

Comparing Different Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Management: The Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait

Report from the
Central Asia-Caucasus Institute &
Silk Road Studies Program Conference
Stockholm Sweden, December 16-17, 2005

Sofia K. Ledberg



*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
Silk Road Studies Program*

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Introduction

This report follows the conference "Comparing Different Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Management: the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait" organized by the Program for Silk Road Studies [herewith referred to as "Program"] at the Department of Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University held on December 16-17, 2005. The objective of the conference was to discuss the different experiences of conflict prevention and management in Northeast Asia and identify the common and differentiating factors regarding attempted measures of prevention and management on the Korean peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait. A further aim was to provide a historical and theoretical perspective on approaches to conflict management and prevention to enable a constructive analysis of the present day situation in Northeast Asia. The main sponsor of this event, as well as of the Program's overarching project on Conflict and Security in Asia, was the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Utrikesdepartementet). The Program also wishes to acknowledge the sponsorship of the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond) to this event, as well as the overarching support by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet).

This conference was part of a larger ongoing series of conferences and workshops on Conflict Prevention and Management (CPM). The main purpose of this conference series is to accumulate knowledge regarding CPM in Asia and create a structured forum for further research in which this knowledge can be applied. In order to broaden and advance the international research on regional CPM, invitations to these conferences and workshops are extended to prominent experts in Europe, Asia and the U.S. Although practitioners participate in the conferences, the participants to the December conference were predominantly academics.

- The objective of the event was to discuss and compare experiences of conflict prevention and management in Northeast Asia.

- The December event is part of a series of activities aiming at furthering the knowledge of conflict prevention and management in Asia.

The December conference was organized into the following five sessions: I - *Approaches to conflict prevention and management*; II - *Historical aspects to the conflicts on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait*; III - *Present day measures of conflict prevention and conflict management on the Korean Peninsula—advantages and disadvantages*; IV - *Present day measures of conflict prevention and conflict management in the Taiwan Strait—advantages and disadvantages*; V - *Lessons from the two cases—implications for the future.*¹

The purpose of this report is to offer an account of the discussion that took place during the questions and answers (Q & A) sessions following each round of presentations. This report starts by a presentation of the debate that took place with regard to the situation in Korea, including topics such as the North Korean state system, the six-party talks (SPT) and the role of China and the U.S. on the peninsula. The report then gives an account of the discussion on the Taiwan Strait issue, thereby addressing for example the communication between China and Taiwan, the anti-secession law, and Taiwanese independence. The last section of this report discusses conflict prevention and management and the lessons that can be learned by comparing the two Northeast Asian cases. Finally, this report should be seen as a complement to the conference papers, available at (www.silkroadstudies.org), and other publications drawing from the December event.

Korean Peninsula

The situation on the Korean peninsula was discussed during several of the Q & A sessions. The topics that were discussed can roughly be divided into: 1) the rule and system of the North Korean state; 2) the six-party talks; 3) the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; 4) the

- The purpose of this report is to offer an account of the discussions during the Q & A sessions of the conference.

- The report starts by focusing on the debate on the Korean peninsula and then addresses the discussion that took place regarding the Taiwan Strait.

- The conference papers and additional information about the conference can be found at the Program's homepage.

¹ A complete conference program, with names of the different presenters, can be found in the appendix at page 32 in this report.

United States in Korea; 5) China's engagement in Korea; 6) Japanese aid to Korea and the abduction issue. Thanks to the broad representation of analysts and auditors, many different views were voiced in the debate. Below follows an account of this discussion.

The Rule and System of the North Korean State

When discussing the nuclear stand-off and other related issues on the Korean peninsula, the debate came to touch upon the state system in North Korea and its possible implication for conflict management and prevention.

In one of the presentations, North Korea was described as an eroding totalitarian state. However, totalitarianism was not seen as a static condition, but as something undergoing constant changes. At present, it was argued, there are signs indicating that state control in North Korea is eroding. Other participants framed this differently and talked about recent changes to the better in North Korea. In regard to eroding totalitarianism, it was argued that this did not make the North Korean state unable, only disinclined, to engage in conflict resolution. Furthermore, it was pointed out that predictions about North Korea generally are hard to make, but that the succession of Kim Jong Il likely will be a decisive moment regarding the country's future. Other participants agreed with the description of North Korea as unpredictable. It was also argued that calls for a reversed security policy, on behalf of North Korea, made by the other states in the six-party talks make domestic elaboration in North Korea less plausible in the short term.

In addition, it was argued that an imminent collapse of the North Korean state is rather unlikely and that such anticipations, especially when made officially, will undermine confidence building on the peninsula. In this context, the problem of gaining inside information

- It was debated whether state control in North Korea was eroding and, if so, what implications this may have for conflict prevention.

- It was generally agreed that North Korea is a highly unpredictable state, but that an imminent collapse of the regime is unlikely.

on North Korea was addressed. As a consequence of this, it was pointed out, many North Korea reports have been written by people without first hand knowledge and experience of the country, something which was seen as problematic.

The danger of labeling states was brought up under the motto: "If you treat another state as an enemy, it will become one." Following this line of reasoning, it was stressed that categorizing North Korea can have profound implications, especially when done in conjunction with conflict management and prevention measures. Indeed, it may well cause the very actions these measures intend to prevent. Thus, it must be understood that approaches to conflict management, both in academic and policy circles, have real implications.

