



PRESERVING THE LONG EAST ASIAN PEACE: REPORT ON AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

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Introduction

At a time of mounting global tensions, an international workshop convened by the Toda Peace Institute and the Institute of Japanese Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (IJSCASS) suggested that the long peace that has prevailed in East Asia since 1979 can be sustained. So long as the states in the region act responsibly, avoid confrontation, exercise restraint, tolerate diverse development paths and reassure one another, it should be possible to preserve and even to deepen the East Asian peace.

IJSCASS is the highest academic institution for Japan and related region research in China. The Toda Peace Institute is a Tokyo-based international think tank that convenes policy-oriented conversations between experts, practitioners and policymakers, with a longstanding focus on peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Both institutions are committed to international dialogue between scholars and policymakers as a means of enhancing mutual understanding and promoting cooperation in turbulent times.

The East Asian region is home to a third of the world's population and is one of the three main hubs of the world economy. Since 1979, the region has experienced a Long Peace, with no interstate wars and very few violent intrastate conflicts. This has enabled it to flourish economically, lifted millions out of poverty and made East Asia one of the most dynamic regions in the world.

However, the long peace is threatened by the deteriorating international environment and rivalry between the United States and China. It was argued in the workshop that the war in Ukraine, the Taiwan issue, the nuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and territorial conflicts in the South and East China Seas all contribute to instability. Meanwhile mistrust between China, Korea and Japan and their failure to achieve reconciliation hamper efforts to establish a common security framework in East Asia.

In this context, the workshop aimed to build collaborative relationships between scholars and policymakers, encourage dialogue, and identify promising multilateral approaches to the region's challenges. It built on an earlier workshop with representatives of Toda, IJSCASS, Japanese and other scholars in Tokyo in November 2023.

The importance of dialogue

East Asia has many contradictions, so dialogue is crucial. However, East Asia also has a long tradition of dealing with its own problems. In the Chinese view, peace and development in Asia should be in the hands of Asian people. East Asia should not be a pawn of great powers.

In the Chinese view, the main source of the security deficit in the region is the US alliance system, which created a legacy of division and mistrust. China is seeking to avoid a new Cold War by promoting multilateral economic cooperation and high-quality opening up. China seeks an inclusive and open East Asia, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which originated in Asia. On that basis, China is also taking a more active role in global governance and international peace-making.

The development prospects of China and the rest of East Asia are interdependent. The core concept of China's foreign policy is to promote common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, so China seeks unity and cooperation in the East Asia region, rather than division and confrontation. Dialogue efforts thus have a crucial role.

From the point of view of the Toda Peace Institute, a major objective is to build close collaborative relationships between scholars and policymakers in China, Japan and Korea, and to create a safe space for attentive listening and learning from one another. The challenges which face the region cannot be dealt with unilaterally. They require collaborative, analytical problem-solving. The containment strategy is counterproductive and creates security dilemmas in the region. Proposals for trilateral cooperation between China, Japan and Korea should be encouraged. The Chinese policy on No First Use could be a basis for thinking through nuclear risk reduction strategies. Drawing on the idea of 'gòngshēng' (共生: peaceful coexistence and co-becoming), the Toda Peace Institute is interested in sharing ideas on how to prevent armed conflict and make the regional peace more sustainable.

The history and legal basis of the East Asian order

The 1951 San Francisco Treaty is seen by some as the basis of a legal order in East Asia. However, the US-led hub-and-spoke network of alliances and bilateral defence treaties is not an agreed order. China was not a party to the Treaty and regards it as illegal and invalid. From China's point of view, insofar as there is a legal basis of the post-war order in East Asia, it rests on the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed by Japan and the PRC in 1978. In that Treaty, the Japanese government recognised the PRC government as the sole legal government of China and affirmed the principles of the joint Sino-Japanese statement of 29 September 1972, which acknowledged that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese view is that the San Francisco Treaty violated the wartime agreements at Cairo and Potsdam, which promised the return of Taiwan to China. Its consequence was that Japan was incorporated into US strategy and its 'Far East' clause allowed US forces based in Japan to be used anywhere in the Far East. As a result, Japan lost the opportunity to reconcile with its neighbours and to undertake a deep reflection on the war.

