April 15th, Tuesday, Morning Session

Peter VAN NESS: Good morning. We are indebted to the East Asia Foundation, the ANU’s College of Asia and the Pacific, and the Institute for Far Eastern Studies for the opportunity to come together. I’d like to introduce Taik-young Hamm, the Vice Director of the IFES.

Taik-young HAMM: Welcome everyone. Five years ago we held a workshop to discuss the Bush Doctrine in East Asia, and it was a success and produced a book. We hope this workshop can exceed that one, and we hope for constructive dialogues and ideas. We also hope you have an enjoyable stay in Seoul.

Mel GURTOV: Once again we’re able to take advantage of the generosity of the IFES to hold a workshop here. A few years ago Pete, Richard and I came together out of concern about where East Asia is headed, and particularly about the China-Japan rivalry, and we formulated ideas for a workshop, that was eventually held in August 2006 at the ANU, about reconciliation between China and Japan. And now we are together for this workshop about security cooperation. Cooperation is what brings us together.

There are plenty of books and articles about the issues themselves that divide the region, which include history, nationalism, security concerns, etc. Those of us who met in Australia came together to see if as scholars we can move beyond the issues, and can produce ideas for moving the agenda forward in a positive way. Not many of our colleagues on either side of the Pacific are inclined to think this way. The typical thinking is that conflict, rather than cooperation, is prevalent. So we’re in a special category, and our hope, shared with you, is that we will produce concrete ideas that will be positive in terms of promoting peace and stability in NE Asia.

We also have a good record of publishing from these workshops. The Bush Doctrine workshop produced a book, and the Australia workshop produced a special issue of the Asian Perspective. Thanks to support from East Asian Foundation, a special issue will be produced again, this time with Mark Valencia as the Guest Editor, and we also hope to produce a book. On behalf of the Asian Perspective, I’m happy we have this opportunity to come together.

Peter VAN NESS: About the agenda& This is a workshop, and we want to talk to each other, so the agenda is not set in stone. The history of the project links two things
historical reconciliation and multilateral security cooperation. A basic assumption is that without historical reconciliation on key issues it would be virtually impossible to have multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia, so we have linked the two.

Today is devoted to the historical reconciliation issue. We'll talk about the two Koreas, China-Japan relations, Korea-Japan relations, and then, later in the afternoon, the Taiwan issue. A second topic for today is territorial disputes, which Mark Valencia will lead, and he will describe his work regarding maritime disputes in East Asia. When talking about these territorial disputes, because they are so difficult to resolve, let's try and think in terms of general guidelines and principles that might apply to any of these outstanding cases, and try to think of opportunities for moving toward resolution of some of these issues.

For the whole morning of the second day we will talk about the Six Party Talks (SPT), with the goal of understanding how different countries view the talks, their hopes for the future of the SPT, and what some of the basic problems are. We hope that some of our participants from the countries involved in the talks can provide us with some insight. We are not simply looking for an official government position, but rather your view as one citizen regarding the discussions about the SPT in your country. How does it look? For example, in Japan how does it look? Is the abduction issue resolvable? Would it be possible to move it to the side to see more progress in the SPT?

In the afternoon we want to turn to the possibility of building on the foundation of the SPT to move toward a multilateral security organization. Of course some people are skeptical of this, and in writings it is often written off as speculation. But it is relevant, because crisis has created an opportunity for these six countries to come together, where otherwise they may not have. And in my view these six countries are exactly the right combination and number for trying to build an institution.

Tai-Young HAMM: To lead us off, Prof. Chung, former ambassador to Russia and adviser to Kim Dae Jung, will speak on the Koreas issues.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: Cooperation in NE Asia won't materialize without the solution of historical issues and background historical conflicts. The problems in Korea have deep historical roots, with roots 100 years old, and related to the two World Wars and how they affected NE Asia. As you are aware, stability in the NE Asian region has historically been the result of a regional order led by China. 100 years ago the rise of Japan challenged this order, it led to two major wars (the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars), and as a result, Korea fell to Japanese rule. In the aftermath of Japan's defeat in WWII, Korea was divided. We received independence, but with a division.

So the historical confrontation started after the independence of Korea. After the establishment of the ROK government the world entered the Cold War and the Korea War, and this division has been an incurable scar on the Korean Peninsula. This division remains, but because of opportunities provided by the collapse of the Soviet Union, we were able to reach a historical agreement between the two Koreas, which is a basic
agreement related to the non-nuclearization of the Peninsula. This was a historical document and could have been a starting point for reconciliation.

But North Korea has chosen a different option, of self-reliance and a military-led regime. This policy is not in tune with world trends, which are about opening and cooperation. North Korea's pursuit of this policy eventually led to their nuclear program, which is a clear violation of the historical agreement between the two entities on the Korean Peninsula. The nuclear program is the main obstacle to the creation and formation of a new peaceful order in our region.

North Korea wants to solve these issues by talking only with the US, but American foreign policy has changed and the US wants to have a collective solution. The US alone cannot solve all of the world's issues. Eventually this issue of North Korea nuclearization has come to be handled through multilateral devices, which is the SPT. The SPT is a great opportunity for achieving reconciliation, not only between the Koreas, but also with other historical issues.

Also, one important point in this is the emergence of China. The Korean nuclear issue is the first instance where China has assumed the role as a world or regional power. China needs a peaceful environment, so they are playing a positive role in addressing this issue.

As you know, our newly elected President, Lee Myung-bak, is currently visiting Washington and Tokyo, and his main agenda is the North Korean nuclear issue. Without solving this issue, cooperation is just rhetoric. To make rhetoric into substance, we need a certain change, and the political attitude of North Korea is the key. The new government is presenting the non-nuclearization and opening initiative, which is meant to encourage North Korea to change and reform. Previous governments have exerted utmost efforts toward this goal, and this effort has a solid foundation, which is the 1990s agreement and joint statement, and the 2-1-1 joint statement.

Now is the time for North Korea to submit the report on nuclear facilities, the uranium enrichment program, and the connections with Syria regarding technology transfers. And quite recently we have been informed that the US and North Korea had a meeting in Singapore, and we understand the US is prepared, after the submission of the report, to lift sanctions on North Korea and remove the terrorism listing, which requires the cooperation of the US Congress. North Korea has missed several crucial chances to opt for new paths, but they have failed, so they are being given another chance.

But again the first obstacle is that the North Korea attitude is very dubious, and we are not sure if North Korea will choose a new path. I think they are too addicted to their old regime, which gives them minimum security or guarantee over their regime, and their top priority is the maintenance of the regime. But their policy is against world trends and expectations. With the current meetings by President Lee in Tokyo and Washington, and with close consultations between leaders, they will again try to give North Korea an idea of what they may enjoy after they give up the program. So in our workshop, I hope we can put forward suggestions and ideas about how to help resolve the North Korea issue.
Peter VAN NESS: Thank you, this sets up the issue very well. To our North Korea specialists, in regards to regime security and Kim Jung Il’s concern with his own neck, are there ways of thinking about North-South reconciliation that could provide some clear assurances to Kim Jung Il about regime security? Especially regarding President Lee Myung-bak, who to us outsiders seems more conservative and less oriented toward the Sunshine Policy - are there ways of thinking about reconciliation that could focus on regime security, or is that even necessary?

Sook-Jung LEE: We are talking about historical reconciliation, which should be distinguished from political reconciliation the two are separate. In my opinion the historical issue is very difficult to resolve, because it requires discussing the Korean war and who is accountable. How to view North Korea as a state, and its legitimacy, is related to historical issues. Even in the ROK there are conflicting historical issues, regarding the founding of the country& So historical reconciliation issues, like those between North Korea and Japan, should be the last issues to be solved. But they are not preventing political reconciliation, so we should focus on that.

Taik-young HAMM: Historical reconciliation, as Dr Lee said, involves political sentiments over the Korean War and the roles of the US, China, Russia, etc. Since the Cold War ended, South Korea has achieved reconciliation in several places. But North Korea still has not reconciled with its former enemies, we still don’t have a peace agreement between the Koreas, nor have we formally ended the war. After establishing diplomatic ties with China and the USSR, South Korea tried to take a functionalist approach with North Korea, hoping to bring it into the capitalist world. Presidents Kim and Roh both supported the Sunshine Policy and held various meetings and summits. Yet people deny the importance of these meetings. The two summits may not have persuaded the North Korea regime to open or reform, but, had the former Bush Administration approach succeeded in forcing the regime to open, this would have been worse. North Korea does not like to be forced, and even the USSR has been unable to force them. Consequently there has been less progress, now there is also the nuclear issue, and we still don’t have a peace agreement.

Tai-Ik CHUNG: The legitimacy issue is important. A lot of it has to do with Japan, and the fact that South Korea has adopted Japan as a partner. They think that reconciliation with Japan is against the legitimacy of the North Korean regime. So I think their ambitions won’t be successful, and changes will come, eventually. The nuclear issue is the key element to seeing the changes in our region. Historical reconciliation is rhetoric, but it should be supported by substance, and substance will be achieved by solving the nuclear issue. This is why the new government has put priority on this issue.

Peter VAN NESS: The legitimacy issue - can there be state reconciliation today without the South accepting the legitimacy of the North Korean regime?

Tae-Ik CHUNG: This issue is a symptom of the confrontation. The legitimacy issue can be approached through pragmatism. If you are stuck on legitimacy or ideology, it is hard
to reconcile with one another. And that's why unification or integration needs a solid foundation and similar conditions, and that is why the new government initiative is trying to create similar conditions for cooperation, and create an environment to negotiate easily. Disparity, in social or economic terms, shouldn't be addressed. The ROK-DPRK issue is more difficult than many other historical confrontation issues. But many people have the illusion that because we are the same people, and share the same language, history, etc, that it should be easier & I have a lot of experience with DPRK, and in conclusion, it was only frustration.

Byong Moo HWANG: The legitimacy issue cannot be solved until there is peace and stability on the peninsula. North Korean domestic politics, and what would come from opening and reform, is affecting the nuclear and reconciliation issues. I think the most important issue to discuss is regime change in North Korea.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: Judging the legitimacy of a government uses various criteria. The North Korea idea of legitimacy is opposing Japan, and they believe they cannot accommodate Japan because it hasn't repented enough. So, the criteria for judging legitimacy is different because the claims are different. What is important now is addressing the nuclear issue. Regime change is a key element for that.

Is war necessary for regime change? No, everybody agrees this issue should be solved through peaceful means, like negotiations, and that is why we are in the SPT. This process has started, and our foreign minister hopes the SPT will be resumed in May, although at the moment this is doubtful. Even in the US the Congress has reservations, and there are disagreements in the administration.

Gregory MOORE: I've read that people here feel the Bush Administration scuttled the progress of the sunshine policy, and that if the US were to stay out of the way there would be a real chance for reconciliation in the near future. Is that accurate? That brings in the nuclear issue, but if the US were able to establish diplomatic relations with the North, would that help the South move forward?

On regime change, it doesn't seem possible for Kim Jung Il to be a Deng Xiaoping, although that's what people would like to see. Deng was different and special, given his relationship with Mao and his history as a revolutionary. But Kim Jung Il doesn't have Deng's legitimacy, he has only his father's legacy, and he is somewhat shackled by this. Does that mean regime change is the only option?

Peter VAN NESS: By having the USA out of the way, do you mean helping reconciliation along rather than impeding it?

Gregory MOORE: Yes.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: The USA is everywhere in the world, and all issues need US involvement and leadership. We may pursue talks ourselves, but an agreement is just paper without the guarantee of the USA, so USA leadership is essential. People criticize the USA, but it is needed, and it is essential. It is a paradox.
Mel GURTOV: This discussion about legitimacy is important. From the standpoint of the recent history of conflict resolution, accepting each other’s legitimacy is the essential condition for moving ahead with agreements. Going from there, regarding our last topic on a security mechanism dialogue, even if it is not possible to solve the nuclear issue in the SPT, in the context of the dialogue process it may be possible for all the sides to acknowledge the legitimacy of the other. When Secretary of State Rice was in Beijing, she made the unexpected comment that the SPT has provided an opportunity to move forward to a security mechanism. That is the leap in context and practice that is important.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: The 1991 joint statement contains all the ingredients for solving the nuclear issue. We agree this type of negotiation is necessary.