Six-Party Talks

The six-party talks (SPT) were generally viewed as an important framework for conflict management on the Korean peninsula. However, both the future prospect and effectiveness of the framework was called into question. It was argued that it is turning into a proclamation without any tangible progress toward denuclearization. Several participants framed the current situation as a cross-road: either the talks will become institutionalized, or they will turn into five-party talks, thereby excluding North Korea. Although an institutionalization generally was perceived as something positive, a couple of objections were made. An institutionalization would, for example, mean that a certain format and procedure is made permanent, although this format may only be appropriate for some, but not all, issues and situations. Another question that was raised was whether Asia really should copy the Eurocentric focus on large, formal organizations.

- The danger of labeling states was brought up under the motto: "If you treat another state as an enemy, it will become one."

- The six-party talks were generally viewed as an important framework for conflict management and prevention.

The approach to the timeframe of the SPT was also said to differ among the involved states. In general, it was said that the involved Asian states were more patient about the process than the U.S. Most analysts also seemed to agree that the parties to the talks, without doubt, are working for a joint goal, but that they simultaneously are pursuing their own agenda. Here, China's interest in North Korea's energy resources was used as an example. Indeed, one analyst suggested that actors may even deliberately protract negotiations to gain more time to pursue their own interests. Although the SPT were said to be hijacked by the national interests of the participating states, at least the Asian participants view the talks as a useful mechanism to prevent unilateral action from the U.S.

In the discussion on how to reach nuclear disarmament on the Korean peninsula, the so called "Ukraine model" was addressed.² However, there was no consensus on the applicability of this model. Some analysts argued that the "Ukraine model" would be difficult to apply, especially since the SPT have been largely unsuccessful. Another obstacle was argued to be the unknown location and number of the North Korean missiles. Discussants arguing in favor of the model claimed that there simply is no better model to apply since North Korea is in urgent need of a security guarantee. Following this line of thought, it was discussed whether North Korea's security would be enhanced by an inclusion under a regional nuclear umbrella. However, what such an umbrella would look like was not discussed in any length. As a response to North Korea's perceived need for nuclear weapons, it was pointed out

- The Asian states were said to be more patient about the SPT process than the U.S.

- The SPT were said to prevent unilateral action from the U.S.

- The applicability of the "Ukraine model" was discussed.

² In the case of Ukraine, the United States, Britain, and Russia issued a Memorandum on Security Assurances after Ukraine acceded to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) in 1994. These states thereby assured that they would not threaten Ukraine with economic coercion or military force "except in self-defense or...in accordance with" the United Nations Charter. [Author's comment]

that Sweden refrained from developing nuclear weapons despite being under threat.

Some participants questioned Pyongyang's real wish to resolve the stand-off and argued that North Korea is using the six-party talks and the lack of consensus among the participating states to gain maneuver room, just as it tried to use the existing space between Moscow and Beijing during the Cold War. It was argued that North Korea is reluctant to give up its nuclear card, since without it there are few ways in which it can make its voice heard internationally.

The question of the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was also raised in the discussion on the six-party talks. There seemed to be consensus that the KEDO served a useful purpose but that the lack of support for the organization, especially from the U.S. administration and congress, undermined its work. Thus, the failure of the U.S. to fulfill its obligations under the 1994 Agreed Framework can not be attributed to KEDO but rather to the U.S. administration. It was also said that the South Korean government is trying to revive the KEDO, despite the dire costs of running the organization, but that the other parties to the SPT are unwilling to support such a move.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

During the discussions on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, a reference was made to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) – the treaty that North Korea withdrew from, thereby intensifying the crisis. One participant argued that it would be appropriate to address the different standards of this treaty before moving on to discussing any frameworks for conflict management. It was correctly pointed out that some states, like India and Pakistan, have developed nuclear weapons outside the NPT without any serious, long-term repercussions from the international community.

- Some participants questioned North Korea's real interest in resolving the stand-off.

- The usefulness of KEDO was acknowledged but the lack of U.S. support was said to undermine its work.

Such double standards could lead to the understanding that North Korea, indeed, also has the right to develop such weapons. This issue should, it was argued, be dealt with before talking about the effectiveness of the six-party talks.

Another participant argued that since the talks aim to resolve the nuclear issue on the Peninsula, it would be appropriate to invite the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the six-party talks.

United States in Korea

The U.S. presence in Korea dates back more than half a century and the discussion on the implications of this involvement touched upon several issues. The U.S., under assistant secretary of state for Far eastern Affairs Dean Rusk, took the initiative to draw what was intended to be a temporary demarcation line between the two Koreas following the Korean War. This was done merely to facilitate a division of labor between the U.S. and the USSR and the demilitarization of the Japanese troops. Korea was thus liberated and divided at the same time and this is why the Korean nationalists still blame the U.S. for its current position.

The U.S.-South Korean relations have fluctuated over time which was highlighted to illustrate that the complicated U.S.-North Korean relations also may change over time. Although South Korea and the U.S. are on friendly terms today, it was pointed out that the South Korean leader Park Chung Hee was perceived as a major enemy of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. The American disliking of Park could of course have turned South Korea into an isolationist state, but instead the South Korean leader chose to lobby with the U.S.

Just so, one South Korean participant wished to highlight the positive impact of the American presence on the peninsula and stressed the fact that the U.S.

- One participant suggested that the IAEA should be invited to the six-party talks.

- The fluctuation in the relationship between South Korea and the U.S. was used to illustrate that U.S.-North Korean relations may improve in the future.

troops never occupied South Korea. Rather, the troops were invited to come and their presence, it was argued, proved highly beneficial to South Korea. This was raised as an important point that both North and South Koreans should bear in mind. However, this positive view of the American troops on the Peninsula was not shared by all participants. One North Korean participant argued, for example, that such a deployment was unnecessary since the two Koreas have agreed to resolve the peninsular issue in a peaceful manner.

