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FOSTERING PEACE AND MANAGING SECURITY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

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Fostering Peace and Managing Security in the Asia Pacific*

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I. Northeast Asian Paradox

1. Organization Gap

- Northeast Asia, consisting of the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States, has featured a distinct paradox that economic integration was growing but political cooperation remained stagnant for over three decades.
- Indeed, the region's political cooperation has traditionally lacked formal, multilateral, and regionally exclusive institutions, producing a pronounced "organization gap" compared with Europe, the Americas, Africa, and even the Gulf.

2. Importance of Multilateralism

- We need to explore the ways to construct a peace and security mechanism in Northeast Asia from an eclectic perspective that takes both realism and historical institutionalism as the epistemological basis.
- The precondition for formal institutions is great power balance. Such balance has never been enduringly present in Northeast Asia, due to the complicated geopolitical relationships among Russia, China, Japan, and the United States, making it difficult for regional organizations to emerge. The existence of a credible balancer provides a foundation for the emergence and endurance of regional organizations. This means that "U.S. factor" should be considered.
- Historical institutionalism focuses on the determining role of preexisting organizational structures. New institutions are a function of prior institutional settings. If we follow the suggestion from historical institutionalists, it is necessary to keep the Six Party Talks moving

forward so that its setting may become the foundation of a Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism in the future.

3. Five Possible Orders

- When great powers play a role in a region, one of five possible orders is likely: hegemony, balance of power, concert, collective security, or a pluralistic security community.
- However, Northeast Asia is the region most likely to see a hybrid of hegemonic (or U.S.-led) balance of power and a concert, while it depends ultimately on the U.S.-China relationship.
- For now, it is rather premature to talk about feasibility of a pluralistic security community or collective security in Northeast Asia.
- A hegemonic balance of power system is one in which a single great power plays a leading role managing regional security relations and the great power may adopt a "balancer approach." The United States is most likely to fit this role.
- In order to move toward a concert, we also need to create and develop a cooperative security mechanism that starts from a multilateral security dialogue that includes both great and small powers in the region.
- Against this backdrop, leadership role of the United States needs to be maintained, a permanent peace regime should be established, and multilateral security cooperation should be institutionalized for a stable and peaceful Northeast Asia.

II. Strategic Competition in the Asia Pacific

1. US-China Competition for Maritime Supremacy

- US-China strategic rivalry is most conspicuous in the area of maritime strategy. China has steadily modernized and reformed its military by developing stealth fighter jets, strengthening naval capabilities centered on nuclear-powered submarines, and building anti-ship missiles. The issue of maritime supremacy is likely to touch off intense competition between the United States and China.
- The two countries had been in conflict over the Pacific Ocean, and it was expressed quite vividly to the outside world since the ARF meeting in

Hanoion July 23, 2010. In a speech on July 23, US Secretary of State Clinton noted that "resolving the territorial disputes in the South China Sea was the key to the stability of the region." On July 25, she even argued, "The United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and open access to Asia's maritime commons." In short, the message was: inasmuch as the South China Sea is a SLOC for US oil transportation, the United States will be actively involved in the region.

- Feeling threatened, China reacted immediately. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi then warned the United States "not to turn the South China Sea, an area under territorial dispute, into an international issue."

2. South China Sea and Competition for Resources

- The main causes of growing tensions are the rising interest in surveying and exploiting the South China Sea's oil and gas deposits, intensified competition for fish as stocks in close proximity to coastlines are depleted, and growing nationalistic pressures on governments to defend their territorial and maritime claims.
- China: With global energy demand rising, major consumers such as China are seeking new sources to satisfy their expanding economies. In 2009, China became the second largest consumer of oil after the United States, and its consumption is likely to double by 2030, which would make it the world's largest oil consumer. In 2010, it imported 52 percent of its oil from the Middle East, and Saudi Arabia and Angola together accounted for 66 percent of its oil imports. China has been diversifying its energy supplies to reduce this dependence upon imported oil and has sought to increase offshore production around the Pearl River basin and the South China Sea.
- Not only China but also Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei all assert overlapping claims over land features and adjacent waters in the sea, thereby heightening diplomatic tensions and potentially laying the foundation for a future military conflict.
- US: The United States has a great deal at stake in the South China Sea. It is one of the world's primary trade arteries, with half of the world's merchant fleet by tonnage sailing through those sea-lanes each year. The region also contains an abundance of fish and potentially contains

significant quantities of oil and gas resources strategically located near large energy-consuming countries. In July 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called for “a collaborative diplomatic process by all claimants for resolving the various territorial disputes without coercion.” She stated that the United States opposes the use or threat of force by any claimant and insists on unimpeded commerce, freedom of navigation, and open access to Asia’s maritime commons.