Mumin CHEN: The rest of the world doesn’t want to see North Korea collapse, because of the threat of refugees flooding into China, and because of the general instability this would create in the region. But on the other hand, some want to squeeze North Korea and make it change. So all these discussions are a basic dilemma between these two sides. I try to think about how North Korea must think, because I am from Taiwan and I know the feeling of being threatened. But if we look at North Korea, and all the conferences and meetings on this issue, there is no voice from North Korea - it is isolated, we don’t know what they think - we only know it is totalitarian. It seems Kim Jung Il is the only one who can think for the regime, so do we need to understand his thinking to understand their behavior to the outside world?

Peter VAN NESS: We keep trying to get a North Korean voice at one of our workshops, and we won’t stop trying.

Masaru TAMAMOTO: When discussing legitimacy, is there significance in the fact that both North and South have seats in the UN?

Tae-Ik CHUNG: We think that it provides a chance for reconciliation at the UN. In the beginning, North Korea was against joining the UN, but China played an important role in getting them to join, and we argued with North Korea that if you are opposed to this idea, we will join the UN alone, that we will have the Korean stage, and that if you have a position you can represent it on the world stage. Joint UN admissions, joint agreements, all of this happened in the 1990s, after the collapse of Soviet Union, when North Korea felt very insecure and in a crisis. At that time they were generally more cooperative to the outside world. But afterward they figured out that they could still save their regime, and they changed back to being distrustful of the outside world, and back to being the Hermit Kingdom.

Sook-Jung LEE: On the legitimacy issue, because both Koreas have seats in the UN, North Korea is recognized internationally as an independent state. In South Korea we have a constitution that covers the entire peninsula, but the ROK recognizes North Korea as an independent state, most citizens recognize North Korea as a legitimate state, and we
are willing to cooperate with them. But on historical reconciliation, because we are the same people, so it is more complicated and delicate, and it is a complex process. My continuous point is that we must distinguish historical reconciliation and political reconciliation.

Richard TANTER: Prof Lee's notion made me think of the importance of historical reconciliation and our thinking has often come out of the China Japan reconciliation dimension. What you provoked me to think about is the dialectic between historical and state to state reconciliation. When is the key issue historical reconciliation, and when is it state to state recognition? I understand you're saying we must first recognize state legitimacy issues.

That brings us to my second point, about North Korea's objection to South Korea's alliance with Japan, and I'm reminded of former PM Koizumi's visits to North Korea, which were aimed at breaking the deadlock between nations, much like Japan did with South Korea in the 1960s. What would have been the implications in North Korea if Koizumi had been successful, had the abduction issue not interrupted their discussions? It may have led to money flows into North Korea, some opening, etc. Would that have undercut North Korea's own legitimacy as anti-Japanese? What happens if Japan can solve this aspect?

Li Bin: We have a little experience with the DPRK. They do not consider the ROK a counterpart or peer, but rather they consider the ROK as ruled by the USA. They also do not like having the DPRK considered as ruled by China either. I believe the role of the USA is very important in this situation.

Peter VAN NESS: About the business of leaving one or the other country out of the discussions, Professor Chu Shulong has written a paper talking about how important it is for China, Japan, and the US to work together.

As a general principle, propositions for leaving a party out should be opposed adamantly, because all parties are vital. In my view, for a peace regime in Korea you need the big powers in the region and the two Koreas. At the same time, involving other countries doesn't add anything and can take away from the process. So the key parties need to be kept in and they should not give in to the possibility of leaving a country out.

Phillip H. PARK: The reconciliation issue between North and South Korea is complex and difficult. North and South Korea have a wound that cannot be easily healed. It is difficult to say that we will have historical reconciliation, at least right away, because it relates to the unification issue. In South Korea the word we use to refer to North Korea translates to a Northern Territory of the ROK, and North Korea refers to us as A Southern Territory of the DPRK. This needs to be changed. Both Koreas joined the UN as sovereign states, and we have to start from there. The DPRK has been isolated for 50 years and is living in its own world, sealed in a time box, so they look at the world through their own glasses. We need to help bring them out, to the world stage, and help educate them about how to become a normal nation. Then we can talk about
reunification and historical issues.

As for the wounds that are hard to heal, I think that time is the best medicine. My understanding is that nowadays the younger generations in the ROK look at North Korea as a separate country, and they recognize it as a different state, and that in DPRK they similarly distinguish themselves from Southern part. Not that the younger generations can solve this problem alone, but time is a good medicine.

Dean OUELLETTE: I agree with what Dr. Park said, that time will be key, but we’re also hoping to see a transformation in North Korea. Will we see that just from Kim Jong Il? I doubt it. In the last ten years there has been a transformation in ROK society in which citizens are more willing to recognize North Korea as a separate state and to engage with them, and through that engagement we hope there can be transformation.

Kevin SHEPARD: Historical reconciliation, while important, is a long ways off. Other steps need to come first. You simply can’t have historical reconciliation when in DPRK what is happening is not yet viewed as history. It is still the country of Kim Il-sung, and rewriting history would mean rewriting the present, which probably can only happen 20-30 years down the road. Over that time there will be large changes in the ROK. The young people I talk to don’t have family in North Korea, and unlike older people they don’t feel a push for reunification.

It is also worth noting the change in people’s reactions to North Korean threats. South Koreans have reached a point of saturation with threats. If the DPRK can’t continue fear mongering, while the ROK public is losing the personal connections and need for reunification, then I think we’re going to see more recognition of the DPRK as a sovereign state, which may or may not be conducive to solving these problems. Recognition has been existent for some time. President Lee criticized the existence of the Reunification Ministry because he believes the DPRK is sovereign and should be dealt with by the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Also, in South Korea, historical reconciliation has often meant jailing people, righting past wrongs, etc. These don’t mesh well with DPRK ideas for reconciliation, and it breeds a fear in the regime of them winding up in jail after reunification.

Mark VALENCIA: On the US role, somebody has to provide a guarantee that whatever agreement is reached will work, and the DPRK sees the USA as the hegemon in South Korea, so its role is vital. But the current administration has been an all or nothing, and has often been described as stubborn, extreme, ideological, etc. But this is about to change, with the upcoming election, and we will see a change in administration, which may lead to a less ideological and more even-handed approach, which may be helpful to reconciliation.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: On the recognition of the DPRK as a state, that’s why the Reunification Ministry is changing, because we should think of DPRK as a foreign state, and because the ideological approach of the Reunification Ministry was not productive. It is impossible to integrate the two systems of the two countries. North Korea needs to be
transformed into a more democratic society for reunification to take place, so democratization is a key word, and this could also lead to regime change.

Mel GURTOV: Now we’re going to move to the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands.

Andrei LANKOV: This is a serious challenge for me because I’m supposed to talk about solving a problem that I consider unsolvable. In the early 1990s, during the Yeltsin era, there were some chances to find a solution to this dispute, but now it will be absolutely impossible in the current domestic atmosphere to even begin negotiating the issue. Yes, Russia is something of a dictatorship now, but the government still must take public opinion into account. And in the current domestic political climate, any government that even considers discussing with Japan the Kuril Island issue will be out of office in a matter of days due to the public backlash.

What are the solutions? I don’t see options for negotiation from the Russian perspective. I’m not an expert, but it seems the Japanese side is equally unwilling to find a compromise. The Japanese want complete sovereignty, which is impossible now. So there will probably be a stalemate for decades. Unless there are changes in Russian domestic politics, and I don’t know whether or not this will happen, there will be no changes.

Assuming both countries want to reduce tensions, the best way is to agree to disagree - to agree that there are no complete solutions, and to start looking for some compromises since a full solution is impossible. Perhaps a resolution, showing the lack of clarity regarding the islands, would be some place to start. But even that would be very difficult to do given the current state of Russian politics. Maybe the issue could have been solved in the early 1990s, but now the opportunity is lost, and I’m very skeptical progress can be made right now. Maybe in a few decades.

Igor TOLSTOKULAKOV: I have the same point of view. We can feel our Russian society’s point of view on this problem. This dispute concerns not only Russia and Japan, but also other neighbors in the region, because solving one problem will influence the resolutions of disputes with other countries. I hope this dispute will be solved in future generations, not now.

Hideshi TAKESADA: Solved in the future? What can we do to help solve this issue the next time we have a summit meeting?

Igor TOLSTOKULAKOV: I’m afraid that any attempt to discuss this problem will not have any results. So if Japan insists this is a fundamental issue for the development for good relations, I’m afraid that nothing will change.

Hideshi TAKESADA: There have been historical working groups between Korea and Japan, and also one between China and Japan, all focusing on historical issues. After finishing the working groups, both researchers understood we cannot share the same
historical reconciliation views, but we can at least understand what exactly the differences are. I think that a study group by historical researchers of this region is needed, between Russia and Japan. Also, I tried to raise this issue, when we discuss bilateral historical reconciliation issues, we sometime become emotional or don’t have concrete discussions. How about a multilateral history study group among all related countries – China, Russia, Taiwan, etc., to discuss the history of the prewar days, the role of the USA, etc. Multilateral historical working groups could be useful.

Andrei LANKOV - Yes, of course, but I am skeptical of results politically. But like SPT it is better to talk than not, even if the results don’t come.

Igor TOLSTOKULAKOV: I personally know some Russian researchers who insist on returning the islands to Japan, but those are only private opinions. And some in Japan feel the opposite, that Japan should drop the issue. But how to get this out into the political sphere?

Peter VAN NESS: As an outsider, I would like to throw a ball out - Russia and Japan don’t have a peace treat since WWII, going on 60 years now. They are two countries with the developmental potential to benefit both sides immensely – energy, capital and technology, etc. If one looks at the issue from the perspective of opportunity cost, meaning what is the cost of not pursuing an alternative course of action, what are the mutual benefits that aren’t realized because of the continuing stalemate? This could be discussed further. Also, in your minds, is there a third country, or a separate process, that might be most appropriate for beginning discussions? Is there any role for a third party?

Igor TOLSTOKULAKOV: I’m afraid that Russians have specific national traditions, and if we can’t resolve a problem by ourselves, then the integration of a third party into the process is not welcome.

Andrei LANKOV: And there is increasing Russian nationalism. Russia feels it has been stabbed in the back and let down by all countries in the world, so Russia views all countries with distrust. I can’t imagine what country could fill this role.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: As a former ambassador to Russia, the 1990s was indeed the best chance for a breakthrough on this issue, as Russia had suffered greatly after collapse of Soviet Union. But Japan adopted a policy that without solving this island problem there would be zero assistance to Russia. At that time, the US and Japan felt powerful because of their economic strength after the collapse of Soviet Union. Had Japan changed its stance, and provided assistance to Russia, it might have created a political foundation for inducing a concession from Russia. But Japan kept a policy of no assistance without a solution. But today, Russia is a rich country, and will be richer in the future, so now there is no need for Japanese assistance.

Speaking about Russia internally, it has become a strong country again and wants to recover its status as a big power. In the world we live in now power matters and money talks. And the configuration of these islands are very important, both strategically and in
Phillip H. PARK: Does the Kuril Islands issue relate to nationalism alone, or is it important because of strategic or economic reasons?

Andrei LANKOV: All of the reasons you mentioned are important.

Igor TOSTOKULAKOV: The USSR received the islands after WWII, as part of its victory, so giving up these islands would be perceived in some ways as giving up the victory, which is unimaginable to Russians. Also, these islands are rich in resources, and strategically important, so everything keeps these islands in people's minds.

Andrei LANKOV: Nationalism might be the most important, but the other reasons are important as well. In the 1990s Russia conceded many other islands and territories that were much bigger and more important to other countries. Today, because very few Russians understand the difference between the small and large Kuril Island archipelagos, they would go crazy if any part of the islands were conceded. But even if they understood the difference I don't think it would matter too much. It is a sacred issue now.

