China-ROK-Japan-U.S. Quadrilateral Dialogue: Security, Interests, and Identity in the 21st Century

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Executive Summary

This conference assembled scholars from China, South Korea, Japan, and the U.S. to discuss influences on regional security relations with specific attention given to the role of national identity in the formation of these relationships. Also addressed were the issues related to regional security architecture including the impact the Six- Party Talks and the way the U.S. alliances have been adapted to the current regional security environment.

Representatives from the four countries expressed a range of views regarding the important security issues in the region. While it remains focused on economic development, China also faces internal threats of separatism and extremism. At the same time, China's efforts to defend its sovereignty appears aggressive to its neighbors. Japan's immediate concern stems from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, while longer term it is sees China's military expansion, lack of transparency, and its increasing assertiveness as a potential threat to regional security. South Korea remains threatened by the North and concerned about territorial disputes and unresolved history with Japan. The U.S. is focused on the economic dimension and wants good relations with Japan and China. However, there is a concern that China's growth creates insecurity among their neighbors. The U.S. strategy is to ensure access to the region through bilateral mechanisms, which it sees as best suited to address regional security problems. Participants generally agreed that North Korea represents the greatest current security challenge, although there was less agreement regarding the best solutions to resolving the issue.

Identity as a component of national security policy and its impact on security cooperation in the region was a main theme of the conference and much of the discussion focused on surveys conducted among policy elite in South Korea, Japan, and China. Surveys in South Korea indicated a belief that the country should play a greater role in international and regional affairs due to recent economic and political accomplishments. While there is the perception that it still relies on the U.S. to deal with international issues, there is a growing recognition in South Korea that it also wants to further improve ties to China. Younger South Koreans view economic security as their main concern while the older generation remains largely focused on the threat from North Korea. South Koreans generally do not see Japan as an enemy, but agree that Japan should acknowledge historical wrongdoings and develop closer relations.

Japan's identity was characterized as being confused and contested, but self confident. While Japanese consider the U.S. to be its most important security partner, there are differences of opinion regarding the two countries interests. Japanese want to be more self-reliant within the alliance and build stronger ties to Asia, especially South Korea. They tend to blame South Koreans for the persistence of poor relations between the two countries.

In surveys conducted in China, results indicated that Chinese tend to see values and identity as less relevant to policy decisions and believe China should play a larger role in internationally. U.S. and China share similar interests, but also view each other as a potential threat. Japan and South Korea are not seen as a major factor in Chinese thinking. Chinese do not seek radical change in international order, and consider themselves as part of the developing world.

A difference between Chinese and U.S. perspectives on leadership emerged among discussants with Chinese expressing little interest in accepting a leadership role in global issues, at least in the traditional Western sense of the word. Others saw the Chinese perspective as either a tactical ploy to avoid taking responsibility for outcomes or simply a different perception of how best to demonstrate leadership in regional affairs. One conclusion was that all parties should remain sensitive to these different perceptions and adjust expectations accordingly.

Political change has had a major influence on identity and foreign policy. For South Koreans, there was a sense of continuity in foreign policy despite the rather significant shift in political perspective following the election of Lee Myung-bak. South Koreans see the need for closer relations with both U.S. and China, but are also worried about Chinese competition as they promote reciprocity with North Korea. Politics in Japan has led to a lack of confidence in the current government. With a graying population and persistent problems with a growing debt, Japanese see the need for a more proactive foreign policy to shape the region and blunt the emergence of dangerous trends. Chinese participants saw limited influence from culture, values, identity, or its political system on foreign policy decisions. Their focus was on the need for the international community to accept China's rise, which they felt was being distorted by the western media's portrayal of China as destabilizing to the region. Instead, the media should focus instead on China's intentions.

The Six-Party Talks have had and will continue to have an important influence on regional security relations and conference participants expressed a wide range of views on how to move the process forward. While there is a great deal of skepticism that North Korea will be willing to give up its nuclear capabilities, China remains reluctant to pressure North Korea because it sees the need to sustain a sense of trust. U.S. "hostile policy" is seen as a significant impediment. However, there was discussion that if North Korea does not return to the Six-Party Talks, the other five should discuss a strategy to deal with the DPRK. There was also general agreement that others should work to convince the North that missiles and nuclear weapons will not assure its security. On the other hand, several asserted that sanctions will not work and that in the short term a carefully managed containment policy would be a better solution.

As security relations in Northeast Asia shift, the alliance relations between the U.S. and its allies have adapted. While China recognizes the historical importance of the alliances, it sees them as an impediment to regional cooperation. The U.S. sees them as serving four functions: to limit the need for internal balancing, to ensure a greater sense

of security, to provide stability in the region, and encourage regional cooperation beyond the context of the alliances.

The conference concluded with a discussion on regional security architecture. There were recommendations to promote regional security, including extension of U.S. alliance networks, promoting democracy, expanding the Six-Party Talks, promoting ASEAN model of non-interference, and functional cooperation. The biggest challenge in any of these approaches would be to integrate new members into the system. Participants acknowledged the importance of reaching better understanding of each other's concerns towards promoting security architecture. Quadrilateral meeting such as this one are useful because a nation can hear all perspectives and align interests and responses.

China-ROK-Japan-U.S. Quadrilateral Dialogue
"Security, Interests, and Identity in the 21st Century"
Conference Report

Few regions pose as many security challenges and opportunities as does Northeast Asia. Longstanding historical enmities and ideological differences are daunting obstacles to cooperation. Yet the growing recognition of shared security concerns has stimulated the emergence of a framework – still skeletal – for diplomatic cooperation. Integral to the success of this emerging architecture is coordination among the principal nations of Northeast Asia – the United States, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. To better understand those challenges and to explore the potential of that quadrilateral relationship, the Pacific Forum CSIS, with the Shanghai Institutes of International Studies, the CNA Corp, and the Institute for Defense Analyses brought together more than three dozen senior experts from the four countries and more than two dozen Young Leaders for two days of intense, off-the-record discussions on "security, interests, and identity in the 21st century." This report attempts to capture the highlights of that conversation, without purporting to be a consensus document.