- India: Meanwhile, India has become involved as an external player, which complicates the situation. China may have leverage over the ASEAN countries because of its size and proximity, but India has the status and power to resist China. India, moreover, harbors resentment against China for its support of Pakistan and its claims along the countries’ common border that will make it more difficult for the Chinese to manage. India’s ties with Vietnam date back to the time of Indira Gandhi, whose government recognized the Vietnamese-sponsored government in Cambodia in 1984. Many in India regard Vietnam as an ally against China.

3. Sino-Japanese Competition

- China believes it has overtaken Japan not just in terms of GDP but national power.
- Japan tries to deal with the rise of China through “external balancing” (strengthening its security relationship with U.S., Australia, and India) and “internal balancing” that increases its defense expenditure.

III. Fostering Peace and Managing Security in the Asia Pacific

1. Let US Play a Strategic Balancer

- To those who worry about upholding the balance of power in Northeast Asia, the United States stands out more sharply than ever as the only truly indispensable “balancer.”
- Thus, the United States should refrain from aggravating its relations with Japan and China in order to prevent them from collaborating together in an anti-U.S. move. But it also should refrain from provoking distrust between them because such distrust may induce them into escalating an arms race, thereby threatening the stability of the region.

- In order to check such arms races, the United States is required to continuously maintain a security umbrella for Japan. This is a *raison d'être* of the U.S.-Japan security alliance.
2. Let Alliance and Multilateral Cooperation Coexist in Northeast Asia
- In Northeast Asia, bilateral security arrangements will remain the backbone of Northeast Asian security for a considerable period of time. This means a strategic thinking based on realism is still necessary in order to foster the soil for multilateral security cooperation.
 - Despite the strategic uncertainty and prevailing bilateralism, Northeast Asia needs to search for such a multilateral setting as a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism (NEAPSM). In this light, we need to keep the Six Party Talks alive since we will utilize existing norms and procedures within the Six Party Talks to deal with new problems rather than create new ones in the future.
 - We need to create an equilibrium in which bilateral security arrangements coexist with NEAPSM like Europe where NATO and OSCE coexist in a peaceful manner.
3. Let the Moment of Truth Come in the North Korean Nuke Problem
- The North Korean nuclear problem is approaching the moment of truth. Since the “pivot to Asia” was made in 2012, the Obama administration has been focusing its strategy on checking against China particularly in the East China Sea and South China Sea where China’s naval activities are growing. This policy, however, could complicate the North Korean nuclear problem which requires cooperation from China for solution and the United States will then have no other options but to continue its “passive” policy of “strategic patience” vis-à-vis North Korea.
 - Some experts argue we need to lower the threshold for SPT so that North Korea may come to SPT as soon as possible. We could delete one or two “pre-steps” for the resumption of SPT, but North Korea is unlikely to accept it unless the suspension of nuclear programs is deleted from the list of pre-steps. North Korea must be interested in making us purchase the same horse for the third time. We bought the horse for the first time through the Geneva Agreed Framework in 1994 and for second time through the February 13 Agreement in 2003.
 - Once SPT is resumed, North Korea will be demanding political and economic benefits in return for suspending a 5 MW nuclear reactor in *Yongbyun* which appears to be restarted since August 2013. By using

“salami tactics” North Korea will demand separate reciprocal benefits in return for suspending its uranium enrichment programs let alone for missile and nuclear test moratorium.