In the 1990s, when the country was falling apart, Japan could have negotiated on the issue much easier. Now I don't see any opportunity. If there were any serious negotiations the public would go crazy with nationalism. I personally think this should be solved on Japanese conditions, and Russia should get a lot of money in return, but Russia doesn't need to sell the islands to earn money, and so it won't sell for any price. Would it be realistic to imagine Japan or Korea selling a part of what they perceive to be their country?

Mumin CHEN: This reminds me a little of the South China Sea dispute, where islands are claimed by six different countries. Recently they all agreed to talk, and to put aside the territorial issues in pursuit of joint development. Is it possible for Russia and Japan to put aside the sovereignty issues and just focus on development?

LI Bin: I like the idea of compromise. We in China have had good success in resolving territorial disputes. I understand territorial disputes between countries have different natures, so there is no model that can apply to all, but I still want to mention our solving of a territorial dispute with Russia several years back. In this instance, one must appreciate the flexibility the two governments exhibited in coming up with a solution. The Chinese government was worried very much that this compromise might trigger nationalism in China, but in the end it didn't although there was one exception. The only Chinese group who opposed this compromise was the Falun Gong. The other side is that I haven't seen much discussion or appreciation, in the Western media, of China and Russia's ability to find a resolution to this complicated issue.

Richard TANTER: I'll be the odd one out and start from a different position, and this position does not start from who had the rights in the forties or fifties&
is the rights of indigenous people here. As an Australian, when I go to Hokkaido, I see colonialism. And it s very clear that in Russia s Far Eastern provinces, and these islands, it also resembles colonialism and contempt for indigenous people. Thinking about indigenous rights may hold a key for looking at this issue in the future.

I ve been very depressed by the intractability of the situation, and although there is no current tension between Japan and Russia, this may change sometime down the road. In fact with nationalism a strong force in both Russia and Japan, I can t see this not changing. There are always some solutions, some practical solutions. I can t imagine the Kuril Islands have such great strategic value. Is there any group in Russia that has a stake in some compromise? Where Japanese money and Russian resources can come together?

Igor TOSTOKULAKOV: I m afraid there is no group in Russia that supports reaching a compromise with Japan on this issue. I said I know some researchers who privately have their own views on resolution, but their voice is weak.

Richard TANTER: Is there any interest in an interim solution, of a practical kind? Or is it too hard?

Andrei LANKOV: I m afraid there is not much interest in such a thing. Even if you could create such interest it would be political suicide. But I may try to talk about it because I am not supported by Russia, so I can afford to discuss such opportunities.

Hideshi TAKESADA: You say there are problems having to do with the legacy of WWII, and Russia not wanting to disavow its victory. But Japan has never said abandon the WWII reward of the Islands. And Putin himself proposed a two part solution, involving the breaking up of the islands. But the Japanese people and government thought this plan was too tricky.

Also, Prof. Chung said that after the former USSR collapsed is when we had the best chance to discuss this issue, but the Japanese government didn t do this and therefore missed the window of opportunity. When did Russia have no money? When did Russia try to discuss this issue? But now, because of its energy resources, Russia has money and is reluctant to discuss the issue so does this mean it is not a territorial issue, but an issue of money? You ve also said the Kurile islands have a strategic location, and Japanese also see military reasons as part of why Russia is reluctant negotiate. So you also stress the strategic value of the islands, which means it is not a territorial issue but a military and money issue.

Masaru TAMAMOTO: Simply put, Japan fought a war and lost, and territory was taken away. Russians and no Japanese have been living there for six decades. So Japan s legal and historical claims over the islands are weak.

Pete points out that after 60 years there is no peace treaty between Russia and Japan. But what is or isn t happening because there is no peace treaty? And much of this is about domestic politics.
Tae-Ik CHUNG: As long as Japan claims sovereignty over the islands there will be no resolution. And it also seems Russia has a double standard on territorial issues. They made recently made concessions to China, but why not here?

Peter VAN NESS: What are the benefits being foregone? In organizing these workshops, for a long time I tried to get business people to join us because they often have different views from academics. In the case of Russia and Japan, if you had businesses in Japan wanting to go into Russia, and if Russian people wanted more capital and money from Japan, what would be a multinational corporation’s view? I think this perspective can be helpful in finding practical solutions.

Su-hoon LEE: About the role of domestic politics in territorial disputes. After Korea’s liberation from Japan, Koreans never doubted that all their territory had been returned, and believed that legally and historically the Dokdo Islands all belonged to Korea. But in 1965 this issue reemerged. Since then, for 30 years, the Japanese government was very quiet about this issue, until 1990, when a white paper emerged that began to claim that the Takeshima Islands belong to Japan. We South Koreans had been keeping the status quo, and it was the Japanese government that began to change the status quo.

Yes, they are small islands, but they are important to Koreans. In Korea these islands are a part of our national pride and identity. But in Japan few people even know about these islands, so we kept quiet rather than making an issue out of it - a way that has worked well for a long time. But this has changed as a result of the recent more assertive gestures from the Japanese government, particularly the resolution in 2005 that said these islands belong to Japan. This statement inflamed domestic sentiment in Korea. This issue is different from historical issues, which can be studied by historical working groups, because it is territorial. So the Korean government takes a very hard line stance on the issue, and Korea will not admit that there is even a dispute because it is clearly Korean territory. Is there value to the islands? No, very little, but there is EEZ value, as well as domestic nationalism value. Personally I think it is a very serious issue, and that the status quo must be maintained rather than creating a serious problem.

April 15th, Afternoon Session

Mel GURTOV: As you know, we met in August 2006 to specifically discuss Sino-Japanese Reconciliation. It was not easy to get Chinese or Japanese participants to come to the workshop because it is still such a sensitive issue. We were coming together at a very interesting moment, because Prime Minister Koizumi was still in power, and many of the problems in relations had to do with Mr. Koizumi’s ardent embrace of American policies, his visits to Yasukuni, and his efforts to move Japan to normal nation status. On the other hand, there had been very positive development recently as the Yomiuri Shimbun had produced a book titled Who Was Responsible, and one of the editors of that book, Mr. Tenichi, presented a history of the research project on war responsibility. His description and subsequent papers were published in a special issue of the Asian Perspective.
What you have in front of you is a brief outline of some of the ideas that were floated at the workshop. Toward the end of the workshop we broke into small groups, under the premise of Tracks 1, 2, and 3, and beyond that each group was asked to consider three different levels within each track (unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral initiatives) in an effort to try and stimulate interaction and most importantly to get at specific ideas.

I really think that there are some interesting ideas from conflict resolution literature that are useful when dealing with international disputes, such as China-Japan reconciliation. One of them is that it’s extremely difficult to overcome issues of historical memory, and in fact typically it’s a bad place to start in negotiations to talk about historical grievances. If it starts there it often ends there. But you’ll see that that the Yasukuni Shrine issue is mentioned at the top, hoping that we can move beyond it so we can find common ground.

It is also important to emphasize tracks 2 and 3, instead of just track 1. Many discussions focus on this area (Track 1), and many at the workshop agreed that it is essential, but we also think that other areas (NGOs, businesses, etc) have things to offer in promoting exchanges and promoting trust. Trust, and trust building, is vital. There are three areas we could focus on: engagement strategies, dialogues and formats, and confidence/trust building measures.

One other thing, which Pete always likes to emphasize, is we always want to be pushing to remember the idea that there are opportunity costs from failing to take advantage of positive developments between China and Japan. In a nutshell, between any two rivals it ought to be possible to say that the two sides need each other, and there is more to be gained by finding common ground, and there is more to be gained from this than rivalry that could result in problems or conflicts. Of course, today, things look a lot brighter, but that doesn’t in any way lessen the urgency to deal with this kind of issue.

Obviously the US is the elephant in the room, and US policy is important, but the China-Japan relationship is vital to regional stability. At the conference we talked about how US policy impacts China and Japan, an issue that many Chinese policy analysts are talking about. Some argue that history isn’t as important as the lack of even-handedness in US policy and US support of normal nation status in Japan. Personally I think that is true, though it could change. But at the workshop it was thought that to try and take on the role of the USA was too much, and too complicating, so although there were mentions of it, there was little talk about what the USA might do to affect a reduction of tensions and positive Sino-Japanese relations.

Peter VAN NESS: I’d like to go to Mark Valencia to hear his presentation on a possible maritime security regime in NE Asia that would affect a lot of things, especially the territorial differences. Mark’s ideas strike me as a new way of thinking about how to ameliorate and mediate these issues.

Mark VALENCIA: Thanks to Pete. There’s a long paper that goes with this too. What I try to do is set out the rationale, need, and content of an initial maritime security
SEE VALENcia PAPER/PRESENTATION

Peter VAN NESS: Let me just say that one reason we’ve invited Mark to these two workshops is because his work on the South China Sea, in terms of conflict resolution, is impressive and practical in terms of finding concrete ways to resolve or ameliorate disputes. He has also written a paper on the East China Sea dispute, and now one on the idea of a NE Asian maritime security regime. Questions?

Gregory MOORE: What would be the context where these leaders could come together to talk about a maritime security regime? APEC?

Mark VALENcia: The SPT is what gave me the idea that they could start working in the maritime sphere when the SPT were going well there was talk of a NE Asia security agreement, and this could be part of this broader dialogue.

Richard TANTER: How important is it that North Korea has not ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea?

Mark VALENcia: They haven’t ratified the convention, but have vaguely claimed an EEZ, and they even have an agreement with China on that. They do claim parts of these seas, and patrol them as far as they can, so I would think that North Korea would have to be brought in to the dialogue to manage this effectively. They wouldn’t even have to ratify it, but just participate in the talks. That is what the US has been doing for years now.

Richard TANTER: In terms of institutional interests, are there groups (corporate, bureaucratic, etc) that would gain from these negotiations? Are there any institutional pushers?

Mark VALENcia: There is a conflict avoidance regime that I say is evolving, such as between China and Japan, and I think on all sides there would be the benefit of knowing what the other is up to.

Richard TANTER: I ask because the ministry in Japan is not known for its generosity in negotiations.

Mark VALENcia: If the South China Sea can be used as a model, it would include mostly ministries.

Hideshi TAKESADA: A ship of Japan’s NSDF attacked a North Korea spy boat in a Chinese EEZ, and in your presentation you raised it as an illegal move by Japanese? Also, another correction, the ship of the Japanese NSDF attacked, but when the North Korean spy boat sank it wasn’t because of the Japanese attack. The North Korean boat sank when one of their crewmembers pulled a pin that automatically sank the spy boat.
Japan’s government wasn’t responsible for this.

LI Bin: How can you know that?

Hideshi TAKESADA: We have confirmed it.

Mark VALENCEA: I know that Japan’s position. My point is that it isn’t illegal to spy from an EEZ. It isn’t clear that the boat was doing anything illegal. Initially it was thought to be illegally fishing. The video showed a lot of firing by the Japanese vessel, though maybe the final result was the North Koreans own doing. But my point is that this agreement should make clear what is and isn’t acceptable behavior to avoid these problems.

Gregory MOORE: Is it legal or illegal to transit EEZs for the obvious purpose of spying?

Mark VALENCEA: It is legal, the US does it every day. There are a lot of vessels, aircrafts, etc., that are operating at sea, and there will continue to be more and more. And the EP3 incident was an accident waiting to happen. Understanding what other countries consider acceptable behavior and what is not is very important.

Richard TANTER: Unless there is some move toward a security regime of the type Mark described, there is an accident or much more waiting to happen. It seems urgent.

Mark VALENCEA: A lot of it obviously goes back to confidence, trust, suspicion, reconciliation, etc, but the fact that a working group was created to look into these kinds of things initially gave me some confidence that these types of arrangements could be worked out. Maybe we are not there yet, but it seems the maritime sphere is an important place to start.

Richard TANTER: If liquefied natural gas takes off, then supertanker traffic in the Sea of Japan and other sea lanes will worsen.

Hideshi TAKESADA: When discussing maritime cooperation in this area, we should talk more about the Proliferation Security Initiative. Led by the US, this is a useful framework to promote confidence-building measures. But the ROK and PRC are not members of PSI. This is not a framework to fight with each other, but a framework to stop the proliferation of goods and weapons of mass destruction. So we would welcome the membership of PRC and ROK in the PSI, and then we can have a naval exercises in the East China Sea among the PRC, ROK, and Japan, perhaps even the DPRK.