The recent US–Japanese–South Korean trilateral agreement on security cooperation aims to further strengthen the US alliance system. Almost eighty years after the end of the Second World War, there is still no agreed legal basis for the East Asian order. What is needed is a strategic dialogue among all relevant parties to create a genuine East Asian security order, building on common interests, enhancing practical cooperation, managing differences and dealing with potential conflict.

An 'order' is a state in which laws and rules regarding behaviour of members of a community are observed. Following the Second World War, there was no order in this sense, as East Asia was divided along geopolitical and ideological lines and the region experienced large-scale wars. From 1979, East Asia moved towards an order based on economic interdependence, governed by the external rules of the Bretton Woods institutions. This era of economic interdependence is now under threat from the revival of geopolitical rivalries. Rather than encouraging China to be a stakeholder in global institutions, the US is putting brakes on China's rise. A deepening military-strategic divide is pitting the United States and its allies against China. Even NATO is inching towards a security role in the region.

The right wing in Japan finds it difficult to accept China's rise. Under their influence, Japan is remilitarising, which entails a profound transformation in Japan's governance away from its pacifist constitution.

China actively benefits from many of the rules of the US-created liberal economic order but also seeks to develop rules that are more in its own and other developing countries' interests.

Territorial disputes over islands and maritime zones make it difficult to arrive at a functioning legal order. Conflicts in the South China Sea or East China Sea could escalate quickly with unintended consequences. It was suggested that it is in the interests of China to settle these territorial disputes more generously (possibly along the lines of an agreement that small islands cannot sustain human habitation and thus, in line with UNCLOS, do not have EEZs beyond 12 nautical miles). Then regional economic cooperation could replace rivalry, and there would be no rationale for an American role in counter-balancing China.

Conditions for success of the long East Asian Peace

The long East Asian Peace has been a ‘shallow’ peace, but nevertheless it has a remarkable record in avoiding interstate wars. The main explanations for it lie in the priority given to economic development by leaders in the region and the improved relations between the US and China after 1972. The role of ASEAN and multilateral cooperation have been important too. Today, however, the US and China have reduced their cooperation, and there is a risk that governments may prioritise security over development. The peace could be sustained if the US and China maintain and expand their cooperation in fighting climate change. They could accept that Korea is divided. Taiwan is perhaps the biggest threat to the Long Peace, but China could rid itself of the Taiwan problem by negotiating on its own initiative.

China’s Twelve Points from February 2023 for ending the conflict in Ukraine are an excellent starting point and an armistice, with great power guarantees, could contribute to peace in East Asia.

It is important to recognise that most of the East Asian region is rising – not just China. Japan is an important investor in East Asia and Southeast Asia is becoming an economic powerhouse. Regional economic integration lays a foundation for regional order. The countries in the region should reject the idea of a new Cold War and turn their backs on decoupling. Instead, they must maintain cooperation and integration and limit as much as possible the technologies that are exempted from free trade for security reasons.

A collective approach is needed to address regional issues. Building a regional order acceptable to all parties requires structural change. It will necessarily be a gradual process. It should involve East Asian countries but external countries’ concerns should also be recognized. To overcome the China–US rivalry is a global concern.

The discourse among US generals about the possible military conflicts across the Taiwan strait in 2027 has created pressure to get South Korea and Japan involved on the US side of the conflict. In the Chinese view, this makes the US–South Korea–Japan alliance dangerous and threatening. Several participants in the workshop expressed the view that China’s need for national reintegration needs to be respected. In the Chinese view, the option of resort to military means must be retained, for otherwise peaceful unification will never be achieved.