Security Perceptions in Northeast Asia

The meeting began with a comparative assessment of security perceptions in Northeast Asia. Wang Fan (*Foreign Affairs College*) focused on sources of misunderstanding between the U.S. and North Korea. For Wang, those two countries are the key players in the region and they are engaged in a psychological struggle. The chief obstacle to the development of a working relationship between them is a lack of trust and the failure of the two sides to understand each other. The U.S. sees North Korea as evil and seeks to overthrow the regime in Pyongyang. Washington demands that Pyongyang give up its nuclear weapons but it refuses to provide security guarantees in return. For Wang, as long as the U.S. considers North Korea to be "evil," then North Korea needs its nuclear weapons. At the same time, Pyongyang considers itself to be besieged. It wants equal status with and security guarantees from the U.S. Simply put, both sides see the other as the enemy.

Fortunately, both countries seek stability, so both prefer engagement. A long-term solution, however, requires recognition of both sides' priorities and addressing the real issues – the two countries' perceptions – rather than "mere" technological issues.

Nishihara Masashi (*Research Institute of Peace and Security*) identified the major threats to Japan's national security as North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, along with its calculated recklessness; China's military expansion, its lack of nuclear transparency, growing economic power, increased confidence and assertiveness, and the territorial disputes it has with Japan; and Russia. He sees South Korea as an "ally in practice" but its navy plans are troubling, especially given the two countries' disputes over territory and history. Fortunately, there are growing mil-mil relations between the two Northeast Asian neighbors.

Nishihara noted that these security concerns have "significantly discouraged" regional cooperation, especially when dealing with North Korea. Nonetheless, he sees greater receptivity in Japan to multilateralism when it comes to security efforts, especially trilateral cooperation. The Trilateral Cooperation and Oversight Group (TCOG) was effective in coordinating Japan, the U.S., and South Korea, and there is growing enthusiasm for Japan, China, ROK cooperation too, although that process is still young.

Koo Bon-hak (*Hallym Institute of Advanced International Studies*) shared many of the same concerns. His list of issues includes North Korea, territorial disputes and unresolved history issues, the rise of China, and concomitant questions about U.S. leadership in the region. He conceptualized security perceptions on three levels: the global, which is witnessing an erosion of U.S. power and is forcing Washington toward greater reliance on regional mechanisms; the regional, which is characterized by both cooperation and competition – especially with China – at the bilateral and multilateral levels; and the peninsular level, which is dominated by fears of North Korean misbehavior and fear of abandonment by or decoupling from the U.S. From his perspective, the region needs a multilateral mechanism to engage all parties, especially North Korea, and one that would make Pyongyang a responsible stakeholder.

Michael McDevitt (*CNA*) echoed Koo's concern about U.S. commitment to the region, but he argued Defense Secretary Robert Gates addressed that issue in his speech at the 2008 Shangri-La Dialogue. McDevitt was the first speaker to focus on the economic dimension of the security challenge: the global crisis reinforces the belief that Asia is the economic engine of the world and that puts a premium on good relations between the U.S. and China and Japan.

At the same time, he worried about the rise of China and its strategic impact on the region. China's growing strength cuts across all elements of national power and its efforts to protect its national assets are creating insecurity for neighbors. McDevitt highlighted the competing strategic concepts of the U.S. and China: Beijing seeks to deny access to adversaries in the event of a conflict while Washington's strategy is based on access to the region. The result is "a long-term capabilities competition" between the U.S. and the PRC. Fortunately, this competition has been dampened by growing stability across the Taiwan Strait. Relations between the mainland and Taiwan are on a positive trajectory which reduces tensions between the U.S. and China; McDevitt warned that U.S. arms sales to Taipei could reverse recent positive developments.

Like other speakers, McDevitt sees North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons as the region's most serious and potentially destabilizing problem. While he has little faith that the Six-Party Talks (6PT) will fix this issue, he differed from Wang by asserting that most observers see China playing a key role in resolving this situation.

The failure of the 6PT casts a long shadow over the prospects for cooperative security in Northeast Asia. McDevitt believes this will reinforce the belief that bilateral

mechanisms are best suited to the region's security problems. At the same time, however, he argued that the crisis with North Korea and the failure of multilateralism will convince regional governments of the essential role of the U.S. in dealing with such issues.

As was evident from the presentations and the subsequent discussion, there is broad agreement on the threats these countries face. There may be differences among the priority afforded particular threats, but for the most part, regional governments acknowledge the same concerns. Participants also agreed that, with the exception of North Korea, regional trends are positive and there is more security cooperation than before, and that is a promising development.

There is one exception. Participants differed on whether China itself constitutes a threat to the regional security order. Chinese participants insisted that their country's rise is not an "inherent threat," although some of them conceded that Chinese behavior would determine whether the country is considered a danger by its neighbors. Chinese speakers insisted that their nation was focused on economic development, which demands a peaceful external environment. Moreover, several noted that their country faces internal threats such as separatism and extremism; other countries do not.

China's concern with internal threats overlaps with the more conventional concerns of other nations when discussion turns to Taiwan – an issue that is seen by Beijing as an internal issue while other countries consider it an international issue. Several pointed out that China's preparations for a Taiwan contingency look to neighbors like preparations for conflict with them: capabilities to deal with Taiwan can also be used in territorial disputes in the South China Sea. What Chinese consider to be moves to defend its territory look aggressive to its neighbors.