During the discussion on the relations and contacts between North Korea and the U.S., it was pointed out that the U.S. had breached several of the commitments in the Agreed Framework, whereas it was argued that the North Koreans had fulfilled their part of the agreement. One analyst pointed out that, according to the agreement, the U.S. should not pose any threat, nuclear or otherwise, to the North Koreans. However, in reality, the U.S. has listed North Korea as a possible target of a preemptive strike and labeled it as part of an axis of evil. This was argued to be yet another proof of the American non-compliance.

Regarding the most recent round of six-party talks, some participants argued that the U.S. posed the greatest obstacle to any tangible progress. It was pointed out that the U.S. refused to accept the nuclear provisions in the joint statement following the fourth round of the SPT in September 2005, despite the fact that it was backed by all other parties. Instead, it was argued, the U.S. has tried to isolate North Korea and damage it through spreading rumors of narcotics smuggling. The same participant also questioned the trustworthiness of the U.S. leaders who promote a negotiated solution at the same time as they wish to topple the North Korean system. North Korea, it was suggested, cannot sit at the same table as a state which expresses such intentions. Taken together, this was

- The positive impact of the U.S. presence on the peninsula was stressed by a South Korean participant, but questioned by a North Korean analyst.

- North Korea was said to find it difficult to negotiate with the U.S. knowing that Washington wishes to topple the North Korean system.

argued to be the reason for the failed talks and the bleak prospects for the next round.

China's Engagement in Korea

Several conference participants acknowledged Beijing's unusual active diplomacy on the Korean peninsula. It was argued that this move, from passive to active handling of the crisis, was important and indeed something positive. Several issues in regard to China's role on the peninsula were raised during the discussion sessions, including: China's view on the SPT; China's possible leverage over North Korea; and China's underlying interests on the peninsula.

Regarding the present stalemate in the SPT, a couple of Chinese participants argued that Beijing's official line is that one of the main parties, i.e. North Korea or the U.S., needs to take the first step and that this preferably should be the Americans. China, it was said, sees its role as a balancer in the negotiations. Some participants also suggested that China, as opposed to other regional states, may have a better insight into and understanding of North Korea's domestic conditions. Consequently, it was argued that China may well understand the security needs of Pyongyang better than the other parties.

Today, China is commonly viewed as one of the most influential states in the six-party talks due to its unique contacts with Pyongyang. However, there was no consensus among the participants on the degree of China's influence or its possibility or willingness to utilize it. Some argued that this influence was larger in the past, whereas others argued that the fact that China managed to get North Korea to the negotiating table proves its prevailing influence.

In the discussions, a few points were made to modify the standard view of China as the most influential third party on the Korean peninsula. First, it was argued that

- Beijing's unusual active diplomacy on the Korean peninsula was acknowledged.

- It was suggested that China has a better understanding of North Korea's domestic situation and security needs than other states in the SPT.

- It was argued that China's unique contacts with Pyongyang make it an influential actor in the SPT. However, China's willingness or ability to practice this influence was being debated.

China's interest, and influence, in North Korea is limited. North Korea belongs to China's sphere of economic interest and China's oil and food aid is not supplied for humanitarian reasons but rather as part of an economic strategy. The North Koreans were said to be fully aware of this fact. Another participant argued that China seeks a "big brother" position and that the only reason for China's engagement is the geographic proximity.

Second, it was suggested that Korea is linked to the issue of Taiwan in the eyes of the Chinese leaders. It was argued that a common view in, for example, Japan, is that the Chinese leaders anticipate the U.S. to ask more of them in regard to North Korea and that they will use this as a bargaining chip in the Taiwan issue. The third point that was made in regard to China's influence over North Korea was that other states use China's influence over North Korea as an excuse to limit their own efforts.

It was also pointed out that any potential influence also poses constraints on China and that it simply cannot follow the U.S. or South Korea in this matter. China has its own interests, it was argued, which it needs to monitor. The difference between being influential and practicing influence was also stressed. In addition, it was argued that North Korea also has cards to play in its diplomatic encounters with China, which forces China to be careful. In this regard, it should be remembered – as one Chinese participant pointed out – that China adheres to the principle of non-interference and therefore needs to think twice anytime it is asked to use its potential leverage.

One of the North Korean participants totally dismissed the idea of other states having an influence over North Korea. It was stressed that Pyongyang never has sought permission from another state regarding its foreign policy and that super power influence simply does not

- It was suggested that the Chinese leadership links Korea with Taiwan, hoping that its efforts on the peninsula will pay off in the Strait.

- It was also pointed out that China's eventual influence over North Korea also constrains China's policy options.

- One North Korean participant totally dismissed the idea of other states having an influence over North Korea.

work on the independent policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Japanese Aid to Korea and the Abduction Issue

The abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea was also acknowledged and it was discussed whether this should be allowed to influence Japanese aid to North Korea. One analyst argued that this issue needs to be resolved on a bilateral level, but that this need not be directly linked to the nuclear issue on the peninsula. As an example, it was mentioned that several hundred South Koreans have been abducted by the North, but that this has been set aside for the sake of peace. However, it was argued that Japan most likely would be unable to make that separation since the abduction issue seemingly has taken over the Japanese debate. Fears were also raised that this issue may cause Japan to become isolated in the six-party talks.

One Japanese participant argued that Japan must apologize properly for the colonization of Korea. It was pointed out that it already has apologized and provided aid to South Korea and that it should be prepared to do the same in regard to North Korea. Another participant pointed out that if historic precedent is a guideline, Japan will not give ODA to North Korea until North Korea and the United States have established diplomatic relations, in the same way as aid to China and Vietnam was not granted until these countries normalized relations with the U.S.