According to a critical perspective from some of the non-Chinese participants, it is in the US interest to keep rivalries in East Asia alive. This gives the US a rationale for increased defence expenditure to maintain its hegemony and military protection in the region.

A consensus is needed on regional order. This requires a mechanism for economic, political and security cooperation. More economic cooperation is essential for maintaining the long peace, and all countries need to manage their divergences by positive means. The region needs to find a way to manage the role of the US in the region and deal with its policy of driving East Asia into two camps, while keeping US–China relations in balance.

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The role of the United States in East Asian security

The United States acts as a ring-holder in East Asia, even though it is an extra-regional power. An abiding principle of American foreign policy has been to pre-empt the emergence of any regional hegemon, in Asia, Europe or the Middle East. Prevention of peer competition remains a key principle of US policy.

The United States tends to always balance against the stronger regional contender, supporting the weaker. Although it professes liberal principles, its foreign policy is mostly based on *realpolitik*.

The US creates imagined super regions such as the North Atlantic, the Asia Pacific and the Indo-Pacific to justify an American presence in all of them.

Foreign policy always has domestic sources and domestic politics trumps foreign policy. At present American domestic politics are in disarray. For American politicians, the chief opponents are domestic, not foreign. One of the few aims that unite the two camps in US politics is the quest to counter a perceived challenge from China.

Initially the US role in East Asia was based on the Yoshida doctrine. Japan submitted to US leadership and accepted military occupation and political subordination. In return, Japan got preferential access to US capital and markets and was exempted from any military role in US Cold War policy. But this bargain is no longer effective. US capital is no longer as indispensable as before and China has displaced the US as the preferred trading partner of most East Asian countries. American economic power is eroding, while its military preponderance persists, if not in the East Asian region, then at least globally. It may face imperial overstretch, with a widening gap between its responsibilities and its means. The consensus on liberal internationalism has collapsed. In the context of domestic political polarisation, there is a growing isolationism, policy deadlock and rising anti-foreign rhetoric.

The US claims to be the indispensable leading country. To justify its indispensability, it needs threats. Threat inflation is thus a part of its aim to remain dominant.

The Indo-Pacific region has become the strategic centre of gravity of United States foreign policy. In East Asia, the US may face a choice between maintaining its military presence in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Singapore or becoming a purely offshore balancer with bases in Pacific islands. Both strategies would aim to prevent any competitors that may threaten its interests and challenge its naval supremacy. The US commitment to world leadership makes it difficult for Washington to view the rise of other countries rationally. The new US defence strategy treats China as 'the most important strategic competitor and an ever-approaching challenge'. As a result, the US and China are in a classic security dilemma.

The focal area of US–China strategic competition lies in China's neighbourhood. In the opinion of many Chinese, the US is using Taiwan to constrain China's development. It is hollowing out the one China policy and continuing to arm Taiwan. If not handled properly, the Taiwan issue can become the primary factor triggering a head-on confrontation between China and the United States. How to avoid this will be a major challenge for China and the United States.

The US believes in the realist idea of 'deterrence through strength' and is continuously strengthening its military presence in East Asia. This is reflected in the plans for the deployment of land-based intermediate missiles. US military expenditure accounts for 40% of global military expenditure, and 3.2% of its GDP; in contrast, China's military expenditure is only a quarter of that of the United States and only 1.8% of its GDP. The US is stepping up trilateral cooperation with Japan and South Korea, pressing Japan to provide both monetary and military help in the containment of China. This is placing pressure on South Korea to choose sides.

The idea of developing AUKUS into a 'small NATO', and of promoting cooperation between NATO and US allies in the Asia Pacific region, also aims to curb China's military rise.

Japan has a special potential role to play in East Asian security. If it remains tied to the American chariot, it runs great risks. Japan could consider honouring its commitments under the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship and maintaining a balanced relationship with China and the US, possibly even mediating between them. Maintaining stability in the region and avoiding a military confrontation is strongly in Japan's interests. At the workshop, however, no one expected that Japan would move in this direction in the near term. Japan's current foreign policy remains firmly attached to strengthening its alliance with the US.

