elaborated policy suggestions to Seoul under such circumstance were noted. Professor Chun evaluated the differences of China's rise – re-rise of Chinese civilization; soft rise in the field of soft power; post-Westphalian rise with networked governance; and engaged rise with global and regional structures. Then he proposed the future China strategy that South Korea should rightly theorize pre-modern history and experiences; set the standards for regional leadership, overcoming the pressure on soft balancing; promote civil society networks; and manage the U.S.-China relations with the role of middle power initiatives. Strategy of hedging is too situation-dependent, and strategy of engagement and cooperation than that of balancing would suit South Korea better. Focus

on the complex and networked regional architecture is also important.

The Rise of China The discussion began with the warning that we should be careful in using the expression, the “rise” of China. This is a new challenge we face, a global super power that is still growing, but China seems not ready to take international responsibility as a global power because it is mainly concentrating on the domestic issues. China does not yet have the power or the vision to lead the region or to organize the region. So the middle power like Korea, Taiwan and Japan might have something to contribute.

Still, the rise of China has been the most significant change with full-dimension influence, and it brought about three challenges: strategic divergence between security and economy; rise of geopolitics in Asia, as the gravity of geopolitics is moving toward China again as American presence in Asia weakened; challenge to American alliance system. It is a transitional period for Northeast Asia security and under such environment, there is a strong need to establish a regional mechanism to consult and cooperate particularly in security issues.

From Japan’s perspective, growth in economic relations with China is given but Tokyo should reconsider the constraints on dealing with the pending security situation. Strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance as well as broadening the security relations with the other states such as Korea and/or Taiwan is also discussed domestically. In Japanese interpretation on Chinese security behavior, there are four possible hypothesis: China becoming economic power leading to it becoming a hegemon, recent position of China towards North Korea would be one case; displacement theory of domestic tension as nationalist agenda raises domestic conflicts; rivalry

theory in the process of succession from Hu to Xi; and weakening of the civilian control of Chinese military.

Regional Security Architecture The rise of China and rapidly shifting situation do pose limitations on the behaviors of middle and small powers so they need to draw up more sophisticated and complex strategy. They need to find a room not to stay stuck between the great powers, so institutionalized cooperation among the middle and small powers is required. In East Asia, there is a clear discrepancy and divergence in security and economic architecture and East Asian states’ interest on the regional integration is growing while most of them are dependent on China particularly after the financial crisis. Against this backdrop, FTAs could play a crucial role though it is an economic tool, it could bring about political achievement to the related parties. Lining economic and political nexus is one of the Chinese strategies as well.

The basic security architecture has not changed much since the Cold War in Northeast Asia. However, it is getting loose since the U.S. influence has been weakened, not any more dominant as it was before, since it is concentrating on the war on terrorism. Due to its domestic and financial problem, it would be difficult for the U.S. to be involved into the regional issues of Asia. The U.S. perception on the dominance in the region is different what we the regional actors might think. This is a critical juncture where the great powers compete with each other in the region for the dominance, and the middle powers are striving to develop their own roles and establish regional architecture.

Regional strategic environment and impact of China on it is very complicated. Chinese foreign policy goal of growing peacefully was not realized as expected. While trading

with mainland China, Taiwan also is going through careful consideration on security strategy dealing with the rise of China. Last year's Chinese behavior is only temporary and as they grow more dominant, their behavior could become more assertive in the future. So can we shape Chinese behavior as middle powers? Can we have impact on the Chinese public as they are more open now than ever? What is the alternative to keep China developing as a stable power? There are the questions to consider when designing a common Asian strategy.

Session 2: Changing U.S.-China Relations and Japan's Response

Professor Soeya presented on the Japan's position in the midst of the circumstance where the rise of China entails a mix of two scenarios – China seeking an alternative (China-centered) international order and China staying within the liberal international order. In spite of discourses on an eventual clash between the United States and China, the two countries will be cooperative for strategic coexistence. In this context, Japan is a “middle power” that integrates alliance with the U.S. and security cooperation with regional countries in face of China's rise and changing U.S.-China relations. Notably, security ties will increase between Japan and South Korea, especially in the domain of non-traditional security cooperation. Taiwan is a natural partner to Japan and South Korea in “middle power” security cooperation and Korea would play an important role in bringing Japan-Taiwan cooperation in a trilateral context.

Defining the U.S.-China Relations Whether it is a power shift or transition has been a key question in defining the U.S.-China rela-

tions. The implications rise of China has are interpreted in many ways like peaceful and harmonious rise, eventual compliance with liberal international order, or G2 rivalry. After analyzing the economic growth in GDP and military expenditure projection on future China, it seems that middle powers' collaboration might be able to balance against the rise of China. Not just an autonomous diplomacy, but collective hard and soft balancing through innovative coordination with the other middle powers is required. Japan's emphasis on the more dynamic and operational self-defense force and high deterrence capability could contribute as well.

China has been cautious in pursuing its national interest – harmonious world: consistent peace and reciprocal prosperity. It also promotes grass-root participation to the international relations, calling it the democratization of international relations.

In addition, liberal international order has been firmly established for many years with the supports from many major powers so China cannot fundamentally change it, let alone single-handedly modify it. No matter how powerful China would be in the future, middle power cooperation will be able to pose strong constraints to Chinese behavior. The most realist objective China could achieve would be to become a benign regional hegemon. In that case, practical and realistic China's interest would be to minimize the U.S. influence in the region.

For example, Taiwan issue, Tibet issue, trade, technology, treatment of dissidents, and sense of external threats are the issues that the U.S. and China could cooperate since both sides understand that it is better to avoid disputes between the two.