Taiwan

The second issue in focus of this conference was the situation across the Taiwan Strait. Although one of the sessions was devoted solely to the cross-Strait issue, the matter was discussed throughout the conference. Thanks to the broad selection of the presenting and auditing participants, several views on the Sino-

- One Japanese participant argued that North Korea should receive the same aid as South Korea as compensation for Japan's colonization of Korea.

- The cross-Strait situation was the second issue of focus of the conference.

Taiwanese relationship were put forward, thereby assuring a multifaceted and broad discussion. Regarding the debate, the topics of discussion can be divided as follows: Communication between China and Taiwan; the anti-secession law (ASL); Taiwan independence; the roles and views of other states; confidence building between China and Taiwan; and deterrence.

Communication between China and Taiwan

There seemed to be a general agreement among the conference participants that the communication between China and Taiwan needs improvement. There has been no track-one communication between the two entities for the past six year.³ According to one analyst, there was one explicit and one implicit explanation for this silence. The explicit explanation is that the present Taiwanese president, Chen Shui-bian, lacks credibility on the Mainland. The implicit reason is that China feels it has time on its side and can afford to wait. These preconditions, it was argued, negatively impact the Mainland's preparedness to establish preventive measure between the two sides.

Despite the lack of official communication, there is plenty of interaction between China and Taiwan over other issues, such as trade. It was also pointed out that preventative measures have been implemented without any official agreement. It was argued that the non-official interaction should be used as a starting point from which new ideas should be developed through "thinking outside the box". According to some analysts, comparative studies of other cases are of little use and China and Taiwan must find ways to improve the situation based on the existing situation.

³ In 1999, then Taiwanese President Lee Tung-hui made a statement in which he referred to China and Taiwan as two states located on each side of the Strait. This caused cross-Strait relations to deteriorate and all official channels of contacts were abandoned.

- The participants agreed that the communication between China and Taiwan needs to improve.

- One analyst gave two reasons for the silence on China's behalf: The lack of trust for Chen Shui-bian; and the belief that time is on China's side.

- It was argued that the non-official interaction should be used as a starting point from which new ideas should be developed.

The Anti-Secession Law

On March 14 2005, the National People's Congress passed an Anti-Secession Law (ASL); a law that has received a great deal of attention and criticism worldwide. The massive protests in, for example, Taiwan have targeted especially Article 8 of the legislation, which states that "[i]n the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the state shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Whereas China argues that this law merely restates China's longstanding policy, as stated for example in its White Paper on Taiwan, several Western states and Taiwan see it as a "war authorizing" law. Not surprisingly, the discussion at the conference did not lead to any consensus on the purpose and intent of the law.

Some of the participants pointed out important differences between China's White Paper on Taiwan and the ASL. For example, in the ASL, China states three conditions under which the state shall employ non-peaceful means and these differ slightly from the conditions stated in the White Paper. It was also pointed out that the ASL does not mention the "one country – two systems". However, it was argued that this does not imply the end of this formula merely that Beijing only refers to it implicitly since it is highly unpopular on Taiwan. It was also stressed that the ASL substituted the Unification Law, which indicates an important strategy change from action to reaction. The same analyst also emphasized that the non-peaceful means of Article 8, for example, may imply sanctions and not necessarily military means. Furthermore, it was

- In regard to the ASL, China argues that it merely restates China's longstanding Taiwan policy. However, several Western states and Taiwan see it as a "war authorizing" law.

- It was pointed out that there are differences between the ASL and China's White Paper on Taiwan.

- The ASL substituted the Unification Law, which indicates an important strategy change from action to reaction.

also made clear that the ASL is not directed at Taiwan per se but that it is intended to assure Chinese unity.⁴

According to one Japanese participant, there are two interpretations of this law. First, that China definitely will use military force if Taiwan declares independence. Second, that China will not use military force as long as Taiwan does not declare independence. This second reading would thus, in fact, mean that Beijing guarantees the existence of Taiwan and could be interpreted as a remarkable signal to the world that China accepts the status quo.

Some participants agreed with this interpretation and saw the law as a clarification from Beijing's side that force will not be used provided that Taiwan does not declare independence. However, others clearly doubted this interpretation and stated that China never has renounced the use of force and that its military modernization should be taken as a hint of Beijing's intentions. Furthermore, it was argued that Taiwan worries about China's domestic situation and fears a scenario where the Chinese government fails to address internal unrest and uses the "liberation" of Taiwan as a way to rally the mainlanders around the flag. Following this line of thinking, Taiwan does not dare to give up its defense without any real guarantees. It was also argued that China should have communicated with Taiwan instead of issuing the ASL.

One Chinese analyst argued that the law has not made China's position any harsher. Quite contrary, it was argued that China already has the capability to address the Taiwan issue with non-peaceful means and that it would be successful if it did. However, the same analyst stressed that China lacks the will to do so. Rather, Beijing was said to be prepared to wait. This argument was countered by a Taiwanese analyst saying that

- A Chinese participant pointed out that the non-peaceful measures referred to in the ASL may imply sanctions and not necessarily military means.

- Some argued that the ASL indicates that China will not use military force if Taiwan does not declare independence.

- The Taiwanese fear that the "liberation" of Taiwan will be used to unify the Chinese population in times of social unrest.

⁴ Per definition, the law would thus also be applicable to Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. [Author's comment]

China would not have needed an ASL if it would have felt that time is on its side. Later on in the discussions, it was argued that time is on China's side, but only in some ways. For example, the political attitude on Taiwan is not working in favor of China as illustrated by the growing movement for independence in Taiwan.