Chinese speakers acknowledged that China's development will yield a stronger and more powerful nation, one with a greater influence on the regional and global order. A Chinese participant explained that should not be a bad thing: historically the region has been stable when China was strong. The question that hung over the discussion was, "what kind of international order does China prefer and how will it differ from the current one?" There were no direct answers. A Japanese speaker pointed out that China's rise is facilitating cooperation among other nations – that implies, at least, a shared sense that China's growing power threatens existing interests. A Korean speaker shared that opinion, noting it was Chinese assertiveness not just its expanding military budget that is alarming. At a minimum, non-Chinese speakers urged China to be more transparent to give its neighbors a better sense of Chinese intentions and capabilities.

Concomitant to China's rise is a sense that U.S. influence in Asia is diminishing. A Korean participant noted that U.S. moral legitimacy and credibility have been badly damaged in recent years. A Japanese speaker added that Washington has been distracted by two wars. One Chinese speaker noted that he could not foresee an end to Pax Americana for at least two or three decades. Thus, those two nations, along with others, should be developing habits of cooperation and mechanisms to handle shared concerns. To do that, suggested one U.S. participant, governments should focus on out-of-area

issues and nontraditional security issues, such as humanitarian assistance-disaster relief, energy security, and climate change.

Identity, National Security Policy, and Prospects for Multilateral Cooperation

The second session turned to the theme of this conference, the impact of identity on national security policy and the prospects for multilateral cooperation. Brad Glosserman (*Pacific Forum CSIS*) and Scott Snyder (*Pacific Forum CSIS/Asia Foundation*) provided a summary of their research, which explored changing conceptions of national identity in Japan and South Korea and its implications for those countries' alliances with the U.S. (For more, see "Confidence and Confusion: National Identity and Security Alliances in Northeast Asia," Pacific Forum CSIS *Issues & Insights*, Vol. 8 No. 16, Sept. 2008).

The key findings for South Korea are:

1. There is a broad convergence across the political spectrum in Korea that the country's economic and political accomplishments during the past two decades have positioned the country to play a greater role in international and regional affairs. Koreans are self-confident and proud of their economic modernization and democratization and believe their country should play a more active role in world affairs.

2. Ideological divisions that existed in Korea a few years ago have dissipated and have been replaced by a consensus desire to maintain the alliance with the United States as a foundation for dealing with other international issues. South Koreans want the U.S. to show respect and appreciation for Korea as a close partner. The top national priority among our survey participants is strengthening ties with the U.S.; normalizing relations with the DPRK comes second; improving ties with China is a distant third.

3. The foundation of the alliance with the U.S. is strong and deep. Nearly half (43 percent) of survey respondents said that U.S. interests are most similar to those of South Korea; 35 percent said the two countries' values are most similar. Eighty percent said the U.S. is the ROK's most important security partner; a similar number agree that the alliance is the most important contributor to South Korean security.

4. Younger Koreans have been described as pursuing "Taehan Minguk nationalism," based on an identity and experience that is South Korean as opposed to pan-Korean. The defining experience of the "post-Kwangju generation" of Koreans was the Asian financial crisis. Korean young people are more focused on achieving economic security and less interested in North Korea.

5. Views of North Korea are divided. During interviews, the DPRK was not described as a major security threat, yet survey data shows 69 percent agreed that

the North is the "main threat." South Koreans want to help the North, but South Korean feelings of superiority vis-à-vis the North have led to a diminished view of North Korea's military threat and capabilities.

6. Koreans do not see Japan as a natural enemy, and they want Japan to acknowledge rather than paper over historical wrongs. But that is not stopping economic and cultural exchanges and grassroots tourism from bringing the two societies together. Political differences over history, comfort women, and textbooks may be inevitable and recurring, but responses to those issues shouldn't be allowed to poison the relationship.

7. There is a basis for strong ROK-Japan ties. Nearly a third (32 percent) believes the two countries have similar values; less (23 percent) believe their interests are similar. An overwhelming majority (87 percent) thinks they should be allies; still more (89 percent) think they should be allies even after unification. A little more than one-third of respondents (35 percent) don't trust Japan to act responsibly.

Key findings for Japan include:

1. Japanese identity is confused and contested. The post-Cold War era eroded many once-assumed "truths" and Japanese are grappling with the impact of this process. Japanese are proud of their nation (93 percent of survey respondents) but there has been a deterioration of confidence, particularly in the face of a "rising China." Identity issues are a critical element of domestic politics in Japan, but their expression is incoherent and unfocused and works in contradictory ways.

2. There continues to be movement toward greater realism in foreign policy. This is evident in a greater willingness to assert Japanese national interests in foreign policy (89 percent of respondents) and the evolution of the country's national security apparatus in Japan; creation of the Ministry of Defense, for example, receives 90 percent support. This process is not open-ended, however. There is a strong sensitivity to the concerns of Japan's neighbors (92 percent of survey respondents). While three-quarters of those we polled agreed that the constitution should be amended, only 39 percent would rewrite Article 9 completely, and slightly more (44 percent) would amend just paragraph two. In other words, a key element of the Peace Constitution would be maintained. Slightly more than a quarter of respondents (27 percent) agree that the Self-Defense Forces should be dispatched overseas with approval from a multilateral institution such as the UN.

3. Nearly all (96 percent) our respondents agree that Japan should play a bigger part in world affairs. Specifically, the country should be focusing on ways to help solve environmental problems, developing new technologies, and developing and helping to stabilizing Asian economies. But Japanese contributions to international security are motivated in large part by the desire for status and recognition and a sense of responsibility, rather than a wish to be an international power broker. There is little desire to help solve or arbitrate international disputes.

4. There is overwhelming support for the U.S. role in Asia and the alliance with the U.S. More than half of respondents (56 percent) think Japanese interests are most similar to those of the U.S.; 34 percent say Japanese values are most like those of the U.S. Most Japanese think the alliance is growing in its importance for Japan and the region. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) believe the alliance is the most important contributor to Japan's security and seek stronger ties with the U.S.; 91 percent think that the U.S. is Japan's most important security partner.