The Senkaku/Diaoyu islands dispute could be managed if the two sides were not playing to a domestic audience. Deng Xiaoping's approach was to suggest joint development of resources and postponement of the sovereignty issue. It was suggested that Japan and China could agree that the islands only have a 12-nautical mile zone of territorial waters and negotiate a maritime boundary in the East China Sea, based on a compromise between the median line principle and the principle of the natural extension of China's continental shelf.

Sino-Japanese reconciliation, which depends on managing these territorial issues and acknowledging the painful wartime past, is a key to East Asian peace.

The role of China in East Asian security

With regard to traditional security, China does not seek a sphere of influence in East Asia. Instead, it aims to stabilize Central Asia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and widen its role on the Eurasian continent through the Belt and Road Initiative. At the same time, China seeks to gradually increase its global influence by hedging its bets diplomatically and avoiding making enemies. It jealously defends its core interests (Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet) but does not want or need spheres of influence. Nor is there a tripartite alliance in the making between China and others. China's defence spending, which is substantial but limited to within 2 percent of GDP, may be seen to indicate its confidence in itself and in avoiding a US-China confrontation. With its huge economy, China is the world's second most powerful military power but has not followed Japan in doubling its military budget.

Regarding the hotspots, the Diaoyu/Senkaku issue is manageable and there is a tacit agreement on both sides. Chinese ships and aircraft have avoided coming closer than 12 nautical miles from the island.

With regard to the Taiwan Strait, the question of whether to use force is a Chinese decision, it was said at the workshop. Conflict is not imminent or inevitable, and China has set no deadline for unifying Taiwan with the mainland. China is exercising restraint in its military exercises, by announcing them beforehand and not using live firing. However, it was suggested there is ambiguity on both the Chinese and US sides over where their red lines lie, and there would be fewer exit ramps in the case of a crisis in Taiwan than in the South China Sea. It was also argued that the risk of armed conflict is higher in the South China Sea than in the Taiwan Strait, but conflict in the Strait would be more dangerous because it would be more difficult to prevent it from escalating.

With regard to North Korea, the situation is worsening on account of the war in Ukraine. Russia is getting closer to North Korea for the purpose of buying arms and munitions, but this might end if the war stopped. South Korea should avoid providing weapons to Ukraine, it was said, as that would damage its own security environment. It would be suicidal for Kim Jong-Un to use his nuclear weapons. China wishes to return to the Six Party Talks.

The South China Sea remains a dangerous hotspot. There is a high risk of collisions arising from China-Philippines disputes and confrontation in the Second Thomas Shoal. Although such conflicts could be limited, the risks of escalation are unpredictable.

In the realm of non-traditional security, there is considerable scope for cooperation. China, Japan and the Republic of Korea are major maritime trading, shipping and oil importing countries. They are responsible for protection of marine ecosystems, search and rescue, and control of illegal operations such as piracy, arms trafficking and people trafficking. A growing body of international law and bilateral agreements apply to the maritime environment. However, solving environmental issues in the East and South China Seas is difficult, given the lack of institutions to deal with them. Broadening bilateral arrangements such as the Korea–China fishing agreement to make them multilateral might be a helpful step. New regimes are needed for the governance of the high seas and the seabed, going beyond the vague provisions of UNCLOS.

Developing a cooperative security framework for Northeast Asia

The context for a new security framework is the end of the ‘fan’ or ‘hub-and-spoke’ system (with the US at the centre and bilateral relationships radiating outwards) that has been the dominant security system in East Asia to date. It is challenged by heightened strategic rivalry, bipolar tensions, increased military build-up and possible future quests for greater autonomy by Japan and South Korea.