According to several of the participants, a great deal of ambiguity regarding the ASL could be traced back to the secrecy surrounding the ratification process. For example, the U.S. was not informed about the law. Taken together, this gave rise to speculations and has contributed to the negative outlook on the ASL.

Taiwan Independence

From the Taiwanese side, it was asserted that the island will not declare independence. It was argued that since this pledge is being repeated by the Taiwanese leaders, China should have faith in this statement. The fact that China does not renounce the use of force must be interpreted as a lack of trust toward Taiwan, which is not a sound basis for communication. Some Taiwanese participants stressed that Taiwan's military policy is strictly defensive and that any procurements merely aim to improve the island's defensive capability. Simultaneously, Taiwan is trying to deal with its "cousins" across the Strait.

From the Chinese perspective, it was argued that China is doing everything to get a dialogue with Taiwan, but that it simultaneously has to be prepared to use military force. However, it was stressed that engagement is at the top of China's present policy agenda and that China has moved away from the military doctrine of People's War. Several Chinese participants repeatedly argued that China only takes a stance against the independence advocates, not the Taiwanese people. According to one Chinese analyst, many mainlanders regard Taiwan's policy makers as troublemakers striving for

- From the Chinese side, it was stressed that China has the means but not the will to use force across the Strait.

- The secrecy in the ratification process and the lack of forehand information was argued to be one explanation for the negative perceptions of the ASL.

- The Taiwanese leaders have said that they will not declare independence and China should have faith in this, some analysts argued.

independence. Since the military is subordinated the political leadership, which at the moment pushes for independence, the Chinese find it difficult to believe that Taiwan's military procurements are part of a defensive strategy.

The Roles and Views of Other States

Clearly, no regional state, nor the United States, wants to see a military conflict erupt in Northeast Asia. However, there were different takes among the conference participants on whether states or organizations like Japan, South Korea, the United States and the European Union would be able to stay outside a potential cross-Strait military conflict. Although many regional states have declared neutrality in this regard, their actual undertakings in case of a war remain unpredictable. Therefore, it was argued, China should refrain from making too positive calculations.

For example, it was mentioned that Japan recently labeled Taiwan a Japanese security concern. It was also commented that South-Korean non-intervention in a cross-Strait conflict should not be taken for granted since South Korea has obligations to the U.S. through the mutual defense treaty. However, there were different takes on this matter. While some argued that South Korea likely would be forced into such a conflict, other participants stressed that South Korea definitely would remain neutral and that a South Korean involvement already has been ruled out in the U.S. military defense perspective.

The American policy of strategic ambiguity toward Taiwan was also addressed during the discussion. One of the questions raised was whether there had been any recent changes to this strategy. One analyst argued that the Americans have moved toward co-management with Beijing, although this is not obvious in any open statements from the U.S. administration. According to

- Many regional states have declared neutrality but their actual undertakings in case of a war remain unpredictable.

- It was argued that Washington has moved toward co-management with Beijing, thereby affecting the strategic ambiguity.

this participant, the mood is changing in Washington which can be interpreted as a power shift. The discussions within the U.S. leadership are, to a great extent, focused on how to avoid conflict when a rising power meets a dominant power. The same analyst argued that the best for Washington would be to keep the issue alive forever, whereas Beijing would prefer to deal with the issue alone. Since neither of these two options is feasible, the U.S. and China have settled for the second best, i.e. co-management to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence.

Another analyst argued that the American strategic ambiguity has two layers. The first is the policy level, on which the U.S. openly opposes Taiwan independence. This open opposition is new and the U.S. is thus clearer than previously. The second level of strategic ambiguity involves whether the U.S. will get involved in a military cross-Strait conflict, and here the ambiguity is still prevailing.

In regard to a potential U.S. involvement in the Taiwan Strait, the problem of conception and misconception in Sino-U.S. relations was highlighted. In light of this discussion, the outcome of a potential Sino-U.S. war over Taiwan was touched upon. It was stressed that in such a war there would be no winners, only losers. However, China tends to assume that it is willing to sacrifice more than the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait. This was argued to be a very dangerous assumption. As one American analyst pointed out, this is an issue of U.S. credibility and face-saving especially when framed as a fight for democracy. The U.S. resolve should therefore not be underestimated, it was argued. Other analysts pointed to the fact that China and the U.S. face very different interest domestically, which creates an asymmetry in their willingness to fight such a war. Although the U.S. may have a will to defend a democratic Taiwan, its domestic opinion will be an important determinant for U.S. behavior. In this regard,

- The open U.S. opposition against Taiwanese independence is new

- China assumes that it is willing to make greater sacrifices than the U.S. in the Strait, which was argued to be a dangerous assumption.

- It was acknowledged that China and the U.S. face different interest domestically.

the Chinese calculations about the American willingness to fight might be correct. It is thus possible that the Chinese could in fact defeat the U.S. since domestic interests would cause Washington to withdraw. If this would happen, it was pointed out, the credibility of U.S. power in the South Pacific, or even globally, would be undermined. This, in turn, would open up for China to become the paramount power in Asia, which certainly is not in the interest of the West, including Europe.

Europe's importance to this issue was stressed by one of the participants who also encouraged Europe to take a more outspoken position on the Taiwan Strait issue. Clearly, the Sino-U.S. links weigh heavier in Beijing than do its ties to the European Union. It may therefore not be in China's interest to acknowledge or encourage a trilateral Sino-U.S.-E.U. linkage in regard to the Taiwan Strait. However, the analyst argued that such a linkage would indeed be highly beneficial for the future prospect of peace in the Taiwan Strait.