5. Tensions remain within the alliance. One-quarter of respondents think Japan is not respected by the U.S. There is a desire to make Japan more self-reliant within the alliance and to build stronger relations with Asia. There is concern that Tokyo has stressed relations with the U.S. to the detriment of those with Asia.

6. Japanese seek stronger, more resilient ties with South Korea. Generally, ties between the two countries are seen as positive. The ROK is the country whose values are most like those of Japan, trailing only the U.S. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents believe the two countries should be allies, and even 70 percent endorse an alliance after Korean unification. While acknowledging the provocative acts of Japanese politicians, Japanese are more inclined to blame South Koreans for poor relations. Japanese are skeptical of Korean intentions and prefer to let Koreans prove their desire for a better relationship.

The impact of these developments on U.S. alliances was the third focus of the analysis.

1. There is strong support in both countries for the alliances with the U.S., despite - or perhaps because of - changes in the international environment. An assessment of values and interests in the ROK and Japan reveals a solid foundation for strong ties with the U.S.

2. The domestic evolution in both countries evinces a need for changes in how the alliances operate. Both Seoul and Tokyo seek more respect from their partner and a restructuring of alliance responsibilities that better aligns with their sense of national identity. The key challenge is for the partners to agree on expectations for each other. In fact, the substance of alliance responsibilities may not change as much as alliance procedures.

3. The strong support in South Korea and Japan for better ties with each other suggests an opportunity for reinvigorated trilateral cooperation. At a minimum, stronger ties are needed to insulate cooperation on defense and security issues from political vicissitudes. Moving beyond a relatively low level of cooperation on these issues may be difficult, however.

Discussion focused on the significance of identity for foreign policy. Several participants felt national interests dominate foreign and security policy decisionmaking. Thus, attempts to discern characteristics of identity are a waste of time. Governments

uniformly seek to maximize power and influence; core values have little significance. A Chinese participant made similar objections but argued that values and identity should be irrelevant to policy decisions: values divide nations and focusing on them inhibits much-needed cooperation. A Japanese participant insisted that Japan should focus on overcoming value-based differences to create a shared foundation of understanding with its neighbors. In response, other participants countered that identity matters because a nation's sense of itself – its identity – determines what it values are and what it determines its interests to be: interests cannot be assumed to exist independent of the value structure of a society.

Chinese Identity and National Security Policy

The third session continued the examination of identity but focused on China. Again, Glosserman and Snyder provided the results of research – this time, a survey of Chinese elites that took place in the spring of 2009. Key findings from that research include:

1. ***Chinese are proud of their nation and confident about its future***. Virtually all Chinese are proud of their heritage. Yet when pressed to identify specific things about which their country excels, the list is short. As one Chinese explained "we are taught to be proud."

2. ***Chinese think their country should be active internationally, but the overwhelming majority believes China should not be a leader.*** As a big country, China should do more to help deal with pressing issues – and have a say in their resolution – but the guidance of Deng Xiaoping remains operative: "take a low profile and never take the lead." Still, more than half believe China will be the leader of Asia.

3. ***The United States looms large in the Chinese mind.*** The U.S. is seen as China's most important economic and security partner. Strengthening relations with the U.S. is a top foreign policy priority for almost all respondents. It is seen as the country "most like China" in terms of interests, and is viewed as a positive force in Asia. Almost all Chinese "respect" the U.S. But it is also the country most identified as a "threat" to China – by more than half of respondents.

4. ***Chinese feelings about Japan are profoundly ambivalent. For the most part, Japan is not a factor in Chinese thinking***. Few Chinese identified strengthening relations with Japan as a foreign policy priority, even though almost all believe East Asian integration, and a Northeast Asian FTA will occur. Warmth of feelings for Japan is right at 50 percent, although nearly one-quarter identified Tokyo as a threat to China. Only 41 percent call Japan "a friend." More than half see Japan as a positive influence in Asia, yet more than one-third don't trust it to act responsibly. That could explain why nearly two-thirds of respondents don't believe the U.S.-Japan alliance contributes to regional stability, but nearly 60 percent would keep it as is.

5. ***South Korea is not a factor in Chinese thinking***. South Korea is seen positively in China – when Chinese think about Korea. Its values are seen as most like those of China, 80 percent think the ROK has a positive influence in Asia, feelings are fairly warm (70 percent on the thermometer), and nearly two-thirds trust it to act somewhat responsibly. Still, it is the country that the most Chinese said relations were worsening (only 19 percent), a little more than 60 percent said the ROK was a friend of China – while 95 percent China was a friend of the ROK – and 41 percent blamed South Korean "ill will" for the troubles in the relationship.

6. ***Generational change could change Chinese thinking.*** There were few generational differences in responses. Departures occurred among 20-30 year olds. While preferring a more equal society, the number saying that should be the goal is almost one-third smaller. More than twice as many of them make preserving traditions a priority. This generation is much more inclined to see Japanese values as more similar to their own (43 percent v 17 percent) and they have warmer feelings toward Japan. They are the only group to endorse the idea of an alliance with Japan. They have much warmer feelings toward the U.S.

Discussion explored several themes. First, Chinese participants noted the gap between how Chinese see themselves and how Japanese and Koreans see their country. One Chinese participant wondered whether such perceptions are a lagging indicator: he speculated that Chinese identity had changed and outsiders had not yet recognized this shift. Nevertheless, several Chinese noted that the survey results backed their view that China does not seek radical change in the international order and that it will work to strengthen and support that order. One Chinese speaker pointed out that a gap between Chinese self-perceptions and those of Japan and Korea is to be expected since China sees itself as a developing country and has greater sympathy for similarly situated nations.