On the other hand, there was also a cautions voice among the discussants about the

rise of China. Basic assumption of this dialogue is the rise of China but we need to be more flexible on the future projection. If there would be some technology innovation in the production sector, it would be in the U.S., not China. Demographic projection in East Asia is peculiar and the aging of the population is rapidly ongoing. By assuming certain type of future, we tend to limit the behavior of today, so when projecting the future of China's growth, we should also think about the challenges China now faces.

Middle Power Strategy Middle power networking strategy is needed and there should be pre-conditions set for the middle power diplomacy to be more workable. Domestic political stability matters and within the middle powers, issue priorities should be coordinated. Geographical scope of regional cooperation must be also agreed upon. In order to come up with the effective middle power diplomacy, sophisticated strategy is required such as collaboration, soft balancing, or deterrence, and these three are not mutually exclusive.

Under the circumstance, Japan's role should be more than that of middle power and lead the other regional actors to cooperate in dealing with the issue of the rise of China. Certain initiative for the security coordination needs to be taken and Japanese willingness to propose a future vision is very much anticipated.

Cooperation in crisis management such as dealing with North Korea's regime change is another issue area of cooperation in terms of preparing for the contingency scenario. Military conflicts including maritime disputes in the region, changes of political leadership, or/and economic crisis could be considered as issues for security cooperation among the middle powers as well.

Session 3: U.S.-China Relations and the Cross-Strait Prospects

The United States and China maintain a comprehensive and complex relationship, especially in military relations. One of the most critical issues is U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Beijing denounces the Taiwan Relations Act while Taipei criticizes China's missile deployment in the coastal areas. Since 2008, however, tensions between Taiwan and China eased as negotiations on military confidence-building measures and the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) were concluded. In the mood towards rapprochement, the U.S. is caught in a dilemma. Improved Cross-Strait relations involve risks, including regional instability and threat to American security. The U.S. finds fewer roles for it to play and is concerned over the possible ramifications of arms sales to Taiwan.

Developments in the Cross-Strait Economic Relations Since the Kuomintang (KMT) came to power in 2008, cross-strait relations has been significantly eased as incoming Chinese tourists and investment to the island greatly benefited Taiwan economy. Furthermore, in order to boost the chances of reelection for President Ma Ying-jeou, whose China policy has quickened the pace of rapprochement with China, Beijing is likely to reduce the number of missiles targeting Taiwan. Increase in economic interdependence also contributed to the security and military field as China encourages meetings of retired generals of both sides of the strait to deal with topics related to military confidence building measures (CBMS).

Upcoming Presidential Election and its impact on the Cross-Strait Détente Since domestic economic benefit, particularly of the

private business increased massively in the recent days, it is difficult for any administration to underestimate the vitality of economic cooperation between mainland China and Taiwan. The Cross-Strait détente is not reversible no matter which party comes to power since it has been significantly beneficial and publicly supported. Even the fear of Chinese military option toward Taiwan could be eliminated by keeping the trend of increasing the exchanges across the strait.

Unlike in the inter-Korean relations where China and the U.S. are the major variables, in the cross-strait relations, the one external variable is the U.S. While the U.S. influence in Taiwan decreases following the pressure from China, Washington is being cautious in endorsing the reconciliation between China and Taiwan. Sino-U.S. relations and those of the cross-strait, the two relations are not militarily exclusive. One Taiwan discussant suggested that the above-mentioned peace process of the cross-strait relations could provide an example to pacify growing China.

The overall conclusion of the Trilateral Dialogue was that spontaneous consultations among middle powers on strategic choices for regional security are crucial. Now the remaining issues for the future discussion are: defining of middle power since it is not power-based concept but rather a strategy-based concept; how to design middle power security architecture in the region; political economic issues concerning the relations with China; viability question on the collective action among middle powers and their division of roles; probable decline of the U.S.; usefulness of Chinese economic power as a policy measure toward the other regional powers; and what the strategies of the other middle powers such as India and Australia are. ■

List of Participants

- CHAN Mignonne Man-jung, Executive Director of the Chinese Taipei APEC Study Center
- CHANG Chung-Young, Professor of Department of Public Affairs, Fo Guang University
- CHENG Tuan-Yao, Research Fellow of the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University
- CHOO Jaewoo, Professor of Department of Chinese Studies, Kyung Hee University
- CHUN Chaesung, Professor of International Relations, Seoul National University / Chair of MacArthur Asia Security Initiative Research Center, East Asia Institute
- FAN Hou-Lou, Section Chief of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China
- JINBO Ken, Professor of Policy Management, Keio University
- KAN Francis Yi-hua, Associate Research Fellow of the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University
- LEE Ming, Professor of Department of Diplomacy, National Chengchi University
- LEE Seungjoo, Professor of Department of Political Science and International Relations, Chung-Ang University
- LIN Cheng-Yi, Research Fellow of the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica
- Capt. LIN Laurence, Instructor of Naval Command & Staff College, National Defense University
- LIN Wei-Yang, Deputy Chief on Home Assignment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China
- LIU Fu-Kuo, Research Fellow of the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University / Chief Executive

Director of MacArthur Center for Security Studies, National Chengchi University

NAKANISHI Hiroshi, Professor of Graduate School of Law, Kyoto University

SHEN Ming-Shih, Associate Research Fellow of Graduate Institute of Strategic Studies, National Defense University

SOEYA Yoshihide, Director of Institute of East Asian Studies / Professor of Keio University

SUNG Shen-Wu, Section Chief of the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China

TADOKORO Masayuki, Professor of Law, Keio University

TSAO Hsiung-Yuan, Chief of Graduate Institute of Strategic Studies, National Defense University

TZEN Louis Wen-Hua, Chairman of the Prospect Foundation

YANG Yu-Ling, Assistant Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China

YEN Tiehlin, Deputy Executive Director of MacArthur Center for Security Studies, National Chengchi University