Confidence Building between China and Taiwan

When discussing the prospects for conflict prevention and management across the Taiwan Strait, it was argued that such concepts are new to China and that the country still is in the learning phase. In addition, Taiwan is regarded as a part of China and Beijing therefore does not take a state-to-state approach in this matter. It was also stressed that the Asian and European views of conflict prevention differ significantly. The Asian model takes a top-down approach that starts with principles and thereafter moves to concrete measures. In Europe, on the other hand, conflict prevention measures are expected to follow a bottom-up pattern.

China's interest in confidence building measures (CBMs) and concession making was also questioned,

- Europe was encouraged to take a more outspoken role in cross-Strait affairs.

The differing Asian and European views on conflict prevention were highlighted.

- The fact that China is the strongest party made some analysts question China's interest in confidence building measures and concession making.

noting that it is by far the strongest party. One Taiwanese analyst argued that it would be naïve to believe that China has an interest in improving cross-Strait relations or reducing tension. Nevertheless, Taiwan, it was argued, has no other option than to promote CBMs to not be perceived as a troublemaker. Another participant questioned China's "two hands" approach to conflict prevention, i.e. "to talk war and make peace", and said that in order to shake hands with someone you have to let go of the weapon you carry in the other hand.⁵

In line with its present strategy, Taiwan was said to be aiming at an internationalization of the issue, justified by the implications a cross-Strait conflict would have for the international community. Although the Taiwanese side was said to be willing to make efforts, it did not expect any immediate progress in cross-Strait relations since China seems to be awaiting the Taiwanese elections in 2008, after which it hopes that the Kuomintang will gain power.

Several other analysts brought up the multilateral approach as a possible way forward for Sino-Taiwan relations and argued that at least the U.S. should be involved in this process. It was also pointed out that China's classification of the Taiwan issue as an internal affair has negative implications for any attempts to conflict prevention and management in the whole region. The question was raised how confidence building measures or preventive diplomacy will be able to prevent accidents in the air or on the sea in Northeast Asia, when Japan and Taiwan, for example, not are allowed to negotiate with each other.

One analyst identified a number of difficulties regarding multilateral measures for preventing

- In line with its present strategy, Taiwan is aiming at an internationalization of the conflict.

- The multilateral approach was put forward as a possibility for Sino-Taiwan relations, thereby including at least the U.S.

⁵ China's approach to conflict prevention is characterized by *liangshou celue* (two hands' strategy/tactic) and mixes military coercion and peaceful offence.

accidents in the air or on the sea in Northeast Asia. The first difficulty, it was argued, was whether China would allow Taiwan to take part. Judging from China's previous stance in this issue, it does not seem likely that Taiwan could be included in such an exercise. On the other hand, without the involvement of Taiwan, any such measures would be fruitless. In this regard, it was pointed out that former U.S. President Bill Clinton tried to internationalize the Taiwan issue in that he proposed to decrease the sales of weapons to Taiwan in return for a reduction of Chinese missiles facing Taiwan. This attempt failed, however, as China once again referred to the Taiwan issue as a domestic affair. Another difficulty in establishing multilateral conflict prevention measures in Northeast Asia was identified to be the many unresolved territorial disputes in the region.

Another Taiwanese analyst presented a strategy called "three people principles", which was described as "knowing the people, caring for the people, and winning the people over." It was argued that the Mainland is not knowing, caring for or winning the hearts of the Taiwanese people. Through a chart, the correlation between policy decisions on the Mainland and the support for the independence movement on Taiwan was illustrated. The graphics showed clearly how hostile statements, military exercises and other political actions by the Chinese government reinforced the support for an independent Taiwan. In this way, Beijing's efforts to stem Taiwan's move toward independence have in fact proved counterproductive.

It was proposed that successful cooperation across the Strait should follow a so called EMP approach: Economy first, Military second and Politics last. To the EMP approach, a number of factors were added, such as the dispute on sovereignty issue (P-factor); increasing economic interdependence (E-factor); increasing socio-economic exchanges: (E+++ factor); absence of an

- The many unresolved territorial disputes in the region were identified as a major obstacle to concrete conflict prevention measures in Northeast Asia.

- It was illustrated how hostile Chinese statements and military exercises reinforce the support for an independent Taiwan.

immediate military conflict (M-factor). In order to think outside the box, new approaches to the conventional conflict prevention terms were suggested. For example, it was suggested that between Taiwan and China, the abbreviation CBM should be read Cross-Strait Beneficial Measures instead of confidence building measures and that preventive diplomacy should be replaced by Preventive Defusing.

One Chinese analyst made three points in regard to the EMP approach. First, it was argued that it is absolutely essential for China to know, care about, and win over the Taiwanese people. To know the people was argued to be the most important of these aspects and it was said that the Chinese government needs to do more in this regard. Second, the same analyst also carefully stressed that the final aim of the Mainland is not to occupy Taiwan by military means. Third, it was proposed that the two sides should find and enhance communalities and shared interests instead of stressing points of differences.

Deterrence

Deterrence was a strategy subject to lengthy discussion during the Q&A sessions. There were different takes on the usefulness and appropriateness of deterrence as a conflict prevention measure. Some participants argued for deterrence in Northeast Asia, saying that it proved to be a useful mechanism preventing the outbreak of war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Another reason why deterrence could be applicable to the cross-Strait conflict was argued to be the fact that China has no guarantee that Taiwan will not declare independence even if China renounces the use of force. One of the advocates also stated that deterrence is not necessarily an offensive approach. Rather, it was argued to be a defensive strategy which promotes cooperation and makes possible confidence building measures.

- New approaches to the conventional conflict prevention terms were suggested.

- Some analysts argued in favor of deterrence and pointed out that it proved useful during the Cold War.

- By the advocates, deterrence was described as a defensive strategy that promotes co-operation.