This segued into the most intriguing and revealing discussions of the meeting, which explored the meaning of leadership. The survey data and the conference discussion show that there is a big gap between Chinese definitions of leadership and those in the West. In fact, there was no agreement among Americans and Chinese about what constitutes leadership and how it can and should be exercised. A Chinese participant suggested that the concept is too abstract and context dependent: who leads depends on the particulars of a given situation. Another Chinese participant bluntly noted that China is "not comfortable with the idea of leadership." An American participant countered that China has shown no hesitation about asserting itself and being a leader in its "near abroad" or when dealing with issues Beijing believes are important. Another U.S. participant suggested that China is being tactical and refuses to lead because it doesn't want to be responsible for outcomes.

But, as one U.S. participant noted, it is vitally important that other nations understand Chinese thinking about leadership, the ingrained reluctance to accept that mantle, and to reconcile expectations with the Chinese mindset. Failure to do that guarantees a collision between China and its partners. At the same time, however, China

must understand that its desire to have more influence in the world and a greater say about outcomes create obligations as well. It has to grasp the meaning of its partners' expectations too.

Political Change, National Identity, and Foreign Policy

The fourth session of the meeting looked at political change, national identity and foreign policy**.** Han Sukhee (*Yonsei University*) explored the South Korean context, noting the pendulum-like swings in politics in Seoul. The election of Lee Myung Bak in 2008 marked a shift to the right and reflected an "anything but Roh" (Moo-hyun) mentality among the electorate. Han discerned elements of continuity and change in its foreign policy. The Lee administration wants to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance; as part of that effort it seeks to make more international contributions and develop a more coordinated approach to North Korea with Washington. Passage of the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement is a key item on this agenda. At the same time, the new government hopes to upgrade Sino-ROK relations to create a strategic cooperative partnership. Growing economic interaction and the sense in South Korea that China is the key to dealing with the North are positive forces in that relationship. At the same time, South Koreans have suspicions about Chinese intentions regarding territory and history (Kogoryo) as well as concerns about the terms of the economic competition between the two. Finally, the new government wants more reciprocity in relations with Pyongyang.

For Tamamoto Masaru, national identity is critical to understanding modern Japan: as social critic Kato Shoichi noted over 50 years ago, "the Japanese are a people who constantly ask, 'who are the Japanese?'" The answer today, according to Tamamoto, is the Japanese are a people who have no confidence in government in the face of a grave crisis but who have great faith in their society. Thus, in the face of a looming demographic problem – the country is on course to become the "grayest" in the world, with nearly 40 percent of the population age 65 or older, and a national debt twice the size of GDP – there is today an entire generation of Japanese "for whom tomorrow is not a better day." The social contract is eroding and expectations are diminishing. He anticipates that Japan will become like Portugal, a former imperial power that has drifted to the margins of Europe. Yet the country lacks energy to tackle this crisis. Tamamoto insisted that the Japanese need to answer the key question of what life is worth living for, and how therefore, their society should be organized. This, not national security, should be driving the debate over the constitution.

If Japan is distracted, Tamamoto says the U.S. is partly at fault. The role of the U.S. in providing for Japanese defense means that its policies have an inordinately large impact on Japanese decision making; changes in U.S. domestic politics influence Japanese behavior. Thus, President Bush's policies encouraged constituencies in Japan that shared his goals or wanted to use the U.S. to bring about particular changes in Japan (such as encourage the country to play a larger international role). The advent of the Obama administration will empower other groups. But, Tamamoto argued, the U.S. has provided a buffer for Japan when it comes to international politics. Rather than debate

engagement on its terms, it has seen the world at a distance and through a distinctly American prism.

This has potent implications today, as China rises. Japan worries about being forced to choose between its ally and the rising power in Asia. Tamamoto argued that the choice is false since China's rise will take another 50-60 years. During that time, he urged Japan to open its doors to China and share its wealth. Rising affluence in China will attenuate the differences between the two countries and promote peaceful relations between them.

For Balbina Hwang (*National Defense University*), a key characteristic of U.S. national identity is the distance most Americans feel toward the outside world and the resulting disconnect when it comes to foreign policy; fewer than 20 percent of Americans have passports. For her, Americans have less emotional attachment to past events, and tend to demonstrate a negative correlation between pride and insecurity. The U.S. is less inclined to interpret events in a relative sense; Americans are less concerned with how others react (in contrast, for example, to South Korea which frequently uses Japan as a benchmark). The U.S. also sees events in a global context, while Asian nations tend to focus on local or regional concerns. The result is a sense of apathy toward foreign policy and a failure to connect to events beyond its borders. Americans rely on their leaders to guide foreign policy and absent extraordinary issues – like war – defer to them.

For Yang Yi (*National Defense University, China*), Northeast Asia is developing a common identity. This process is spurring the search for a new framework for regional relations. This is evident as the four key countries in Northeast Asia – China, Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. – expand their discussions to take in new topics and develop new methods of cooperation and collaboration. China's own development is critical to this evolution. It is becoming more confident and more capable. It can contribute more to the search for solutions to both regional and global problems. At the same time, he sees Japan is becoming more fragile "psychologically" and this is creating obstacles to cooperation with neighboring countries. Japan fears abandonment by the U.S. and being eclipsed by China. Thus, he puts great emphasis on the need for trilateral China-Japan-U.S. discussions to allay Japanese concerns and suspicions.

Again, debate focused on the significance of national identity for foreign policy. A U.S. participant noted that there have been profound changes in national politics in Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. In each case, it looks as though a pendulum has swung. While the foreign policy framework of each country appears unchanged, there have been rhetorical shifts and incidents that reveal strains within the various bilateral relationships. Moreover, a changing international environment and changing material circumstances of each country suggest that new opportunities for cooperation – and new challenges – are emerging. Success in securing national interests and smoothing out relations require each of the four key Northeast Asia nations to better understand itself and its partners, and to then calibrate its expectations accordingly.