Mark VALENCEA: The problem with Proliferation Security Initiative is that its perceived as a US-led initiative, and it takes laws beyond their natural limits, including interdiction at sea. There have been resolutions against North Korea, but this does not authorize interdiction at sea. And at least in terms of harbors, ports, etc, China is cooperating. But the sticking point is interdiction, and China and the ROK won’t participate in that.
LI Bin: Is this the position of the Japanese government? I am not so sure. But my sense is that the US would not like China to join, that we should cooperate but not join. Like a technology control regime, China is kept outside the regime but abides by the rules, so China has a commitment responsibility but no rights.

Gregory MOORE: But doesn’t the US want China to board vessels, trains, etc?

LI Bin: Yes, but just that, no more. It is not welcome in the discussions of the rules and other aspects.

Byong Moo HWANG: Regarding the PSI, the ROK position is that it doesn’t want to be involved in interdictions which would be in the open sea, though it is happy to share information and participate in other ways.

On the part of the PRC, we should remember Yinhe incident, in 1993. The US received faulty intelligence that a ship going from Qingdao, China to Iran was carrying chemical weapon precursors, so US destroyers stopped the boat and asked to investigate. China was a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention as a council member. There was a stalemate at sea for ten days, and Deng Xiaoping finally compromised and allowed the US to investigate the ships, but only if Saudi Arabian investigators were used. There were 800 containers and it took seven days, and nothing was discovered. Afterward China said the US must apologize and pay compensation for the delays, but the US did nothing. This was a bad experience, and is why China is wary of these kinds of arrangements and of their participation in them. And there are too many potentially sensitive issues for the ROK to participate either.

Peter VAN NESS: Now we’ll move on. Professor Yi Kiho has a presentation about conflict resolution from a civil society, bottom-up perspective.

YI Koho: SEE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Richard TANTER: First an apology, because you’ve just been mugged by Nautilus. What is civil society? If you read the literature it sounds like God’s answer to everything on earth. It’s not the state or markets, but media plays a role. Also, civil society is not always civil, it can be violent, and it can have negative influences. But clearly what we’re seeing are new forms of social conflict resolution emerging, resulting from the mixture of capitalist socialization and communication, democratization, and globalization. Cross border associations are also important. What is interesting about civil society’s national and transnational forms is the differences in thinking between civil societies in different countries. In Japan for example, the lack of civil society indicates a lack of citizen restraint on government actions. There is a remarkable amount of civil society contact across borders.

Chen MUMIN: As a college professor, I find that young college students in Taiwan don’t hate China or Japan, and that they want to travel there (or already have), but so far I don’t
see any multilateral activities promoting this kind of Asian spirit in the realm of civil society. It's all bilateral. As a teacher in college, I'm willing to help this process. What can I do? My question is maybe primitive and abstract, but what can we do?

Phillip H. PARK: Professor Yi's presentation was marvelous. My question is about the practicality of his proposal, it seems as hard as building a nation. Regarding the relationship between economic development and civil society development, there is a correlation there, if not causation.

Mel GURTOV: There is always going to be a problem in understanding where you find civil society. In the literature, it's still very vague in terms of what is and isn't civil society. But I wonder if the issue couldn't be turned around—are there any civil society groups worth listening to and mobilizing? For example, look at the precedent of what has happened since the 1980s with APEC meetings, where NGOs were initially locked out because of the trade-environment contradictions. So they organized their own meeting, on the sidelines of APEC, and that example has been followed in other cases, creating a series of alternative meetings.

One question that arises, when discussing a NE Asia cooperative security mechanism, is who speaks for people? A security dialogue mechanism of course relies on heads of states, but who is there to safeguard human and environmental security? One would want to look for vital and strong civil society organizations that can put pressure on those in the room who purport to represent everybody but in reality only represent state interests.

YI Kiho: Two years ago I brought some of my students to Tokyo to have some discussions with Japanese students. It was at a time of heightened tension between our countries. The first evening they had a dialogue, and then the next day we all went to the Yasukuni Shrine together. Afterward, that afternoon and into the evening, the debate changed, their opinions and views changed, and they began to understand the Japanese perspective on history. By the morning they had turned 180 degrees, and at the same time the Japanese students (it was also their first visit there) began to understand what was happening in East Asia regarding the Yasukuni issue. And they said that if they had visited there by themselves, they might not have been able to understand the sorrows of their neighbors. But by going together it was a good chance to talk together.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: In terms of Asian integration, building up civil society provides a good base to facilitate integration. But it is not the main factor to regional integration. We should learn from history, and the most successful case is European integration. In Europe they were forced to share resources (such as steel and coal), so economic factors were very important to integration. And why was the integration of Europe initiated? Because of political leadership, and because after the two world wars the status of Europe was down and there was the challenge from America. So they started the integration process. Asian integration needs a challenge that could be a driving factor. Europe is now an integrated group, Russia is realigning with many of its old states, etc. I think in Asia there is an awakening among regional leaders. For example, Kim Dae Jung initiated a summit to promote regional integration. We simply don't have anything resembling the
NATO network that there is in Europe. Not to undermine civil society, but NGOs tend to discuss very localized issues, such as the environment, crime, diseases, etc. And this agenda is important for promoting solidarity, but it is not enough of a factor for bringing about regional integration.

Richard TANTER: Yes, we’re still looking for the Jean Monnet of East Asian integration. After the break we’ll talk about Taiwan.

Peter VAN NESS: One of the main reasons for putting the Taiwan issue on the agenda is that with the recent elections it seems there are some new opportunities for reconciliation between Taiwan and the Mainland. I’d like Chen Mumin to talk about the results of the elections, and then have Li Bin make some comments as well.

Mumin CHEN: I recently wrote a policy paper for Singapore’s East Asia Institute, and I think everybody read it, so I’ll just do a brief introduction and talk about election results. We all know the China-Taiwan issue is a result of the 1949 civil war. Today the official position of China is that Taiwan is a part of China and reunification is inevitable. But if you go to Taiwan and ask people, you get a different view of the issue. They say yes, they are Chinese, but that since 1949 they have never been under PRC jurisdiction, and that since Taiwan is democratic, they have the right to decide the fate of the island. And they believe this decision should be made in a democratic way, such as through a referendum.

Usually it seems there are only two solutions to the issue - reunification under the one country two systems, where both sides cooperate in economic and functional areas, and over time they become one political entity. The other way, which forty percent of Taiwanese people support, is eventual total independence and the establishment of the Republic of Taiwan, meaning a seat at the United Nation, recognition from the international community, etc. So it seems impossible to reconcile these differences, and there are huge gaps among people’s views of what is best.

Since 2000, when the DPP (which is pro-independence) and Chen Shui-bian came to power, the basic position has been that Taiwan is already an independent state and should pursue international recognition by seeking the help of USA or Japan. The KMT used to be the ruling party but they were removed from power in 2000. They now have a different position than they did before. They used to say that they eventually want to reunify. But now they say why not put aside the sovereignty issue, reduce misunderstandings, improve economic cooperation, etc.

This year we had a parliamentary election, and elected 113 legislators, and the ruling DPP part lost, and the KMT won 2/3 of the seats in the legislature. 3-4 weeks ago there was another election. The KMT made it clear that this election was about the economy, not about sovereignty or identity. The DPP stuck with the identity theme, and so they initiated the referendum on joining the UN, which the KMT opposed. In the March 22nd election, Ma Ying-jeou and Vincent Siew, of the KMT, won 58% of the votes. So now what we have is the KMT in the presidency and with control of the legislature. Last
week Vincent Siew attended the Boao Forum and met with Chinese President Hu Jintao on Hainan Island. This was the first ever summit between Taiwan’s #2 and a Chinese president.

LI Bin: President Hu even went to the media room a few minutes early to wait for Mr. Siew.

Mumin CHEN: I personally have become more optimistic about the future after this election. Last year I met with friends in China who said the People’s Liberation Army was going to do something very soon, because of the proposed UN referendum and because conservative leaders in PRC were displeased with the situation. Now I think that the KMT is working hard to build trust with the PRC, though we don’t know how much China will give back. We hope China will respect Taiwan as an autonomous political entity, which will be the basis of negotiations, but right now there is no indication one way or the other, so perhaps after this recent meeting in Hainan the Chinese government will give some sign. In the society of Taiwan, a lot of people feel that in the past few years cross-strait relations have been interrupted by political factors and they want to see some change.

LI Bin: Let me try and speak from Taiwan’s perspective. I can see a lot of opportunities if the two sides reunify, or rather if the Mainland joins Taiwan. If this happens there will be a lot of opportunities for the people of Taiwan. They will no longer need to fly to Hong Kong before coming to China, which is good for business. For political people, they could expand democratic society from Taiwan into the whole of China, and they could have important roles as leaders in China. Taiwan played a big role as a model for China’s economic development, and maybe it can also play a role in democracy building in the Mainland.

At my school we have Taiwanese students who study in my department. The problem is that they cannot go back home. Taiwan does not recognize their degrees. Our university is not so bad, and most countries recognize our degrees. I very much wish we could solve this problem first - we’d like to see students going back and forth, studying in different systems. Chinese students going to Taiwan to learn the systems in Taiwan, and then bringing them back to the Mainland (including democracy). And we also want Taiwanese students to study in the Mainland and things back to Taiwan. That would promote stability on both sides. So I suggest to Mumin and his friends in Taiwan to give more opportunities to students, and to think of some future plans for not only economic investment, but also political investment in Mainland China.

Byong Moo HWANG: A few years ago the Mainland made the Anti-Secession Law. We all want the Taiwan Strait to be tranquil, not hostile. Where is the redline with China to send China’s forces to Taiwan? Under several conditions, Beijing leaders repeatedly claim to do that, which Taiwan gets involved in civil war, or keeps going toward independence movement, etc.?

LI Bin: I personally think the redline question is one that I’d rather not answer, because
my belief is that we are going in the other direction, and moving away from any redline.

Masaru TAMAMOTO: I was told that Beijing’s position is that Taiwan is allowed to have an autonomous military. Is that right?

Both: Yes. Taiwan can even have its own soldiers.

Mumin CHEN: The original One Country Two Systems policy was created for Taiwan, but Taiwan rejected it. Now there is also the Hong Kong model. We think now it would have to be somewhere between the One Country Two Systems policy and the Hong Kong system.

Mark VALENCIA: This may be good or bad, and I don’t know if it is widely known or not, but President Ma is an expert on the East China Sea. In fact it was the subject of his dissertation at Harvard. What if China and Taiwan can form a common position on East China Sea with Japan?

Mel GURTOV: In response to questions about a possible redline, since the US has prided itself on maintaining strategic ambiguity, why shouldn’t China also have strategic ambiguity? And, as we’ve seen in Iraq, redlines are always flexible.

But a question, on the issue of Taiwanese identity, we have a situation in which the majority of Taiwanese people identify themselves as Taiwanese and not Chinese. A second group says they are Taiwanese first and Chinese second. So wouldn’t it be quite undemocratic for Taiwan to reunify with the mainland? Wouldn’t a great many people want to stay secure in their Taiwanese identity?

Mumin CHEN: People my age do see the change in our society. When I went to school we learned about China’s history, and Japan’s history, but we grew up and realized the real world was quite different, and we changed our views. Right now, 60-70 percent of the young people I ask say they are Taiwanese. But if you ask them if they are also Chinese, in a cultural sense, they say yes, because of the shared history, language, culture, etc.

Peter VAN NESS: Realistically, about the opportunity for Taiwan to democratize the rest of China, I am aware that on blogs in China there is indeed a good deal of discussion about Taiwanese political models. But, for example, in the CCP Party School, is there serious discussion of the Jiang Jingguo precedent, of an authoritarian leader bringing about a top down democratization of the country. Does this go on? If this were a discussion in the Party School in China, and I made the case of Jiang Jingguo in Taiwan, would people faint or would people engage?

