

Tendency of a New Order in Northeast Asia and Mongolia, Mongolia-Korean Relations in 1990's

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In the 1990's, Northeast Asia is experiencing great change. Power relations among the major powers have changed. Their foreign policies are changing. The inter-Korean relationship also entered an entirely new phase. This state creates loosening of tension and begets hope, on the one hand. On the other hand, however, it rises images of uncertainty and instability. Some observers highlight signs of peaceful and positive changes, while others fear breakdown of stable patterns of interaction among major regional powers.

In the period following the end of the Second World War, Northeast Asia was in a bipolar situation, with the US and the USSR as the two pillars opposed to each other.

After mid-1980's, however, the region evolved into a state with a relatively pluralistic power structure. The easing of tensions between the two superpowers and the rise of China and Japan as

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political and economic powers accelerated this pluralistic change.

The spread of principles of democracy and the market economy will promote political homogeneity and economic inter-dependence among the states. For them the strengthening of shared values and economic interdependence will create a better environment for cooperation and peace in the region, like anywhere else.

Fortunately, major powers in Northeast Asia began to make gestures supporting a multilateral security forum in the region. Russia has been seeking active involvement in economic and political integration in the Asia-Pacific region. From the Gorbachev years to the present president Yeltsin administration, Russians seem to be the most enthusiastic supporter in forging a new security structure in the region.

Japan began to voice its interest in such a new security forum since the beginning of 1992. Japan has been seeking an initiative for such a forum.

Attitude of the US also changed a bit to a more positive position toward building a comprehensive forum for Northeast Asia. China's stance on such a comprehensive forum has been ambivalent, although China is considered to have recently come closer to supporting it as a way of overcoming the security system of the Cold War years.

Therefore, the effectiveness and desirability of the future multilateral forum for common security in the region will depend on how it is organized and conducted.

We have witnessed a lot of changes in global and regional

affairs. Northeast Asia was not an exception. Although North Korea was top concern for everyone, economics was in command everywhere. The preoccupation in much of Asia with economic liberalization created middle classes, which aspire for more choices on their civil life. Taiwan is a leading example of how wealth promotes calls for greater democracy.

The successfully launched World Trade Organization, with its expanded arbitration role in the post GATT trade order, is an example how free trade is winning globally.

APEC's last informal summit meeting, held last November in Bogor, Indonesia, set a timetable for trade liberalization to be completed by the year 2010 for industrialized members and 2020 for developing countries. Some experts argue that APEC may represent a trap for the United States. They advocate that parallel progress on regional security needs to be made. Former British diplomat Jonathan Clarke wrote in his article *"APEC as a Semi-Solution" that "...the United States should avoid a single-track approach for its East Asia policy. Instead it should aim at a framework that balances the two key components of economy and security... A security dimension either as a component of APEC or, more probably, in a parallel agency is needed"*¹⁾.

It should be reminded that similar initiatives already taken place in East and northeast Asia. The ASEAN nations have shown strong willingness to discuss security issues with their "dialogue partners" in the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference and Regional

1) *Orbis*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Winter 1995, p. 88.

Forum contexts. The ASEAN Regional Forum, started last July in Bangkok, is no doubt an encouraging first step toward a broader dialogue on sensitive security issues involving the countries of Southeast Asia and Indochina, as well as Northeast Asia. South Korea has spoken in favor of a Northeast Asian security forum. In the academic sector, the Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific(CSCAP) was established in 1993 to bring together nongovernmental experts to discuss possible formats for regional security systems.

Most recently, we are witnessing two new phenomena regarding multilateralism versus bilateralism debate. One phenomena is strong isolationist sentiments in the United States Congress dominated by the Republicans. According to the Far Eastern Economic Review, the basic tenets of the Republican view are evident in the National Security Revitalization bill, which the House passed in February. Some in Washington say the bill is not isolationist but rather checks the administration's "mindless multilateralism". Critics of multilateralism point to what they call failed UN missions in Somalia, Haiti and even in Cambodia.

If the Senate passes a comparable bill, the resulting act could prevent US forces from being placed under UN command and require the president to explain to Congress the national interests behind US participation in peacekeeping would be counted as part of America's overall contribution to the UN²⁾.

2) Far Eastern Economic Review, April 13, 1995, Vol. 158, No. 15, p. 15

Japanese talk increasingly of Japan's "reentering" Asia and of the "Asianization" of Japanese foreign policy in order to counter Japan bashing and the threat of protectionism in the West, and to position itself as a leader of the most dynamic region in the world. A free-lance writer Toh Lam Seng wrote recently "On the one hand, the Japanese talk about making a choice between the United States and Asia, to establish itself as the leader of Asia. On the other, they play up racial disharmony in Southeast Asia and spread a new China-threat theory. How Japan will position itself in Asia in the post-Cold War era is an issue that will attract much attention³⁾.