Discussion tended to focus on the assessments of change within each country. Several Japanese participants took exception to the assertion that their country was alienated from international society and did not seek to engage on key foreign policy issues. One Japanese participant suggested that Japan sees the world through a different lens – one that focuses more on economics than security – and that the country is debating, quietly, whether that should change. This shift reflects, she said, the growing number of Japanese who believe their country needs to stake out a larger security role, one more commensurate with its resources and its status. A Chinese participant challenged Japan to not choose between the U.S. and China, but rather to choose itself. He suggested that a focus on anything other than shared concerns would exacerbate differences among nations: in his formulation, values, culture, identity, or political system should have limited – if any – influence on foreign policy decisions.

A Japanese responded that Japan needs a more proactive foreign policy to shape the region and blunt the emergence of dangerous trends. To do that, it should do more to share its prosperity. Middle-class neighbors are a better guarantee of Japanese security than a large military – especially when that military is likely to alienate those same neighbors. He suggested that Japan promote regional arms control initiatives to eliminate redundant weapons and reduce regional suspicions.

Korean participants focused on changing sources of threat. One pointed to a survey that showed a sea change in ROK thinking. In 2002, the U.S. was viewed as the most threatening country to South Korea; by 2008, it was the country considered closest to South Korea. There remains steady suspicion of Japan, despite deepening economic and social ties between the two. Another South Korean participant noted that the U.S. and China are considered to be "much more important countries" to the ROK. Three-quarters of Koreans also believe that their neighbors oppose reunification.

By highlighting the role of geography in shaping perceptions, a Chinese participant emphasized the suspicions that weigh heavily on regional relations. For him, the most important foreign policy question is whether the international community will accept China's rise. In a curious reversal, he pointed out that Chinese fear Japan because Japan sees itself as the leading power in Asia and is used to seeing China as weak. Can Tokyo live with a strong China?

Another Chinese participant probed the difference in views of China held by Chinese and non-Chinese. He blamed the Western media, which slants reporting of China and the pernicious influence of realist theory, which sees rising powers as inherently destabilizing. He urged non-Chinese to focus on Chinese intentions, rather than its capabilities. If they do that, then fears of China will diminish. He also warned his Chinese colleagues that Chinese behavior would shape foreign perceptions and this obliged Beijing to respond accordingly.

Six-Party Talks and Regional Security Relations

The fifth session focused on developments on the Korean Peninsula with specific reference to prospects for progress in the Six-Party Talks and the impact on regional security relations. Liu Ming, (*Institute of Eurasia Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Science*) argued that the recent missile launch by North Korea and the threat of a nuclear test reflected its effort to shape the relationship with the new U.S. administration and domestic succession issues. He believes that North Korea could not accept the invasive verification regime proposed by the U.S. at the December 2008 Six-Party Talks and that it would be unwilling to give up its nuclear weapons even if there is progress toward a peace agreement on the Peninsula. For its part, China has grown weary over the lack of progress in the Six-Party Talks and had concluded that progress is unlikely as the U.S. had few incentives to offer to Pyongyang and China remained unwilling to use pressure — not because it privileged stability, but because doing so would destroy any trust that remained between the two countries. He suggested that it might be useful for the U.S. to engage North Korea bilaterally with a high-level visit by someone like Secretary of State Clinton and establish a space exploration working group to address North Korea's interest in developing space-based capabilities. He concluded that the best approach at this point was to focus on the post-Kim Jong-il era and work to ensure the safety and control of fissile material in North Korea.

Koo Bon-hak, (*Hallym Institute of Advanced International Studies*) offered a South Korean perspective. He argued that North Korea's recent belligerence stems from its assessment that the U.S. has not changed its "hostile policy" and therefore, there is no reason for the North to continue the Six-Party Talks. The North's demands fulfill three purposes. First, in the domestic political context they solidify Kim Jong-il's position in anticipation of a possible succession. Second, they are meant to create internal conflict in the South, undermine President Lee, and force him to return to the "Sunshine Policy" of the two previous administrations. Third, they are designed to get the attention of the U.S. and increase the North's leverage over the Obama administration.

The North aims to follow in the footsteps of India and Pakistan, which have been accepted as de facto nuclear powers. We should anticipate further belligerence including a nuclear test, a refusal to give up its nuclear programs, and a demand for bilateral talks with the U.S. with the ultimate goal being the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Peninsula and the dissolution of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Yasuyo Sakata (*Kanda University*) agreed that North Korea used the missile test for domestic purposes and to put pressure on the U.S. and the ROK. She also felt that the North would eventually return to the Six-Party Talks. If not, the other five parties should meet to determine a strategy for dealing with the North.

The most recent missile launch had special significance for Japan: it was the first time Tokyo actually deployed its missile defense system. Despite some operational glitches, the Japanese defense establishment was generally satisfied that the system worked, which helped to assuage concerns among the Japanese public regarding the

North Korean missile threat. Sakata also noted that while Japan must demonstrate more flexibility in its negotiating position, the abductee issue would have to be dealt with before there can be any meaningful improvement in Japan-North Korea relations. She expressed skepticism over Liu's suggestions that a high-level visit by a U.S. representative would resolve anything without close consultation with other parties and reminded the group that North Korea has rejected the offer by other parties to launch satellites on its behalf.

Discussion began with a reminder that the other five parties should focus on the point of their negotiations: the Six-Party Talks are not an end in themselves but a means to a very specific – and already agreed upon – goal: denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. While the Obama administration has not fully articulated its policy, guiding principles have been laid out. They include Washington's desire to seek a coordinated response to the North's provocations; a refusal to chase North Korea for the sake of talks; the belief that rules matter and governments that do not follow the rules should be dealt with through sanctions; and a refusal to buy Yongbyon for a third time. Accordingly, despite Pyongyang's complaints about a U.S. hostile policy, the root of the problem remains North Korea's behavior.