The challenges to constructing a new security system lie particularly in national identity problems. They include the unresolved territorial disputes, the unfinished civil wars and processes of national unification, the unresolved historical grievances and the lack of reconciliation. In countries that have not completed their national unification processes, the question of who ‘we’ are remains unresolved. The ‘make my country great again’ narrative is present in Japan and China as well as the United States. Lai Ching-te’s “nation-building” attempt in Taiwan, through changes to school curriculums and textbooks, worries China. US scholars tend to ignore this and see the DPP as an innocent party because it is democratic, but its identity-building programme is sowing division within Taiwan and complicating relations with Chinese mainland. Mature societies should allow mixed identities to thrive, and there should be respect for the multiplicity of identities. The idea of being both Taiwanese and Chinese is richer and more realistic than attempts to insist on a single national identity.

The clash of narratives over Covid-19 has poisoned US–China relations and caused a collapse of the ‘soft power’ efforts of each country. Young students in each country have developed negative views of the other since Covid hit.

In order to develop a cooperative security framework, these national identity issues need to be addressed. The ‘two Asias’ need to come together, with trilateral cooperation between China, Japan and South Korea over economic and security issues at the heart of the process. ‘Minilateral’ cooperation can also be a step towards a collaborative framework. A bamboo lattice vision would be more resilient than a fan or hub-and-spoke system.

The war in Ukraine is another obstacle to a cooperative security framework in East Asia. It tends to drive states into separate camps and adds to fears of a new Cold War in Northeast Asia. It has also damaged relationships between European countries and China.

If China were to pursue a policy of confrontation, the world could slide into either a new Cold War or World War 3. This is of course highly undesirable from China’s point of view. China prioritises building a ‘community of human destiny’, promoting multipolarity, inclusive globalisation and stabilisation in the Middle East and Ukraine.

The challenge as seen by China is how to put in place a cooperative security framework in the context of the US pursuing Cold War-like policies. China's approach should be to maintain frequent contact with US decision-makers, show restraint on territorial issues, promote cooperation on non-traditional security issues, foster trilateral cooperation, and enhance cooperation with ASEAN and the Northeast Asian countries in the '10 plus 3' framework.

There may be scope for building a security framework similar to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which promotes conflict prevention in Southeast Asia. A similar mechanism could be attached to the trilateral talks, to encourage discussion of threat perceptions and foster trust-building.

Regarding Taiwan, Lai Ching-te's inaugural speech was seen by the mainland as provocative. Its response was a military exercise that Taiwan saw as provocative. During the time when Ma Ying-jeou was Taiwan's leader, the two sides promoted economic integration and people-to-people exchanges. Contact and cooperation has since been reduced. The mainland walked away from informal conflict prevention mechanisms, and the DPP looked for ways to reduce Taiwan's economic dependence on the mainland. The Institute of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao Studies in the Shanghai Institutes of International Affairs has proposed scholarly visits to Taiwan and exchanges with Taiwanese leaders in Hong Kong, but the DPP has put obstacles in the way of these initiatives.

China, Japan and Korea and their neighbours in the region

What is the role of the smaller neighbours in the region in bridging differences and contributing to a peaceful neighbourhood?

Small countries like Mongolia benefit from cooperation in the region and are the first victims of non-cooperation. As a landlocked country between Russia and China, Mongolia seeks good relations with both its neighbours and with non-contiguous 'third neighbours'. It strives towards an East Asian peace and a nuclear-free Korea, while keeping channels open to North Korea. Since 2013, Mongolia has hosted the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue which fosters active dialogue among East Asian countries. Mongolia is also important for re-starting the Six Party Talks. It supports trilateral cooperation between China, Japan and South Korea. The three East Asian countries are all members of the UN Security Council this year. This fortuitous alignment offers a significant opportunity for diplomatic cooperation.