To institutionalize multilateralism we need a long arduous way ahead. At the present stage, multilateralism must somehow complement bilateralism which is a real guarantee of the security in North and East Asia mostly through bilateral security arrangements of the United States with Japan, Korea and others. However, multilateralism seems to me is a wave of future. It is really difficult to abandon decades long perceptions that bilateralism is the best way for diversified and multicultural Asian. However, new relations of post Cold War era, namely nonavailability of hegemony power and emergence of indigenous centers of power (Russia, China, Japan and possibly unified Korea), require new non-standard approaches to the maintaining of security in Northeast Asia.

3) The Japan Times Weekly, International edition, April 3-9, 1995, p. 8

Mongolia and Multilateralism

Mongolia firmly believes that its security and development interests are closely linked with multilateral processes and institutions. The reason is that it is situated between two international "heavyweights", i.e. China and Russia. Their mere "weight" (economic, military and demographic power and influence) is so enormous that Mongolia, with its small population and under-developed economy, can easily lose its relative economic independence. Today Mongolia cannot compete even with the local administrative unit states that border with Mongolia. Economic dependence would easily lead to political dependence.

That is why Mongolia's national security concept defines economic security as the cornerstone of the country's independence and sovereignty and maintaining of relative economic independence as one of its vital national interests. The concept further states that turning into a raw materials appendage of other countries and direct dependence on any one country in economic branches of strategic importance as external factors that would adversely affect economic security.

The second reason for the support of multilateralism is to make policies of its neighbors, that are currently undergoing radical changes or are to undergo changes, more predictable and containable within accepted international legal norms of conduct.

History is full of examples when economic success could easily be transformed to political and military power that in turn could lead to the revival of old historical ambitions of states that could in its turn cause chain reaction. Therefore, creating networks of multilateral institutions would serve both as instruments of cooperation of states in various fields of human activity as well as of maintaining regional peace and security.

It is for these reasons that Mongolia has been advocating the creation of a Northeast regional security mechanism that would serve as an international instrument for fostering political dialogue and solving inter-state problems and disputes by political means. Mongolia felt the need for such a regional security forum especially at the height of Sino-Soviet dispute in the mid 1960's and 1970's, when the dispute could have turned into outright armed conflict with Mongolia caught in the middle and serving as a battleground. That is why in 1986 Mongolia supported Gorbachev's Vladivostok initiative as a step towards normalization of not only Sino-Soviet relations but the atmosphere in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

In August 1989, on its part, Mongolia suggested the creation of a "mechanism of political dialogue" in Northeast Asia to discuss non-political issues, aimed at developing effective and mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of economy, science and technology, culture and education, ecology and humanitarian links. Though Mongolia's initiative was modest in its scope and aims, the reaction of the most of the would-be participants was cool, in large part because the cold war was not over yet and Mongolia was

considered as staunch ally of the Soviet Union.

Despite cool reaction to its initiative, Mongolia supported the 1990 Australia's Asia Pacific Security Dialogue and Canada's North Pacific Security Dialogue. In substance and format the latter was closer to Mongolia's earlier initiative.

While the merits of the above initiatives were being discussed, a promising regional forum is emerging in the form of ARF- the ASEAN Regional Forum. It is to serve as a place to discuss political and security issues. Mongolia is keenly interested in taking part in this part in this forum so as to be able to make its contribution to the collective search for an appropriate mechanism of ensuring peace and security in the region.

The third reason for Mongolia's support for multilateralism is, together with its open foreign policy, to overcome its virtual physical isolation from the rest of the world. That is why it is seeking to develop broad relations with other countries and seeking membership in international organizations.

We are happy that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea in 1990, the relations between our two countries are successfully developing and expanding in all fields.

President of Mongolia esteemed Mr. P. Ochirbat and Minister of Foreign Relations Mr. Ts. Gombosuren and ex Vice President P. Gonchigdorj visited the Republic of Korea in 1992 and Vice Prime Minister Mr. Ch. Purevdorj visited in 1993.

The Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic

of Korea respected Mr. Kim Je Gwang visited Mongolia in 1991, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Li Sang Ok in 1992 and the Chairman of the Constitutional Judge Mr. Cho Gu Gwang in 1994 visited Mongolia. All these visits of the leading people of our two countries made big contribution in the development of a happily existing friendly and brotherly relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea.

The Republic of Korea helps very much Mongolia in the hard period for Mongolia of transition from socialist economy into open market system. The whole Mongolian people highly appreciate the brotherly help and assistance rendered and are rendering by the Republic of Korea to Mongolia in all fields of life.

We the scholars of our Institute and all the participants of this conference on the part of Mongolia, I hope, will share our deepest and warmest thanks and best wishes to our Korean friends who participate in this conference.

I wish the conference success.