Discussion explored ways to restart dialogue with North Korea, the feasibility of broadening the talks beyond the nuclear issue, the likelihood that North Korea misjudged the U.S. and Chinese reaction to the missile launch, which party has the advantage of time, and which party has the responsibility to take the initiative. A Chinese participant provided a comprehensive policy solution with the following advice to each government:

- United States: President Obama or another senior official should give a public statement that makes three points:
  - The U.S. people are not hostile to the North Korean people;
  - developing missiles and nuclear weapons won't assure North Korea's security;
  - do not make things worse for yourselves by conducting a nuclear test.

- South Korea should offer humanitarian assistance and refrain from escalating tension on the Peninsula by avoiding U.S.-ROK joint exercises;

- Japan should do nothing and be quiet;

- China and Russia should apply low-profile pressure on North Korea to stop nuclear and missile development and set out negative incentives to prevent North Korea from doing something that could destabilize the region.

The session ended without consensus on a best approach. Not surprisingly, there was frustration over the inability to find a satisfactory way to deal with the North Korea issue. There was agreement that any solution would require approval by and input from all states in the region and involve compromises on all sides. While several participants argued that sanctions would not work with North Korea because it would respond like a

"cornered dog," others argued that a carefully managed containment policy was the best short-term solution. Policy should focus on keeping what is in North Korea *in* North Korea, and keep out any material that could exacerbate the problem until the North Korean leadership sees that it is putting its own survival at risk.

Alliance Adaptation

The endurance of the U.S. alliances with Japan and South Korea despite the end of the Cold War has had a significant influence on security relations in Northeast Asia. Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (*Aoyama Gakuin University*) opened the session by arguing there had been several significant adaptations to the U.S.-Japan alliance over the years. Like NATO, the alliance had evolved from a focus on preventing a Soviet attack to one that involves all components of national power. This shift represents a movement away from an emphasis on balance of power to one of establishing a security mechanism that can provide public goods in the region and developing a collective response to issues of common interest out of the region. Noting that the alliance is a key component of Japan's foreign policy as it moves toward "normal nation" status, Tsuchiyama felt that the alliance would be greatly influenced by China's actions. He concluded by suggesting that the alliance would continue to adapt as long as Japan fears isolation and the U.S. retained an interest in a military presence in Asia.

Liu Zun (*Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, China Academy of Social Science*) agreed that U.S. alliances were undergoing a series of adjustments and were being strengthened. He argued that the alliances, especially the U.S.-Japan alliance, had shifted from the defense of Japan to a focus on regional stability and had begun to focus on global issues. He viewed this movement as part of a U.S. strategy to retain world dominance and as a means for Japan and South Korea to become global powers. As this is mutually beneficial, it is likely that the alliances will continue to evolve and become more integrated into U.S. defense policy. For Liu, this strategy is problematic: it makes other nations uncomfortable and the alliance structure makes multilateralism more difficult. While China does not favor the retention of alliances, it does see them as part of objective reality and recognizes that it must adapt its security strategy to deal with them. China would prefer a new regional multilateral security framework that encourages the resolution of issues of common concern via consultation.

Phillip Saunders (*Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University*) argued that from a U.S. perspective the alliances serve four basic functions:

- they limit the need for internal balancing in Northeast Asia (South Korea and Japan would have to spend more on own defense);
- they provide a greater sense of security, which has allowed Japan and South Korea to reach out to other countries;
- they provide stability that allows the region to look beyond a balance of power; and
- they have encouraged regional cooperation and capabilities that can be applied beyond the context of the alliances.

Saunders argued that alliances have adapted in response to technological innovations and changes in capabilities as well as political changes that demand that they become more equal and more consultative. These adaptations are needed to keep the alliances viable and relevant to the interests of the countries involved.

The discussion was familiar: several Chinese participants argued that alliances represent a zero-sum view of security, are relics of the Cold War, and hinder regional integration. Others responded by noting that the alliances have served as a stabilizing mechanism, have offered the opportunity for win-win solutions, and provide public goods in the region by maintaining open lanes of communication and offering rapid response in the case of humanitarian crises. Ultimately, neither side was won over, but they agreed on the importance of improving cooperation on transnational security issues while acknowledging that the alliances would continue to be viewed by the alliance partners as an important component of their respective security strategies.

Regional Security Architecture

In an effort to examine the most appropriate model to follow in developing regional security architecture, Chikako Kawakatsu Ueki (*Waseda University*) offered an analysis of five models that could be used as the basis for cooperation in the region. They included the extension of U.S. alliance networks; a league of democracies; expansion of the Six-Party Talks; an ASEAN model focused on noninterference and cooperation; and a disaster relief model emphasizing functional cooperation in response to a crisis. According to criteria developed by Robert Axelrod for successful cooperation in situations where there is a lack of trust and a lack of central authority, the main requirements are the ability to identify and punish those who refuse to cooperate and a clear payoff structure for those who do cooperate. By that logic, Ueki argued, the alliance network system offers the best opportunity for success. However, she did note that two of the challenges would be how to integrate new members into the system and how to develop the system as more of a network than the current hub-and-spoke arrangement.

The primary discussant, Jaeho Hwang (*Korea Institute for Defense Analysis*), argued that a major obstacle to establishing a security mechanism is the absence of a shared perspective on regional security threats. For example, he suggested that there are different perspectives on the ultimate goal of the Six-Party Talks and that those perspectives shaped national views on how the six-party process could increase regional cooperation. The talks have brought the countries closer together, but an extended timeframe is needed to realize the benefits of cooperation. There was agreement that establishment of a viable security architecture in the region would not be easy, especially as long as the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula remained. One participant argued that security architecture promotes stability and offers deterrence whereas the Six-Party Talks are designed to address a specific problem: it is important to recognize the difference between these challenges and that they require separate mechanisms. Another participant reminded the group that the definition of security determines what is seen as appropriate security architecture. As one participant concluded, there has to be a

willingness to recognize diversity and to be as inclusive as possible in addressing issues of common interest. At the same time, however, there is no escaping the fact that not all countries share the same interests.