LI Bin: Let me tell you this, we have both public and private discussions. When I teach in my class I would not say much about this. We are still not democratic, and it’s not convenient to talk about things like this. But in private discussions with colleagues I have not seen much disagreement on this. And when the society goes beyond a critical
point everything may change. We cannot discuss it publicly, but I don’t think it’s too far off.

Peter VAN NESS: A critical point?

LI Bin: If Hu Jintao said why don’t we have a real election, why don’t we invite the KMT to mainland to have a real election, if he said this, I believe the whole country would be very quiet and accept it without any problem.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: That would mean it was the same system, where political parties are functioning, and where the KMT reestablishes in mainland and has a platform that it uses in an election. If North Korea was democratized and different political parties functioned through civil society, and a political party had a platform of reunification that was supported by the people, then reunification would be possible. But the precondition is that there are similar systems.

LI Bin: I disagree. I like the idea I put forth about democracy, but before we build democracy we can still have reunification.

Gregory MOORE: Regarding Pete’s question, in 1998, when I was at People’s University in Beijing, I heard that President Jiang Zemin had asked to have some research done on this exact question. A scholar was given a mandate to investigate this, and the question was what would we have to do to bring about a slow transition to a democratic government, from an authoritarian to democratic system? So I’d guess that these discussions do go on a lot. The one thing that China could do to guarantee reunification would be to reform themselves and become more of an open democracy. The high degree of integration already in place this would facilitate this process. And Chinese nativists would certainly welcome the idea of reunification, just like the people in Hong Kong have, if people bought into the idea of a broad Chinese identity.

Mumin CHEN: My personal view is that it would be very difficult for China to become a democracy. When I talk to people, I find that the political culture in society is so different from Taiwan that even with elections and a democratic government, it would take a long time to build up a stable democratic system like the one in Taiwan. Many people are still not satisfied with our own democratic process. Since 1992 our constitution has been amended 7 times. A democratic system doesn’t always mean democracy.

About cooperative security, we all think and worry about this issue, but on all the topics we are talking about today Taiwan has been excluded. It has been excluded from every forum and international discussion. So there is a sense of isolation, and there is a strong sense of insecurity. When talking about international security dialogues, this is an international issue and Taiwan should be included in discussions.

Also, relating Taiwan to Kosovo, Kosovo claimed independence and Russia disagreed. Currently only 36 countries recognize Kosovo. In the world today there are only 5 states
in the world that are only partially recognized—Kosovo, Cyprus, Palestine, Taiwan, and Western Sahara. This implies that there are certain cases in which a state doesn’t meet the traditional statehood requirements. But how can they solve this problem?

Phillip H. PARK: The integration of Taiwan into China is indeed an international issue. What would be the position or implications of the USA and Japan on reunification?

Mel GURTOV: The US position has always been that, as long as reunification is peaceful, they don’t oppose it.

Peter VAN NESS: I would argue that this is a declaratory position. After the election of President Ma a new debate began in the USA. Most people were supporting the declaratory position, but then the strategic people started talking about the strategic implications of reunification. David Kang, who’s book I’m reading right now, says that reunification would be just fine, as far as the US is concerned, but I’m not so sure, because there are serious strategic implications. It will be interesting to see if a real debate develops on this issue.

Mussaru TAMAMOTO: Is there really a great deal the USA can do to influence the process? It seems to me that the USA is powerless if China and Taiwan decide to unify.

Peter VAN NESS: I wish this was the case. Regarding the US role in Japan-China relations, it says its been encouraging peace since 1972. I don’t agree at all. It seems that the US has been working full time to play China and Japan against each other, not wanting war or confrontation, but fearful that the two could get together and realize they don’t need the USA in the region.

Gregory MOORE: Several years ago I interviewed 30 experts in the US about the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis. I asked the question whether or not the US opposes reunification. 100 percent said the US doesn’t oppose reunification. In China, I asked 28 experts and 75 percent of them said they thought the US opposed reunification. It seems that it depends on who you ask. On one hand Taiwan would be a strategic loss for the US. But on the other hand it would be the end of a thorn in the side of diplomatic relations.

Peter VAN NESS: Yes, that’s definitely the declaratory policy, but it will be interesting to see what happens if President Ma starts trying to work things out with the Mainland. The current position is an easy position to maintain. And I’m not surprised by their answers to your question. But I’d bet that if you asked strategic military thinkers in the US you’d get different answers.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: The official policy of the USA and Japan is the One China policy, but in reality, from a strategic point of view, most of Taiwan is a nightmare. Since China is an emerging power, if their economic and military power were to be combined they could opt for hegemony in the region. So the US would try and control this situation in the name of peace and stability in the region. In the real policy arena the US would not want
to lose Taiwan because they don't want to reduce the influence of the US in the region, and Japan would want the same thing, since it shares a similar strategy.

Hideshi TAKESADA: I think the military balance across the Taiwan-strait is changing, and soon China will feel that it can liberate Taiwan individually.

LI Bin: About the military balance, I don't think Japan should worry about this. If we have more military superiority we will have more peace, Japan should believe that. The Chinese government is a government focused on economics, they do not have any military ambitions, and they want a peaceful environment for a long time. Even with military superiority, I don't think this government will launch an attack anywhere. Also, we want cultural and economic integration, democracy building, etc., all of this could help reunification. But on the other hand we can never forget that there are fundamentalists in Taiwan who will resist reunification forever, and some of these people may have to be forced.

Peter VAN NESS: Tomorrow we will discuss the SPT and the technical aspects of denuclearization, then in the afternoon the topic of building a multilateral security mechanism.

April 16th, Morning Session

Peter VAN NESS: Once again thanks to our hosts at IFES and the financial support of the East Asia Foundation and the ANU. There are two main agenda items for today. This morning we want to take up the SPT, and we want to begin this by having several people talk to us about how the SPT are seen their countries, either from a governmental or personal perspective. Then Li Bin will talk about the technical aspects of denuclearization in North Korea.

Professor Moon, how in South Korea are the SPT are viewed? And in your own analysis of potential outcomes, where might it go? Will the groups settle for a freeze or do they want complete denuclearization? And how has the debate about the SPT here in the ROK evolved?

Chung-In MOON: I would argue that the SPT is actually an unintended outcome of American refusals to have direct talks with the DPRK. The Roh government had been pushing for direct talks between the DPRK and USA, but the US refused. China moved in, then the 3-party talks failed, and eventually everyone came together. The intention of the SPT is to create a mechanism through which the USA and DPRK can talk to each other. Japan has incentives to attend the discussion, related to the abduction issue, and I think the USA feels safer having 4 other parties watching what is happening.

For China it is a diplomatic victory in bringing everyone together. At the first 3 rounds of talks it was a disaster because the USA refused to talk directly to the DPRK, and in the third round they came out with the Libya model. Then, in the 4th round there was a major breakthrough, which led to the May 19th statement. This was a great document, about the
abandonment of weapons by the DPRK in return for the US's agreement to pursue peace, end hostility, and pursue normalization. In return China, Japan, and other countries agreed to help the DPRK in other ways. But then, from Sept. 2005 to Feb. 2007, there was no progress, and then there were the North Korean missile tests, then the nuclear test, and it looked like maybe the end had come. Many pessimists in Washington were writing the epitaph of the SPT. But then there was a reversal by Christopher Hill (with Secretary of State Rice's support) and they were able to have another breakthrough in Feb 2007. But I understand there were also some changes by USA, in 2007, regarding the USA wanting a more specific accounting of all of their nuclear transactions.

Then two things happened. Russia failed to deliver as much heavy oil as was promised. Also, the agreement was that when the DPRK made a full declaration of compliance the USA would lift economic sanctions and remove the DPRK from the terrorist list. But on the way to the market, Israel raided an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor, and it gave the USA evidence that the DPRK had supported Syria's nuclear reactor development. The Syrian connection really messed things up, and Chris Hill is working to get things back on track. I don't know what the Congress will do, given the Israel lobby and their fear of nuclear proliferation. I guess the current Singapore agreement is that they will go ahead with the previous agreement, and there will be an informal accounting of materials and then a formal accounting. American intelligence believes that DPRK has processed a substantial amount of plutonium. The Roh government was very active in the SPT and trying to make them viable, and the Roh government saw some new possibilities in the SPT framework, including the possibility of creating peace in the Korean Peninsula.

If the SPT can be built on, a security regime could come about in NE Asia. The SPT have created an important foundation for a peace regime in the region. It is one stone for three or four birds, and I have very high hopes. Just simply coordinating all the people, the translators, arranging logistics, etc., all of it brings people together, and I think it can make everyone a winner. In terms of security and peace dividends I believe the SPT can be a valuable asset.

Peter VAN NESS: Thank you. If the DPRK were to resist giving up their weapons, but were willing to agree to a freeze, how would the ROK government respond?

Chung-In MOON: I can't speak for the new government, but I would argue that when you talk about the verifiable, complete, and irreversible dismantling of nuclear weapons, it could take up to 15 years. Look at South Africa. Their denuclearization took place under Nelson Mandela and with the help of IAEA, and it still took a very long time. My read is that the DPRK has not acquired a real threat-making device. If we can solve the development issues, meaning no more production, and we can eventually trace where it all went, then we can figure it all out. It will take time, and maybe the DPRK will not immediately give everything up, but it is a long process. That is what diplomacy is. The most important is freezing the programs and making everything accountable.

CHU Shulong: First let me give my understanding of the Chinese government's position and attitude about the SPT. Based on what I've read and the discussions I've been part
of, I think the government's basic position is neither optimistic or pessimistic, but rather moderate and calm. Behind the public attitude and statements coming out, I see a great investment having been made by the PRC government in the process. As an observer, I have never seen a specific issue in foreign policy or international relations that the Chinese government has worked so hard on, or made so great an effort for, as the SPT. The whole Chinese leadership and government have put great effort into the SPT with the final goal of denuclearization.

Even the top leaders in China are personally involved. Only in relations with a few other countries are top leaders involved, and rarely are top leaders involved in specific issues. But PRC leaders have personally written letters to Kim Jung Il in times of difficulty, China has sent a special envoy to DPRK several times, and the PRC negotiators they have sent have had great power and important connections with the state council and top leaders. So the government and leaders have made an effort that we rarely see in other issues. I think that in the future, even when there are problems, Chinese leaders will make every effort to keep the process going and keep moving to the final goal. It would not be easy to withdraw and retreat after so many years and so much effort. The SPT every year is one of the biggest events for China's foreign policy, comparable only to the APEC meetings or high level visits. It is one of the 3 or 4 big events that receives a lot of attention over the course of a year.

Last, let me talk about my understanding of the process as an academic. I think we in academia tend to have a lower expectation for the SPT compared to the government. We tell them to be more pessimistic about the process and the future, because we know the process is uncertain, and the goal is uncertain. The reason for this is that nobody (including Chinese negotiators, ambassadors, leaders, scholars, etc.) knows what DPRK wants. This is a statement Christopher Hill has made in the past. When he compares this current process with his years in Eastern Europe, he says that at least then he knew (at least partially) what Yugoslavia wanted. But he has said for years he has no idea what DPRK really wants. Chinese leaders, the government, and the military also do not know what the DPRK wants. Do they really want nukes, or are they using them as a bargaining chip for other things? Sometimes Kim Jung Il talks with leaders in PRC, and he says DPRK does not really want nuclear weapons, but they must have them because they face so many threats from the USA, Japan, and the ROK. But we don't know what if that is sincere and truthful. So nobody can make a clear judgment about possible future outcome.

I think we in Beijing are certain though that the only factor that can lead to success and eventual denuclearization is a good relationship between the DPRK and USA. We know this, and it is a big issue between China and the USA. During the last meeting in Washington, Christopher Hill did not agree with our assessment. He said that USA has already made clear what it can do in the process (ending sanctions, more economic aid, removal from the terrorist list), and according to him there should be no misunderstanding and suspicion about what the USA can give and will do. But the DPRK is still uncertain about the future of bilateral relations. The DPRK has never really wanted the SPT, but has participated because of their desire to talk with the USA. This is
their real interest, improving relations with the USA. So if they come to believe they can have a good relationship with American, they may give up weapons. So I see that as the main factor in denuclearization and the ultimate success of the talks. Besides that, I don't see anything that I can believe in the future. In terms of accepting a freeze in the weapons program, that may be the most realistic and pragmatic option, but the Chinese government is still aiming for denuclearization, that is their main goal.