One analyst called for new approaches to confidence building between China and Taiwan and asked whether it would be worth introducing concepts such as deterrence to the Chinese government. China is, at present, clearly trying to deter Taiwan from declaring independence. If this is argued to be an accepted conflict prevention measure, then the U.S. could, in theory, use deterrence toward China to force Beijing to introduce democracy.

The same analyst also referred to China's classification of Taiwan as an internal issue and posed the open question of whether deterrence can be used as a strategy in an intrastate conflict. In this is the case, it was argued, analysts dealing with the Taiwan Strait issue should aim to learn more about conflict prevention measures applicable to intrastate disputes by studying for example the conflict in the Ache province in Indonesia.

However, several arguments were raised against deterrence. One analyst drew attention to the words of U.S. General Lee Butler: "deterrence seems to work when you need it least." It was pointed out that it is difficult to know if deterrence really is operating or if a conflict is prevented from eruption due to other reasons. It was also argued that deterrence seems to be working as long as there is no immediate crisis. Once a crisis occurs, however, one can never be quite sure. In addition, during the Cold War, there were two rather disciplined and well-behaved blocks facing each other. In Northeast Asia, there are too many large and small powers involved to construct a balance like that in Europe during the Cold War, it was argued. In reply, one participant commented that all states in Europe were not divided into two blocks, but that a number of states, of differing parliamentary systems, remained neutral. It was also argued that it was not the confidence building measures that started the process,

- One analyst encouraged academics to learn more about conflict prevention measures suitable for internal conflicts.

- It was argued that deterrence seems to work as long as there is no immediate crisis.

- In addition, it was argued that the situation in Northeast Asia cannot be compared to Europe during the Cold War.

but the will. The role of the analyst is thus to promote the will.

One of the critical voices highlighted the economic implications of the Cold War deterrence. The U.S.S.R., for instance, spent half its GDP on weapons, i.e. 5.8 trillion dollars until 1996. In addition, the arms race during the Cold War left the world with 50,000 nuclear weapons. In sum, it was argued that the fundamental failure of deterrence is to know when enough is enough and that such enormous military expenditure constitutes a theft from the people.

Another analyst also pointed out that deterrence is made up by a combination of threat and capability and that it can keep rational people from crossing the line. Moreover, in regard to a state like Japan, it should be remembered that you need power and military capability to be able to deter.

Conflict Prevention and Management – Comparing Experiences

Although few attempts were made to directly compare the experiences in the Taiwan Strait and on the Korean peninsula, a few overall lessons regarding conflict prevention were nevertheless highlighted. Arguably, these are lessons that are applicable to both Northeast Asian cases. During the discussions, the importance of a constructive language in conflict management and prevention was stressed. All involved parties to a process need to be treated with respect. Defaming and negatively characterizing another party may create a self-fulfilling prophesy. In this way, the conflict management process may cause the very actions it intends to prevent. One overarching goal for people involved in processes of conflict management and prevention should rather be to break down negative stereotypes and replace them with positive ones.

- Few attempts were made to directly compare the two Northeast Asian cases.

- The importance of a constructive language in conflict management and prevention was stressed.

One scholar wished to stress that policy making should be left for the decision makers. The analysts should function as innovators of new ideas and solution. Academics should be there to challenge, it was argued, not just repeat their government's positions. For example, new ideas for increasing the receptiveness of the two sides in the Taiwan Straits are needed. To achieve this, scholars need to find likeminded colleagues from the other side with whom they can work together.

Many analysts could not see any alternative to deterrence. It was argued that the existence of deterrence should be recognized and that the room for maneuver that it creates should be utilized for positive measures like confidence building and conflict management. In the Taiwan Strait, it was suggested that the core issues should be left aside to focus on smaller issues on the margins. On the Korean peninsula, the multiparty process should be continued.

The relation between China and Japan was singled out as a highly important link for overall state to state relations in Northeast Asia. More cooperation is needed between the two entities. For example, further studies on the Sino-Japanese war are needed and this should preferable be done collaboratively by Korean, Japanese and Chinese historians. In this regard, it was stressed that China's leadership also should be more open to its citizens about the economic aid from Japan which it received as a compensation for the war. It seems like the Japanese aid, just like the Japanese willingness to apologize, has gone largely unreported to the Chinese people.

Concluding Remarks – The Future Ahead

In the concluding remarks, it was highlighted that it clearly is much easier to focus on policy than on non-politicized issues. Although there are significant

- Many analysts argued that the existence of deterrence should be recognized and positives measures implemented on the side.

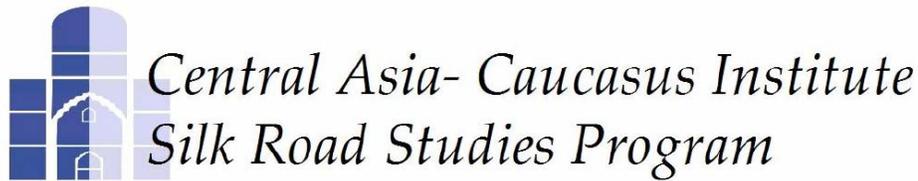
- Sino-Japanese relations were singled out as highly important for overall state to state relations in Northeast Asia.

differences in perception, it is more important to stress the common denominators and interests, such as trade, trade, and good neighborly relations, than the differences. However, despite the lack of tangible progress, one positive sign was identified to be the "peaceful content" of the discussions – no one suggested a military solution to the problems in Northeast Asia.