Nevertheless, all participants acknowledged the importance of reaching a better understanding of each other's concerns and priorities. There are few venues in which all four countries get together to do that. Most frequently, the table is triangular, which means that one of these countries is left out, wondering what is being decided in its absence. The quadrilateral format affords a rare opportunity to hear all key perspectives and try to align interests and responses. The participants at this meeting recognized the value of this unique forum and look forward to future quadrilateral explorations of the opportunities to build a more stable, security and prosperous Northeast Asia – and the obstacles to achieving those plans.

Shanghai Institutes for International Studies
Pacific Forum CSIS
Center for Naval Analyses
Institute for Defense Analyses

China-ROK-Japan-U.S. Quadrilateral Dialogue
"Security, Interests, and Identity in the 21st Century"

Hong Qiao State Guesthouse Hotel * Shanghai, China
May 10-12, 2009

AGENDA

May 10 - Sunday

18:30 **Welcome Reception/Dinner**
(**East Lake Chinese Restaurant**, 1st Floor, Building No.6)

May 11 – Monday

Venue: (Summer Palace (2nd Floor, Building No. 6)

9:00 **Opening Remarks**
Speakers: Yang Jiemian
Ralph Cossa

9:15 **Session 1: Security Perceptions in Northeast Asia**
Moderator: Ralph Cossa
Presenters: China: Wang Fan
Japan: Masashi Nishihara
South Korea: Koo Bon-hak
US: Mike McDevitt

This session will focus on current security perceptions in Northeast Asia. What are the major threats to the national security of the four countries? Have security considerations constrained or encouraged cooperation in the region? How have the perceptions regarding security cooperation changed over the past 20 years? Is the institutional framework in the region compatible and consistent with the current threat perceptions? How have security perceptions influenced national and regional identity? The discussion should focus on convergences and divergences in perceptions.

11:00 **Break**

11:15 **Session 2: Review of South Korea and Japan Identity Surveys**
Moderator: Rhee Sang-woo
Presenters: Brad Glosserman and Scott Snyder

This session will summarize the results of the national identity surveys that were conducted in Japan and South Korea.

12:00 **Lunch (Palm Island Café** 1st Floor, Building No.6)

13:15 **Session 3: Chinese National Identity Survey Findings**
Moderator: Yu Bin
Presenters: Brad Glosserman and Scott Snyder
Discussant: Wu Chunsi

This session presents preliminary findings from research regarding conceptions of national identity in China and its impact on security. Are conceptions of national identity in China changing? Is national identity becoming more prominent in China? How is national identity influencing perceptions of security? How have these perceptions affected domestic politics? What is the impact on relations with other countries in the region?

14:30 **Session 4: Political Change, National Identity, and Foreign Policy**
Moderator: Masashi Nishihara
Presenters: Korea: Han Suk-hee
Japan: Masaru Tamamoto
US: Balbina Hwang
China: Yang Yi

The session will address recent foreign policy shifts in the U.S., South Korea and Japan and China. How are domestic politics in the four countries influencing policies toward the U.S. alliances? To what extent are these influenced by national identity politics? How have foreign policy shifts influenced historical reconciliation issues? How has the economic crisis influenced foreign policies? Have the changes created opportunities for increased security cooperation in the region?

15:30 **Break**

15:45 **Session 4 (cont'd.): Political Change and Foreign Policy**

17:30 **Adjourn**

18:30 **Dinner (Liu Fu Palace,** 2nd Floor, Building No. 6)

May 12 – Tuesday

9:00 **Session 5: Six-Party Talks and Regional Security Relations**
Moderator: Ralph Cossa
Presenter: China: Liu Ming
Discussants: Japan: Yasuyo Sakata
Korea: Koo Ban-hak

This session will focus on developments in the Six-Party Talks. What are the prospects for resolving the North Korean dismantlement issue? What are the alternative paths to move the denuclearization process forward? Can progress be made in other Working Groups without resolving the denuclearization issue?

10:30 **Break**

10:45 **Session 6: Alliance Adaptation and Regional Security Relations**
Moderator: Rhee Sang-woo
Presenter: Jitsuo Tsuchiyama
Discussants: China: Liu Zun
US: Phillip Saunders

What adjustments are being made in the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliances? What is driving these changes? What are the perceptions by others regarding these changes? What impact have the changes had on relations between the other three countries? How transparent has the adjustment process been?

12:15 **Lunch (Palm Island Café** (1st Floor, Building No.6)

13:30 **Session 7: Regional Security Architecture**
Moderator: Yu Bin
Presenter: Chikako Kawakatsu Ueki
Discussant: Hwang Jaeho
Ni Xiayun

This session focuses on the organizational aspects of security relations in Northeast Asia. What is the scope of possible cooperation in the region? Is the existing security architecture in the region adequate for dealing with transnational security issues? How do changes in national identity in each country impact the prospects for development of a permanent security mechanism? Can the Six-Party Talks serve as a basis for the development of a permanent security mechanism in the region? Or, is a permanent security mechanism desirable? What impact do various trilateral arrangements have on the absent fourth party? Are the existing bilateral alliances compatible with the development of a multilateral security mechanism?

15:00 **Session 8: Wrap Up and Next Steps**
Moderator: Ralph Cossa

This session will draw conclusions and offer policy recommendations based on the discussions. What is the relationship between the articulation of political identity and the formation and maintenance of security institutions? What are the prospects for further institutionalization of security relations among the four countries? What issues present opportunities for security cooperation among the four countries? What can be done to take advantage of those opportunities? What issues represent obstacles to additional security cooperation among the four countries? What can be done to address those obstacles?

16:00 **Adjourn**

18:30 **Dinner**

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