Also, it is my judgment that we must prepare for the SPT to be a long-term, ongoing process. As was the case with China, engagement with a country is not an easy thing. We will soon celebrate 30 years of economic reforms, and over this time China has been very engaged with the outside world, on trade and economic issues, on security issues, etc. But on political issues there is still a huge gap between China and other countries, and especially Western ones. After 30 years of engagement we still have fundamental issues and conflicts. North Korea is still a communist regime in terms of its thinking and ways of doing things, so it is going to take a long time for them to change as well. For years I’ve argued that for the DPRK the key issue is not economics, or national security, but regime security. They will give up weapons, maybe, the day they do not feel any threat about the security of their regime. If they cannot feel confident in their dealings with other countries (USA, Japan, etc), then they will not open. So regime security is the major theme of their government and the rationale behind decision-making.

Hideshi Takesada: See Takesada PowerPoint

Igor Tolstokulakov: See Tolstokulakov Paper

Gregory Moore: As far as the US perspective, I don’t have any inside information but I’ll try and summarize. Going back to 1994 the talks were primarily bilateral, but they broke down in the 1990s, in part because of the Republican Congress and the delays in transferring the light water reactors. And the DPRK was also to blame. By 2001, when Bush came into office, things had fallen apart quite a bit, and so the Bush Administration reviewed and changed the policy. They essentially drug their feet, rained on the Sunshine Policy, and a lot of progress deteriorated. Then came September 11th and the Iraq war, so the DPRK took a back seat. They also believed that the regime was going to fall, and that they could sit back, apply pressure, and wait for the collapse. But this was shortsighted and inaccurate, because the regime was more stable than thought.

China deserves credit for restarting the discussions after the DPRK’s shocking revelation to James Kelly. The SPT started in 2003 and didn’t yield a lot until 2005, but then the Banco Delta Asia issue scuttled progress in the eyes of the DPRK. US said that the freezing of assets was a separate issue from the nuclear ones, and the DPRK said it wasn’t. On this issue the Chinese cooperated closely with the US. Finally, after several missile and weapons test, the present 2007 agreement came out.

My personal conclusion is that the Bush Administration’s policy has been a huge failure, because DPRK did acquire weapons, and that the failure was several years ago, when the Bush Administration should have picked up where Clinton Administration left off. The
ROK was also making progress at that time, but the Bush Administration didn’t want to work closely with ROK. Where we are today is that there is a sticking point in terms of deadlines, and also regarding the possible transfer of nuclear materials to Syria. The proliferation threat is important. The DPRK view is also that the USA won’t remove them from the terrorism list, and that the USA is holding it out as a reward.

I’m optimistic in the sense that the SPT have been a very useful mechanism and forum for dealing with DPRK. The Bush Administration very early on insisted on multilateralism (which is ironic), probably because they didn’t want to get burned like they had been in 1994, and also because there was no structure for holding DPRK accountable, and they thought that a multilateral forum could possibly do that (thanks to the involvement of the DPRK’s neighbors).

To summarize US interests, they are denuclearization, addressing proliferation, Japanese security, ROK security, and an interest in not appearing inept but also not giving away the farm. In terms of my conclusion that their policy has been a failure, some editorials in the USA have said as much, but the Bush Administration has largely gotten away with it in terms of public opinion at home. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by the DPRK is a really big issue, and could have really big ramifications. Ironically, China has in some ways been just as hard on North Korea in terms of wanting to keep weapons off the peninsula. When I did research in China, several DPRK watchers said they were afraid the US was going to watch DPRK develop a nuclear capability and then treat it the same way it did Pakistan or India, which is with a slap on the wrist. But the implications are huge for China, and the potential for a domino effect in the region, and none of it is in China’s interests.

In terms of possibly accepting a freeze, I think a freeze is a stop gap measure and not a goal, and that the US really wants complete denuclearization, as difficult or as impossible as it may be. Also, I think that rather than using normalization as a prize, we maybe should have done it early on look at Great Britain, with their embassy in Pyongyang, and their intelligence gathering capabilities because of this. So trust building measures earlier, as a means to an end, might have been more effective rather than holding those things out as prizes for DPRK. But today, overall, I am optimistic about the SPT and the hope of turning them into a regional security mechanism.

Mel GURTOV: I would be even tougher on the USA in interpreting the Bush Administration policy on this subject. I would say the hard line policy toward North Korea was born in the 1990s, and is ideological in nature, and was very much a part of the Project for the New American Century, which incidentally included all the key figures in the administration. I think throughout the second half of the Clinton years it became clear that one of the key aims of the neoconservatives was regime change in a number of places, including DPRK and Iraq. If one thing ultimately saved Kim Jung II it was September 11th and the elevation of Iraq to the highest priority.

The other point is that there is a big difference between the multilateral approach the administration followed up through September of 2005 and what we have seen the past
few years. Multilateralism is not an accurate characterization of USA aims during that first period. It wasn’t a matter of consultation and finding a group consensus. The real purpose was for the USA to demonstrate to reluctant others just how rogue the DPRK really was, and that the Americans were right, and that maybe there needed to be more decisive action. The USA wanted to guide others to this conclusion. Being bogged down in Iraq, and the loss of some key figures in the administration, has helped to shape the talks into genuine multilateralism.

A last point, having to do with Syria, I’ve heard some people say that there is no evidence, whatsoever, that indicates that nuclear weapons accounted for the Israeli raid.

Chung-In MOON: The DPRK-Syria relationship dates back to 1950s. Kim Il-sung, during the 1967 Six-Day War, dispatched DPRK soldiers to Syria and Egypt, and during the Yom Kippur War the DPRK sent assistance and personnel to Syria. Also, Syria is the only country that does not recognize South Korea. I was in Damascus once, in 1996, and I asked some people why this was the case and they said because DRPK is their true brother. Furthermore, all DPRK specialists are trained in Damascus. The US has failed to pay attention to the context of the emergence of this relationship.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: I’ve spent my entire life dealing with DPRK issue through different administrations. I’ve found that almost all problems, including the nuclear issue, stem from the DPRK and its regime. We cannot ignore this. Some say it’s a failure of the USA, but it seems that all US governments have failed because of the policy of the DPRK. DPRK policy has never changed. They know how to utilize and take advantage of every situation, be it leniency or a hard line. They adapt and find ways to survive. What I want to say is that external pressure or input to solve this issue has limitations. DPRK policy remains unchanged - their first priority is the maintenance of their regime, and their second is to demolish South Korea to reunify the peninsula. The Roh administration intention was that ROK assistance to the DRPK would facilitate a solution to the nuclear issue and boost the SPT, but we should simplify the issue to one of non-proliferation. Proliferation is against international principles, and they have defied and challenged it. It is time to have concerted action and have the international community join this effort. Our strategy should be how to promote internal change in North Korea.

Peter VAN NESS: Let me try something. Chu Shulong in his presentation raised the key question of whether the DPRK wants nuclear weapons for strategic reasons or for regime security and a peace commitment from the USA. I wonder if we could think about how a new administration in the USA could make a credible security commitment to DPRK. Professor Chu, you didn’t say it, but I inferred that you would agree with me that the Bush Administration could not make a credible commitment to DPRK regime security after President Bush said he hated Kim Jung Il, among other insults. Although I agree Clinton didn’t follow through well, if we go back to the final months of his administration, Madeleine Albright had been to North Korea, and there were talks about Clinton going. If we assume now that not much is going to happen between now and the next USA president, what type of American position could be credible?
Chung-In MOON: Tit for tat will never work, and peace engineering will not work. It has to be a holistic approach. If Obama wins and they push for the normalization of diplomatic relations, then this would be an offer Kim could not refuse. But complete denuclearization will take at least five to ten years, maybe twenty, and the reason is we cannot trust the DPRK. It has to change from within. But the Americans don't understand that one.

Mel GURTOV: There were some modest breakthroughs. William Perry said we may not like this regime, but it is there and must be lived with. He also said we may think we don't pose a threat to the DPRK, but they believe they are threatened, and he believes their missiles are meant as a deterrence of us.

Chung-In MOON: If you engage with the DPRK, and assure the DPRK of regime security, then the military faction cannot prevail over others, and those reformers in DPRK will gain power and influence. The process will continue, and the changes may come. The ROK, Chinese, and Russian governments have all followed this approach.

Richard TANTER: On the issue of the PSI, it has virtues but is against international law. And I find it difficult to understand why Japan continues to strongly support what is essentially the worst aspect of PSI. The question of DPRK abductions has made the government hostage to domestic pressure from what is really a very small group. The issue is important to the families involved, but it's really a criminal matter. Why have successive governments not had the political resources to corral and control that noisy minority? Back to yesterday, had Koizumi pulled it off in terms of bettering Japan-DPRK relations, that would have opened up a lot of possibilities. But now Japan has taken a more Catholic than the Pope policy.

CHU Shulong: The key issue and fundamental solution is promoting internal change and regime change. Looking at the case of my country, one can argue that there is a cause and effect relationship between the Nixon/Kissinger visit in 1972 (and establishing of diplomatic relations) and China's decision in 1978 to reform and open. By relaxing concerns about national security, the regime feels secure. After all the years of the SPT, the DPRK is now a little more relaxed about their national security. This had been their biggest concern several years ago, especially after the Iraq war in 2003. Now that there is more security coming from America, it reduces their concern for national security. To change the regime from within, they need to feel comfortable enough to engage in economic and political reforms. So that is the fundamental principle is to make, to make the DPRK feel comfortable. The changes may not come in one year or in two, but they may over time. Why don't some officials from USA come to the DPRK and talk? Although the DPRK is smaller than China, I think the regime needs respect, needs to save face, and needs to feel secure before they can really change their minds and policies.

April 16th, Afternoon Session

LI Bin: Regarding North Korea's nuclear capability, the big question is how much plutonium they have. They are being asked to declare both an overall volume and day by
day records of their plutonium activities. I personally believe that the day by day records are the most important, because by looking at day to day records you can determine a quantity. Regarding the quality of their nuclear weapon, the Chinese nuclear weapon laboratory has an assessment of how good the North Korean device is, and they explained their assessment to scientists at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in the USA, and it was eventually used in a report to Congress. My colleagues at the nuclear weapons laboratory in China believe that the DPRK has a very good device, while I disagree and think it is a very low-quality device. I suspect that the test was a failure, and that the reason has to do with engineering rather than science, which means it is a problem not easily fixable. If its an engineering problem that will need many years to improve their industrial base. And I would guess that they won t perform a second test. But I should add that in social science you can say this or that, and its not a big deal if you re wrong. But in real science it is a big deal, and I could be wrong.

My second point is about the SPT. Many people enjoy the multilateral aspect of SPT, but I personally think the key component is bilateral, not multilateral. The North Korean government doesn t care what the ROK governments says or thinks, because they think it is the little brother of the USA. The DPRK almost always prefers to talk to the Americans directly. This is a similar strategy to that of the USA when dealing with Asia, where it prefers bilateral relationships over multilateral ones. So I m very skeptical that the US would really want the type of multilateral mechanism we re discussing.

About heavy oil, it is my understanding that North Korea has a very limited capability to offload heavy oil from ships, and that if too many ships go to North Korea at once, they need a lot of time to offload the oil. So the ships have to wait, and they get angry. And that is part of the reason why the shipments of heavy oil is delayed. My sense is that the SPT members are talking about it and trying to solve it. When we Chinese send things to DPRK by train, it takes them a long time to offload from the trains, and it takes a long time for the train containers to come back. The DPRK thinks that since other countries delayed the process of heavy oil shipments, they ll delay dismantlement (although they don t say that). If it is a technical reason that oil shipments are delayed, it is therefore a technical reason fuel rod dismantlement is delayed.