Multilateralism, driven by middle powers, has been an important factor in preserving the East Asian Peace. Through institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Shangri-La Dialogue and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), Asian countries have developed frameworks for dialogue and cooperation. These multilateral platforms help to build strategic trust, reduce misunderstandings and promote peaceful dispute resolution. However, multilateralism is in decline, and ASEAN plays a smaller role than it used to in regional affairs. Smaller, security-oriented arrangements like AUKUS and the Quad, which aim to counter China's rise, risk contributing to China's military buildup and sidelining more inclusive multilateralism. They tend to unravel the complex web of relationships that has preserved the long East Asian Peace.

The US and China need to balance deterrence with restraint, and seek ways to reassure one another, such as through China re-committing to peaceful unification and the US re-pledging not to support Taiwan's independence. The US could scale back arms sales and official visits to Taiwan and China could scale back military exercises in the Taiwan and Luzon Straits.

China already exercises some restraint, by frequently repeating that it is committed to peaceful unification, announcing its military exercises in advance, and avoiding Taiwan's airspace within 12 nautical miles of its coasts.

By balancing deterrence with restraint and reassurance, and strengthening multilateralism, East Asia can continue to be a zone of peace. The middle and smaller powers can contribute by supporting cooperation in multilateral forums.

China–Japan–South Korean national strategies and trilateral cooperation: Common interests and differences

China's new emphasis on opening up, following the Third Party Plenum, will bring new opportunities for cooperation between China, Japan and South Korea. The ninth trilateral leaders' meeting held in May 2024 was more successful than expected and covered trade and economic cooperation, disaster management, and institutionalisation of further dialogue. Sensitive issues such as denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and supply chain issues were also discussed. China and South Korea have agreed on a strategic dialogue at both foreign ministry and track 1.5 levels.

There are obstacles, however. South Korea and Japan see economic dependence on China as a strategic risk, and they follow the United States in vilifying China. They are showing more interest in bilateral cooperation amongst themselves than trilateral cooperation with China, and more interest in trilateral cooperation with the United States than with China. They blame China for not stopping North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. Japan follows American policy on the Taiwan issue and that increases differences with China.

The scope for cooperation between the three countries is considerable, and its momentum is increasing. Despite the obstacles, functional cooperation is possible.

South Korea, as a peninsula country, is partly a continental and partly a maritime state. South Korea is one of a large number of countries that are allies or partners of the US, while also having China as their top trading partner. This creates a web of interdependence distinct from the separate camps that characterised the bipolar era of the Cold War.

The US–China competition is global and may be long-term, but in the short term the fault line runs through the hotspots in East Asia. This is China's front yard, and China cannot back down here. The Biden Administration's framing of the world as divided between 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' countries makes it difficult to arrive at the kind of compromises needed to maintain the peace.

South Korea is in a difficult position. The more the US and China confront one another, the less South Korea's room for manoeuvre. Tensions are rising with North Korea. The previous Moon Administration tried to bridge the Pacific and continental roles of South Korea, pursuing a regional peace through a northern policy aiming at economic cooperation with Northeast Asia and a southern policy of working with ASEAN and India but avoiding involvement in the Quad. This relieved the pressure to choose between China and the US. President Yoon has discarded this approach. He is harming relations with North Korea, China and Russia by taking sides.

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Against the spirit of the initiatives of the previous South Korean government, the US policy of including only allied and friendly countries in its groupings aims to contain China and exacerbates the security dilemma in the region. As a result, most countries in Northeast Asia are choosing the path of arms racing and conflict, rather than regional cooperation, creating huge opportunity costs for those who would prefer alternative approaches. Rival trading arrangements are securitising economic cooperation.

This creates an urgent need for regional crisis management and cooperative security mechanisms. Building multilateral consultations on peace and security is essential for minimising regional conflicts and managing the North Korean nuclear issue. For the time being, a hybrid of the US security alliance and multilateral groupings may be the most realistic way forward.