Some of the needs for the future were identified as:

- further track 1 - 4 dialogues
- a move from a negative to a constructive language
- new channels for interaction
- new thinking
- the inclusion of culture and education in the process of conflict management and prevention

APPENDIX



**COMPARING DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND
MANAGEMENT: KOREAN PENINSULA AND THE TAIWAN STRAIT
STOCKHOLM DECEMBER 16-17, 2005**

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Friday December 16

***Session I:
Approaches to conflict prevention and management***

09.00-09.15 **Opening of the conference**
Stefan Hedlund, Uppsala University
Niklas Swanström, Uppsala University

09.15-10.15 **Presentations**

Fredrik Söderbaum, Gothenburg University, Sweden
**A REGIONAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT PREVENTION AND
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

Chyungly Lee, National Chengchi University, Taiwan
**CONFLICT PREVENTION IN NORTHEAST ASIA:
LESSONS TO LEARN FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA?**

Jaewoo Choo, Kyung Hee University, Republic of Korea
**SIX PARTY TALKS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION:
A THEORETICAL ASSESSMENT**

William Zartman, Johns Hopkins University, USA
**NEGOTIATING THE BALANCE OF TERROR IN THE STRAITS AND ON THE
PENINSULA**

10.15-10.30 **Coffee break**

10.30-11.30 **Questions and discussion**

11.30-12.30 **Lunch**

Session II:

Historical aspects to the conflicts on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait, with special regard to conflict prevention and conflict management

12.30-13.30 **Presentations**

Arthur Ding, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

PRACTICE WITHOUT THEORY

Quansheng Zhao, American University, USA

CHINA AND THE TWO HOT SPOTS – NORTH KOREA AND TAIWAN

Erik Cornell, Ambassador (ret.), Foreign Ministry, Sweden

NORTH KOREA PURSUING THE HERMIT TRADITION

Andrew Scobell, U.S. Army War College, USA

THE EVOLUTION OF PYONYANG'S POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ITS IMPACT ON NORTH KOREAN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

13.30-14.30 **Questions and Discussion**

14.30-14.45 **Coffee break**

Session III:

Present day measures of conflict prevention and conflict management on the Korean Peninsula—advantages and disadvantages

14.45-16.00 **Presentations**

Zhang Li, Sichuan University, China

THE SIX-PARTY REGIME IN ADDRESSING THE KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS: GAINS, MERITS AND LIMITATIONS

Tiejun Zhang, Shanghai Institute of International Studies, China

SIX-PARTY TALKS AND PROSPECTS FOR NORTHEAST ASIAN MULTILATERAL SECURITY REGIME

Samuel S. Kim, Columbia University, USA

CHINA'S CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO THE NUCLEAR STANDOFF ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Song Nam An, Institute for Disarmament and Peace, D.P.R Korea

THE ROOT CAUSE OF CONFLICT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND THE CONSISTENT EFFORTS MADE BY THE DPRK FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE KOREAN QUESTION

Chu Zhaofeng, Academy of Military Science, China

EFFECT-BASED APPROACHES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION IN NORTH KOREA

Marie Söderberg, European Institute of Japanese Studies, Sweden

JAPANESE FOREIGN AID, AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO INFLUENCE NORTH KOREA?

Hiroshi Kimura, Takushoku University, Japan

PUTIN'S POLICY TOWARDS THE KOREAN PENINSULA – WHY HAS RUSSIA BEEN LOSING ITS INFLUENCE?

16.00-17.00 **Questions and Discussion**

Saturday December 17

Session IV:

Present day measures of conflict prevention and conflict management in the Taiwan Strait--- advantages and disadvantages

9.00-10.30 Presentations

Tomohide Murai, National Defense Academy, Japan

CONFLICT MECHANISM BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN

Wen-Cheng Lin, Sun-Yat-Sen University, Taiwan

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND TAIWAN-CHINA RELATIONS

Suisheng Zhao, University of Denver, USA

CONFLICT PREVENTION ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT AND THE MAKING OF THE ANTI-SECESSION LAW

Han Hua, Beijing University, China

CREDIBLE DETERRENCE: CHINA'S NEW POSTURE IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Yang-Cheng Wang, National Defense University, Taiwan

FEASIBLE MEASURES FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT

John Garver, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA

EUROPE'S ROLE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

10.30-10.45 **Coffee break**

10.45-12.00 **Questions and Discussion**

12.00-13.00 **Lunch**

Session V:

Lessons from the two cases—implications for the future

13.00-14.15 **Presentations**

Mel Gurtov, Portland State University, USA

**PROMOTING SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE KOREAN
PENINSULA AND TAIWAN STRAIT**

Taehoo Kim, Hallym Institute of Advanced International Studies (HIAIS)
Republic of Korea

**THE CROSS-STRAIT AND INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIPS IN A
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: LESSONS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION
AND MANAGEMENT**

Fu Liqun, Academy of Military Science, China

**SEEKING TO ENLARGE MUTUAL BENEFIT AND ACHIEVING A WIN-WIN
SITUATION: THE ESSENTIAL APPROACH IN CONFLICT PREVENTION**

Kyudok Hong, Sookmyung Women's University, Republic of Korea

**LESSONS OF SOUTH KOREA'S CONFLICT PREVENTION EFFORTS:
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Tomohiro Okamoto, Tokyo Foundation, Japan

SITUATIONS IN AREAS SURROUNDING JAPAN

Ingolf Kiesow, Swedish Defence Research Agency, Sweden

**RELEVANCE OF EUROPEAN CBMS IN INTER-KOREAN AND CHINESE-
TAIWANESE RELATIONS**

14.15-15.30 **Questions and Discussion**

15.30-15.45 **Coffee break**

Session VI:

Concluding remarks—end of conference

15.45-16.15 Concluding remarks by Niklas Swanström, the Silk Road Studies Program, Uppsala University

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