My knowledge regarding the dismantlement process all comes from an American scientist who visited Yongbyong and then stopped by Beijing. My belief is that the five megawatt plant does not work and cannot work for a while. A significant amount of fuel rods have been dismantled from the reactor, and it would take a long time to rebuild them. The second change has been with the cooling tower, which the DPRK wants to keep outside as a symbol to be seen. But from what I have seen of the inside of the cooling tower there is nothing in it, so it cannot work and would also take a long time to rebuild. So to some extent the dismantlement process, using a very low standard, is irreversible. Its programs could be reconstituted, but it would take a long time.

My next point is about the uranium enrichment program. I think the US State Department is wasting time to insist on a declaration regarding the uranium enrichment program. To my knowledge the DPRK cannot produce a significant amount of highly
enriched uranium for many years, so it is not something we need to deal with right now.

Peter VAN NESS: Can they produce any now?

LI Bin: No, they have no production capability right now. It would take many years to build, and then many more to produce anything. So right now if the USA is serious about the progress of SPT, then they should forget that requirement in the declaration.

My last point is about the terrorism sponsor list. I don’t believe it makes any sense. This is not a terrorism issue, it is a proliferation issue. If the USA believes the DPRK is a terrorist sponsor, then do not delete it from the list. If it is not, then do it right away. The US is using the terrorism listing issue as a card to play, and that weakens the real goal of anti-terrorism. Some years ago non-proliferation meant everything, and now any problem is a terrorism problem, which in the long run hurts the terrorism issue. So delete it or don’t, but focus on the plutonium issue, and insist that North Korea provide the day to day record of all plutonium activities. If the USA chose to do that I would support them.

Peter VAN NESS: So its your judgment that dismantlement, as far as it has gone right now, is sufficient in that it would take the DPRK a long time to resume producing plutonium?

LI Bin: Yes, unless they have another site that I’m not aware of.

Peter VAN NESS: So if they provide a day to day record of their plutonium related activities, that is the best record for knowing what they have and what they have done?

LI Bin: Yes.

Hideshi TAKESADA: Are you saying the North Korea has no highly enriched uranium program?

LI Bin: Maybe I wasn’t clear. My point is that according to the estimates they do not have any production capability, and that capability will take many years to build. They may have a program, but right now it is too small to do anything.

Mark VALENÇIA: If what you say is true, then what was the motive behind Kelly’s statement that they admitted having a HEU program, and why is the US making such a big deal out of it?

LI Bin: They have said that they tried to do it, but they cannot produce a significant amount for a weapon, even if we were to wait a while. Also, I think the State Department is wrong but they don’t want to change their position.

Mark VALENÇIA: Or is it straw man and they really don’t want a solution? If they don’t have a program that will work, yet the US is insisting on a declaration of it, what is
the motive? Why risk starting a war over so little?

Mel GurtoV: Or maybe it's an intelligence failure.

Li Bin: The State Department has said North Korea has a uranium program, but they have never said how big or small it is. They just say it is a program.

Peter Van Ness: Could the US have evidence that they received components from Pakistan's A.Q. Khan and others, so they know the DPRK has a program, but in reality they aren't far enough along to produce anything?

Li Bin: That is my guess.

Hideshi Takesada: When the DPRK tested the nuclear weapon, do you think the test was successful or not? Also, following the test, several countries announced that it had been a nuclear explosion, but the Chinese government remained silent for a time, and Chinese experts had different opinions on what had happened. Why?

Li Bin: My colleagues have said that they think the DPRK device is very good and better than all other first nuclear designs. I disagree, my belief is that their design is okay, but their engineering is very bad, which resulted in a weak explosion.

Also, a seismic machine cannot tell the difference between a nuclear and conventional explosion. Using radiation releases we can tell the difference, but it takes time, as you can only tell by testing the air. So South Korea could tell sooner than us because there was a wind coming from the NW. This type of test does not require a lot of knowledge. For example any university here in ROK could do it. It's just a matter of detecting radiation.

Gregory Moore: I've read that two days before the test the DPRK informed the Chinese. There was also a report that China shut off the oil flow to the DPRK a few weeks prior to the test. What kind of information did China have?

Li Bin: The DPRK is very good at creating problems between the other members of the SPT. They informed Russia one day or ten hours before the test, and then China 4 hours before, so they tried to create problems by telling Russia and China at different times.

Byong Moo Hwang: If there were some serious problems and the DPRK nation was threatened, or their leadership is making problems, what will be the reaction of neighboring countries, and the USA, in the future? There is suspicion among big powers about who will take preventive measures or implement contingency plans in DPRK. The ROK worries that China will be the first state to take preventive measures in a certain situation, perhaps even involving the armed forces. Without peace in the Korean region we cannot change regimes. We want to see the DPRK regime change, we want to see a change of leadership. But it should be done through peaceful methods. Does China have contingency plans?
CHU Shulong: That is a big topic. I think it has been debated, and is still being debated in China, on how to promote a change in direction in the DPRK. According to regime change from the Bush Administration perspective, you change from the current to a completely different one. I don’t think that is workable in North Korea. Perhaps it is possible to accomplish the goal of changing the regime without changing the current leadership and government, but rather by changing their minds. I made the argument this morning about the Chinese example, that the way to promote regime change is through engagement, long term engagement. The USA does not engage with Cuba, or North Korea or Iran. And all three have not changed for a very long time. Meanwhile the US has engaged China for three decades, since Nixon, and China has changed fundamentally in many important ways. That is why China is still a partner today on so many important issues. Since the US can engage China, why not engage Cuba and North Korea? How can you influence others without dealing with them and exchanging ideas? I see no other way than patient engagement and patient efforts.

Byong Moo HWANG: The problem is this, if any serious problems arose, and there was a massacre, what then? An extreme situation would force the neighboring countries to make a decision. We haven’t talked about this issue.

LI Bin: I would say that China would be very, very reluctant to send its soldiers into the DPRK for any reason.

Gregory MOORE: I have heard that there are some contingency plans that are talked about, as unlikely as it is.

Mel GURTOV: This is a good way to begin our next topic in the sense that we can ask the same question in the context of a multilateral security mechanism, which conceivably, if it were well developed, could provide rules to deal with such contingencies.

CHOI; SEE CHOI JONG KUN PRESENTATION

Mark VALENCIA: I’m really very pleased by this presentation, because it echoes and underpins what I was saying yesterday regarding the maritime sphere. I argued yesterday that the countries involved have developed an informal conflict management regime, but I also pointed out in my paper that most of these arrangements have been bilateral. In the maritime sphere, and with the exception of the SPT, true multilateralism is not to be seen. I’m optimistic and echo your findings, but it’s a leap to go from bilateral to multilateral.

CHOI; Why is multilateral better than bilateral?

Mark VALENCIA: You were making comparisons between Asia and other parts of the world. If you can demonstrate that countries can coexist while in close proximity to each other without multilateral regimes, then I’ll be convinced. But I think in this region we’ve been fortunate that there hasn’t been an outbreak of some sorts, although there’s been a series of small conflict. In a region of competitive powers without multilateral
agreements there remains a potential for real conflict.

Peter VAN NESS: This presentation reminds me of the book by David Kang that I’m reading. David Kang is also a constructivist, and he makes a strong case for why the countries of East Asia have responded well to China’s rise. My review of the book relates to your talk, and maybe there is a generational difference. You and David Kang are talking about the last 15 years, and a phenomenon that is China-centered. China has made a huge and very positive contribution toward creating cooperation, enhancing globalization, interdependence, etc. The problem with the constructivist approach, which focuses on identity and shared norms, is that identity and norms can change. They are more vulnerable to change than perhaps you assume.

For example, if we were studying the foreign policy of the US eight years ago, nobody would have predicted that an administration would have come to power that rejected international law, declared a policy of preemptive war, invaded two sovereign states, identified a variety of states as part of an axis of evil, and, very importantly, carried out officially sanctioned violations of the core values of the society (such as habeas corpus, Guantanamo Bay, torture, etc.). In my view two things came together and created these changes: the possibility of crisis and a leadership change. This in a way led to a change in national identity, a rejection of previous norms, and the using of a particular kind of policy that is not only not cooperative, but also violent.

Why I think there is a generational difference is because some of us can remember the earlier times, the hopes for peace, and how things ultimately changed so very rapidly. What I admire very much in your presentation is that you help explain and demonstrate to us the opportunity to construct further cooperation and to build structures for preventing conflict.

Jong Kun CHOI: Kang argues the region will become China-centered, and other states will bandwagon. But I think that type of framing is biasing the region itself, suggesting that we’ll return to the hierarchical structure of the past. And in terms of identity changes, and I know about all the USA violations, by saying those things and using them as evidence as a country changing is misleading to me because those are the policies of a certain administration, and there has been much objection to these policies by the public. I think bi- and trilateralism, without institutionalized rules, have been effective enough, and that different versions exist. Different states have different versions of a regional concept.

Mel GURTOV: Here’s where I wish Amitav were here, to talk us about how ASEAN is moving toward a security community, because he might have been able to elaborate on why multilateralism has been embraced by many different countries.

Richard TANTER: I wish he was here too so I could tell him that ASEAN is a bunch of junk. There are no valuable rules, and there is no value coming from ASEAN.

I thought a lot of your presentation was great. My main point though is the case of
identify& What strikes me as central is that there are contests of national identities, and in Japan identities swing in one direction. It’s an identity centered around the concept of threat, being introduced by books and papers, about the China threat. The liability of identity is salient — real or not. Also, identity is subject to pressure from outside, and one issue I have is that the USA didn’t appear in your analysis, but it is the elephant in the room.

Jong Kun CHOI: My main argument is that peace for the last 19 years has been surprising. From a bird’s eye view, we are not so bad at maintaining peace. As opposed to unintended consequences, I believe this is an intended consequence. As to civil society, I’m arguing that we are moving toward liberal traditions coupled with democratization, commercial interdependence, etc.

Masaru TAMAMOTO: Regarding the point about a China-centered world, I think that is the fear of nationalists in Japan — 1.3 billion Chinese who are going to get rich. Many Americans would shudder at the thought of 1.3 billion Mexicans as rich as they are. Japan for 60 years has been comfortable being subordinate to the US, but the thought of being subordinate to China seems to be another matter.

I am not that concerned about the possibility of military conflict among countries in the region. I am more concerned about the American need of an enemy in the form of a substantial state — something bigger than say Iran and more than Islamic fundamentalists in the mountains of Afghanistan. China can be made to fit the bill. If the US were to seriously pursue such a policy, China would probably take the bait. This is a grievous trap for all concerned. This could lead to a major arms race between China and US. And it would detract China from what it should be concerned about — economic and social development. The Chinese military is arguably in need of modernization, still Beijing ought to pay careful attention to the issue of transparency, for there are enough people in the US wanting to make China into a national security threat.

We have been talking about states as sovereign units, but I want to make the point that borders are becoming increasingly porous. If and when China succeeds in becoming a middle class society, then borders will become open. Open borders are already happening. For instance, there is an enormous amount of cross-border investment, and this makes a big difference. You don’t go to war with countries you have invested in. This is the big difference between the world before World War I. Then international economics was largely about trade.

Regarding economic-based integration, a key point is that European integration worked because per capita GDP in the core countries approximated each other. Some sort of integration will likely happen in East Asia as China joins the ranks of middle class societies, say in forty or fifty years, when Chinese per capita GDP and wealth distribution pattern approximate that of Japan and South Korea. Until then, it is as if China has to run a marathon course at a 400 meter sprint pace. A rocky road of capitalist development lies ahead, and China can do with all the outside help it can get.
As I see it, relations in East Asia are not simply about state versus state. Rather, with borders increasingly porous and driven by the logic of global capitalism, there is a complex web of economic, social and other relations developing, each with its own norms and values. The state is not necessarily the primary agent in everyday international relations.

Over time, national identity will not play the strong role it does today in East Asia. Identities, too, will become more complex and varied.

Mumin CHEN: After attending two days of the workshop, I think all the problems we have talked about and discussed can be divided into three categories. The first has to do with history, mistrust, and hostility. The second has to do with sovereignty problems and territorial issues. The third deals with countries that don't follow the regular rules of international society. Regarding your presentation, how do you fit in sovereignty issues, like Korea? Where do North Korea and Taiwan fit in? How do we realistically solve these problems?