- Against this backdrop, we could propose a strategic deal to see if North Korea’s Kim Jong-un regime is sincerely interested in denuclearization. Terms of the deal are as follows: If North Korea takes three pre-steps including missile and nuclear test moratorium; bringing IAEA inspectors back in *Yongbyun*; and suspending all nuclear programs, five other parties of SPT will reduce economic sanctions through the consultation with the UN Security Council and four concerned parties – US, China, South and North Korea – will start a “peace forum” as soon as possible to discuss how to replace the armistice agreement with the peace agreement to put a legal end to the Korean War.
- If North Korea rejects this proposal and chooses the path of going nuclear by conducting a fourth nuclear test, it will have to face tougher sanctions. Then, we have to make a bottom-up review of our North Korea policy to decide if we still need to engage North Korea or contain North Korea to the extent that its regime survival is seriously threatened.
- SPT constitutes the place in which each party is fully committed to diplomatic resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem. That diplomacy, however, needs to be engineered so that North Korea may not be tempted to buy time for its own sake.
- In this sense, the elements of “coercive diplomacy” should be considered in policy consultation processes among the concerned parties. For “coercive diplomacy” to work, it is necessary for the coercer to set clear objectives and to show strong leadership so that its message may not be disjointed. The message is that the United States is seeking both denuclearization and non-proliferation and that it would not allow North Korea to become a nuclear power at any cost. The United States should make every effort to get this message to be shared by its allies and friends.

4. Expedite ADMM-Plus

- The inaugural meeting of the Asian Defense Minister Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) – 10 ASEAN countries, Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States – was held in 2010 in Hanoi. Its proposed focus areas include HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief), military medicine, maritime security, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism.

- The main focus over the past few years has been made on HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) and military medicine. There was an unprecedented military exercise in June 2013 in Brunei involving seven ships, fifteen helicopters and more than three thousand personnel from 18 different countries. It made a big progress in the sense that ships and forces from Japan, China, Singapore, the U.S., Vietnam and India worked together and showed a potential of ADMM-Plus to develop into a meaningful confidence-building mechanism.
- Now, they should move to the area of maritime security which is becoming more contested particularly in East China Sea and South China Sea. They could start with an exchange of information on commercial shipping and move on to information on naval ships.

5. Promote Asia Pacific Regionalism, not East Asian Regionalism

- US has joined EAS although she prefers hub-and-spokes approach. In this vein, East Asian regionalism should not center on the ASEAN+3 only – it must be broadened to Asia-Pacific regionalism that included US, Australia, New Zealand, and India.
- In this light, the EAS is now more than a simple expansion or reorganization of the ASEAN+3—one can say it has been upgraded to a global framework for political and security discussions in which the world's four great powers the United States, China, Japan, and Russia, participate. The international political implications of US participation in the EAS, in particular, are quite significant. This is the first time the United States is taking part in a multilateral framework that it did not initiate.

6. Explore Minilateralism

- Bearing regionalism in mind, it is possible for CJK(China-Japan-Korea) and ACJ(America-China-Japan) to attempt to launch trilateral cooperation on the reasoning that only when major countries strengthen cooperation with one another, can they expand regional cooperation.
- In particular, ACJ could explore a trilateral consultation mechanism for the sake of reducing tension, building trust, and envisioning the trilateral relationship. For ACJ trilateral to be established, Japan needs to explain the end state of her pursuit of collective self-defense so that China may not feel US and Japan ganging up against China.

- US is promoting AJK(America-Japan-Korea) trilateral cooperation to address the North Korean issue, but one caveat is that AJK should be confined to North Korea, avoiding the image that AJK is a virtual alliance against China.

IV. Conclusion

- There are significant differences between the security environments in Europe and Asia. Northeast Asia is faced with a dual challenge, stemming from existing traditional security threats as well as new ones.
- Although it might be premature to model the OSCE process and experience directly in Northeast Asia, the OSCE experience provides a useful lesson for addressing the region's dual challenges. In particular, the OSCE's experience with the CSBM regime could serve as an important reference, *mutatis mutandis*, for building upon multilateral dialogue and mutual trust, bearing in mind the unique situation in Northeast Asia.
- Northeast Asia should make extra efforts to enhance international cooperation on addressing new security threats, including terrorism, trafficking in human beings and natural disasters. South Korea's proposal of NAPCI (Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative) can serve these purposes. In that regard, the role of OSCE missions and other field activities in managing conflict could serve as a valuable reference for the region.
- The need for enhanced cooperation between the OSCE and the ARF should also be emphasized. To achieve that goal, it can be suggested that a conference of the OSCE and the ARF should be held and that in that context some Track II efforts should be made to hold a Euro Atlantic and Northeast Asia meeting to address common issues and common interests.
- Additionally, the idea of pursuing sub-regional dialogue on the occasion of a region-wide meeting such as the ARF can be suggested. But, all of these ideas and efforts should be implemented with the sense of realism.

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