Japan is still the world's fourth largest economy, heavily dependent on maritime trade, but it is leading the region in the trend towards demographic decline. In 1947, Japan renounced war as a sovereign right of the nation and rejected the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. Japan also led the process of prioritising economic development and trade which established the Long East Asian Peace. Although its relationship with China was not close and Japan failed to make as full a disavowal of its wartime leaders as Germany did, the 1978 Treaty of Peace and Friendship underscored the determination of China and Japan to avoid war and hegemony. With the end of the Cold War, Sino-Japanese relations deteriorated, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe used the confrontation with China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea as a means of turning public opinion against China and discarding its pacifist past. Following the Ukraine war, Prime Minister Kishida has expressed the fear that East Asia could see another Ukraine. The 2024 Defence White Paper says that Japan is in a 'period of the most severe and complex security environment since the end of the Second World War'. Japan perceives threats from joint Chinese-Russian naval exercises in the north, from North Korea's missiles and nuclear weapons, from the risk of a Taiwan contingency, and from the South China Sea conflict. In response, Japan is increasing its defence budget and investing in long-range weapons.

With its population in steep decline, economic growth is stagnant and the government is in debt. It is unclear whether Japan can afford remilitarisation. Like China and South Korea, Japan's common interests in East Asia are in trade, economic development, and cooperation. These would appear to be weightier than its security differences, although while it depends on the US for its security and for the protection of its trade, the security differences are likely to remain.

“The common interests of China, South Korea and Japan in trade, economic development, and mitigation of the North Korea problem remain strong, but mutual threat perceptions appear to carry more weight.”

The Japanese right wing is divided between security realists, who favour continuing with the US alliance, and romantic nationalists, who want to recover independence and autonomy for Japan and make Japan a 'normal' power with armed forces it can use. Another course might be for China to reinforce its Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Japan, promote reconciliation, settle the East China Seas dispute, and foster conflict resolution in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

The common interests of China, South Korea and Japan in trade, economic development, and mitigation of the North Korea problem remain strong, but mutual threat perceptions appear to carry more weight. Nevertheless, the trilateral rapprochement between the US, Japan and South Korea rests on a shaky basis, given Japan's difficult relationship with South Korea and the polarisation of US politics. A win-win security concept is in the interests of the parties, but replacing the paradigm of deterrence with that of multilateral development remains a challenge.

Conclusion

The workshop concluded that the long East Asian Peace is in a precarious state due to the growing confrontation between the US, its allies and China, and the lack of an adequate security framework to prevent conflicts in the region from escalating. It is important to allow China, Japan and Korea to develop their trilateral cooperation and build a distinctive East Asian approach to peace and security. Sino-Japanese reconciliation is a key to the East Asian peace. It probably requires a parallel rapprochement between China and the US. If China-US relations were to improve, it would become easier for the states in the region to build on their common interests in trade, health, climate protection and non-traditional security. Deterrence cannot work in identity-based conflicts. Instead, long-term dialogue is needed. Ways in which the states in the region can reassure one another need to be explored. They need to show continued restraint to secure the peace.

The workshop succeeded in consolidating relationships between the Toda Peace Institute and IJSCASS and between scholars and policy makers from East Asia, Australasia, the United States and Europe. It explored the prospects for preserving and deepening the East Asian Peace. This report has summarised the many positive proposals that were discussed. The next step is to identify research topics for trilateral study groups, which the Toda Peace Institute intends to convene. It was agreed to hold another IJSCASS–Toda workshop next year.





THE TODA PEACE INSTITUTE

The Toda Peace Institute is an independent, nonpartisan institute committed to advancing a more just and peaceful world through policy-oriented peace research and practice. The Institute commissions evidence-based research, convenes multi-track and multi-disciplinary problem-solving workshops and seminars, and promotes dialogue across ethnic, cultural, religious and political divides. It catalyses practical, policy-oriented conversations between theoretical experts, practitioners, policymakers and civil society leaders in order to discern innovative and creative solutions to the major problems confronting the world in the twenty-first century (see www.toda.org for more information).

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