Byong Moo HWANG: As long as we are talking about these issues, I'd like to raise one basic problem in terms of power configuration. China is rising. The USA and Japan are worried that China perceives it own role in a certain way, and that it will overturn certain agreements and foreign policy objectives. What is China's perception of the existing system in terms of rules and institutions? Is it satisfied or will it challenge them? I would also like to ask the American scholars, what is the proper perspective on a NE Asian system?

Jong Kun CHOI: That is a very difficult question from Mumin. I think our region is peculiar to begin with. In this region we have two states and entities that worry about their own survival - North Korea and Taiwan. How to place this in this regional structure? I really don't know. But my conjecture dictates that I think time will heal things. In terms of blood, things will change. I think 20 years down the road there will be more racial, cultural, and political integration, and I think and hope that Taiwan and North Korea will join that trend.

Tae-Ik CHUNG: When we talk about building a security mechanism, we should think of a common threat or a strong motivation to move in that direction - social integration and things like that are not enough. Professor Choi mentioned the agreement on nuclear issue as a historical breakthrough in terms of cooperation in the region, so that means that the North Korea nuclear program has provided an opportunity as well as a crisis. We should go beyond the nuclear issue to a multilateral security structure, something else that has never existed in our region. We have a common threat, of nuclear proliferation and terrorism, and also energy and the grain issues. This kind of new crisis will provide new common ground for cooperation. For the first time, because of the nuclear issue, we are talking about a multilateral security alliance. The SPT five groups are very important and provide good chances to talk about other things besides the nuclear issue. Having said this, the role of leadership is an important factor, in terms of pursuing new initiatives, and we haven't touched this issue.
Gregory MOORE: As I was listening to the presentation on the lack of need for a security mechanism, and the degree to which ad hoc security has been working well, I was thinking about the cultural differences between East and West. In the West we insist on contracts and predictability in business, and that maybe Asians prefer more flexibility in the relationship, and their relations are based more on the guanxi framework. So maybe institutionalization is a structure or convention that appeals more to Western rather than Asian sensibilities. I know I’m partial to the institutionalized security mechanism approach, but maybe there is some truth in this thought.

Mark VALENCIA: A possible option is a changed US attitude that doesn’t discourage multilateralism. Administrations are going to change in Washington, and there is the possibility that the US may change its attitude.

Hideshi TAKESADA: A security regime in this region is needed. As I said earlier in my presentation, I think bilateral talks are important in drawing road maps and pointing out agendas. And when we speak about security, we should speak about the concept of security as a very big and broad one. Many countries like US, Japan, China, etc., talk about how to cooperate with each other regarding environmental issues or public health issues. How can we better cooperate with each other on these types of issues. We should promote multilateral security cooperation in this area, even beyond the SPT.

Richard TANTER: My main concern with bilateral alliances is that Japan and Korea’s alliances with the USA have disproportionate weight. Bilateral alliances are more susceptible to balance of power shifts. And we haven’t even talked about US hegemony in East Asia. If the USA was at its height on September 12th, 2001, it has come down a good deal since then. It’s not down and out, but there have been diminishing changes (both fiscally and militarily). What does matter and is at the core of American hegemony is the way in which it’s incorporated into the political structures of countries in East Asia.

Operations other than war can use another term, regarding climate change, public health, etc., and this is where Japan was genuinely innovative. It is called comprehensive security. Unfortunately this idea has been thrown away in the rush toward small but great power thinking. Unfortunately militaries are utterly irrelevant when it comes to issues like climate change.

Taik-young HAMM: The lack of a multilateral security mechanism is due to the Cold War and national rivalries. Multilateral security should contain close economic relationships, but the USA is trying to have bilateral FTA with many countries, which is counterproductive to economic free trade zones. And in the meantime we have to prevent conflict over difficult issues. In the short term this means the two Koreas, and in the long term between China and the USA. We must emphasize again and again that the nuclear issue with the DPRK must be resolved by peaceful means. We need preventative diplomacy.

Byong Moo HWANG: I would say we have to reconcile bilateralism with
multilateralism. Look at the Malacca Strait - even with different confidence building schemes there is still competition among states in the region. We should always find a common interest in dealing with non-traditional threats.

Andrei LANKOV: Most of the people who are present here are IR specialists, and they like to look at states. But if we look at the past half-century, a lot of the real crises were triggered not by international developments but by domestic issues. In East Asia today we have a problem that could lead to a serious crisis now or in the future. I'm talking about North Korea. The problem is that right now North Korea would not be able to integrate and adapt to an international system. It cannot continue indefinitely, and although an internal collapse is not imminent, it is likely in the long term. This will create a vacuum. A crisis in North Korea could develop. The Americans and Koreans would want to get involved. What would that involve? There is no mechanism to deal with this issue.

And in terms of the idea of developing North Korea, that will require enormous amounts of money and will create a zone of instability. It is probably in this instance where we will be most sorry that we don't have a mechanism to deal with this problem. The SPT may not get rid of the nukes, but it could create an international forum that can be used in case there is a crisis. The ROK will need a lot of help if they are able to take the lead on this issue, and it will take money on the scale not seen since the Marshall Plan. It is a problem that is bound to happen sooner than later. It may last another ten years, but the country is not as stable as it seems. I think it will be 20-30 years or less.

Peter VAN NESS: One of the papers I circulated was a draft I've been working on about designing a mechanism for security cooperation in East Asia. I'll circulate it again. I'm not going to present the paper, but I would like to suggest an enterprise where people begin to think very seriously about how such a cooperative security mechanism might be best designed.

Mel asked me to give an answer as to what the purpose of this mechanism would be? I think the answer is straightforward - to enhance the stability of the region that currently exists and to constrain the likelihood of the outbreak of conflict or confrontation. Although the ASEAN model is very much criticized, I think it does provide some ideas about what this arrangement might be.

First is the basic concept of cooperative security, which means working things out with adversaries and doing it in a group fashion, and making the decision making process a consensus-based and consensus-building process. One thing that ASEAN has achieved is that it has made interstate conflict among its members virtually unthinkable. Even realists will agree this is a serious achievement. The Northeast Asian security mechanism I have in mind would have same objective, which is to design institutions that would help make interstate conflict between the states unthinkable.

With regard to Professor Choi's work, I'm not disputing his empirical findings, but rather the hopefulness that they can be sustained. As an old man who has lived through many
conflicts, and one who does not look at the world in a constructivist way, I am thinking about possibilities like the ones Dr. Lankov has raised. I am thinking about power transition problems and the potential collapse of the DPRK. I agree that over the past 15 years there has been more harmony, integration, and interdependence (thanks to China) than most people predicted, but a crisis and/or leadership change can make for very rapid changes in state policies. What we want to do is help to build institutions that will provide the opportunity, should a DPRK collapse take place, to work together instead of against each other to make the best of a difficult situation.

In my paper, I began by reading many theories of cooperation, about why individuals cooperate among each other. I’ve tried to ask the question of why, and under what circumstances, are groups likely to cooperate, and then inferred from that guidelines under which states might be more cooperative with each other, trying to move toward building an institution.

The idea of building on the SPT structure, and I think it’s the right structure, is unprecedented. There are the four most powerful states in the world and one divided country. There are no models for this. But there are interesting ideas around, like the one put forward by the Stanley Foundation paper, which had a serious cooperative security content. It has been remarked upon many times that the crisis of the nuclear program in North Korea has created the opportunity for many countries to come together. Without the crisis it would never have happened. But the crisis brought the countries together, and the crisis provides a wonderful opportunity to do something new, positive, and important.

In terms of numbers, many other countries want to be a part of the arrangement, but if the basic concept is one of cooperative security, where decision is about consensus, then numbers become very important, and the more participants you have the more difficult it becomes to make agreements.

Greg has said this arrangement shouldn’t be a PRC or USA product. I agree. It must be a joint product that comes from working together. Some have suggested that, as a prerequisite to building something like this, the American bilateral alliances and bases would have to be withdrawn to make things work. I disagree. It must be a combination of bilateral and multilateral alliances that work together to support each other. The bilateral alliances, like the one between Japan and the USA, are important, and I don’t see a contradiction between a multilateral designs and bilateral relationships.

I hope people who are interested in working on this, including your colleagues and people from around the world, will come together on this to work together on designing an arrangement.

Mel GURTOV: We ourselves are one part of civil society, and I hope you will all take seriously what Pete is saying. Beyond producing more and more articles, we can hope to actually contribute to a process that ultimately only governments are able to negotiate.
Peter VAN NESS: A quick comment. What I find amazing is the way that virtually all of the six parties, except North Korea, have independently and separately talked about how to turn this SPT arrangement into a multilateral security dialogue. Independently, the parties involved realize that there is an opportunity to do something even more with the meetings they have been having. And this is a good piece of evidence that there are common interests among the six countries to do something important together to sustain those interests, especially in terms of strategic stability.

CHU Shulong: I would like to echo what Pete and others have said. Even though the bilateral approach has been a basis for maintaining security, and ad hoc relationships have worked in terms of economics, they are certainly not sufficient. They are not sufficient in the past, today, or in the future. Regarding the many bilateral agreements in the region, I agree it is a foundation and basis of regional security, but its not good enough or sufficient for the 21st century. Ad hoc multilateralism is not reliable, or certain, so I don’t see any cultural factors here. All of us want something reliable, in the form of certain institution and regimes, to maintain peace and security. In the Taiwan Strait, the status quo can be maintained without an agreement, but its better to be maintained with an agreement. These types of arrangements can give a reliability and certainty to peace processes and stability. I agree that the SPT provide a very good model, and that we need to work hard in different areas to see if this can develop into a regional security mechanism.

Richard TANTER: The idea Pete has raised is important, but I think it’s going to be quite hard, for two reasons. First, in terms of ASEAN, I really do not think it is the model. Has it made conflict unthinkable? Maybe, but its also been a machine for maintaining genocides in East Timor and Burma.

Mel GURTOV: It strikes me from what Pete has been writing that there are three core elements to creating an effective mechanism. He’s stressed two, the first being institutionalization and rules, and the second being the web that has been created between bilateral, trilateral, and now the possibility of multilateral alliance. I agree with him that the more alliances the better. The third aspect is the process itself, and that’s where I think ASEAN comes in. The criticisms are correct, but if there is something it can teach, it is about the process. The process can often be as important as the product. Creating the habit of dialogue does promote mutual respect. Diplomacy can be frustrating, but over time it can pay off. One has to be patient about this. That’s where I think ASEAN can contribute.

Mark VALENCIA: I just wanted to say briefly, why has there been no multilateralism in NE Asia? I think it comes back to the USA, and all the mistrust and suspicion. Who are the bilateral relationships against, and what are they for? Until that can be answered to China and Russia, there will be problems.

Peter VAN NESS: I think there is an answer. The parties that those alliances are aimed at, in an old realist fashion (reluctantly or however), have been lived with for a long time. Look at the Chinese view of the US-Japan relationship. Part of the Chinese acquiescence
to this relationship was the image of the cork in the bottle, that there was some benefit to them from the relationship, even while knowing where it was aimed. The most important thing, related to Mel’s comment about processes, is that as we go about building this thing there will be different kinds of insecurities about the fashion in which it is put together. But what would help the feeling of people who feel vulnerable is not having to give up their bilateral commitments while they start to play a more important role in the institution.

Mel GURTOV: I want to close with a few things. We do hope to publish a number of the contributions in the Asian Perspective, and also to go on and publish this as a book. Mark is the guest editor of this issue, and he and Pete and I will be in touch with you in hopes of getting contributions. Also, I hope you’ll join me in thanking the people who made this possible - my dear friend Taik-young Hamm, who has seen to this lovely space, as well as Dean, Kevin, and Ms. Lee, who have been terrific in organizing everything, and to Joe Narus. But beyond all that, this man here, Pete, is the real key. He has done a tremendous amount of work to make this happen, not least in raising money so we could afford to get together. Applause.

Peter VAN NESS: We also want to thank the East Asia Foundation for their support, and Professor Chung-in Moon, and the ANU’s College of Asia and the Pacific. Thank you everybody for coming. It’s been wonderful, and I’m most grateful that everybody came and engaged in these discussions.