

CHINA AND EAST ASIA STRATEGIC DYNAMICS

11–12 MARCH 2010
SINGAPORE



**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

CHINA AND EAST ASIA STRATEGIC DYNAMICS

CONFERENCE REPORT

ORGANIZED BY:
CHINA PROGRAMME AT THE
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (RSIS)
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE

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Executive Summary

On 11–12 March 2010, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) organized a conference on the theme “China and East Asia Strategic Dynamics”. The rise of all aspects of China’s powers in recent years is increasingly changing the regional strategic calculation in East Asia. In recent years, due to China’s growing power and various diplomatic initiatives, the strategic dynamics in the region have been experiencing notable changes. It seems that major power relations in both East Asia appear to be driven by some new momentum, especially in the context of the current financial crisis. Such new empirical trend motivated us to launch a comprehensive study to examine how these phenomena are going to shape China’s position in East Asia, the strategic dynamic in the region.

The conference is organized into five separate sessions. The first session addressed the U.S. and East Asian perspectives on China’s strategic and security role in East Asia. The panellist representing the perspective of the United States cautiously forecast that it would be unlikely for China to emerge in a dominant position in Asia to challenge U.S. leadership. The Chinese side sees China not pursuing a global hegemony strategy. Nevertheless, the recent financial crisis has thrust China to the centre of the international stage. Another Asian giant, India, also feels that the increased Chinese roles in Asia are tied to India’s own strategic dynamics. The Korean representative sees China’s policy towards Korea remaining status quo, particularly on the issues of resolving the North Korean nuclear quandary. Japan views the rise of China as a mixed blessing, both promoting and undermining its security. From an economic security point of view, the growth of China is not just an opportunity for a larger market but also a challenge.

Session Two focused on China’s role in regional integration. Of particular note were China’s active leadership roles in promoting East Asian regional cooperation, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Six Party Talks. It appears that China has made a strategic

change in regional policy to embrace multilateralism. China has also been active in promoting ASEAN+3 and the East Asian Summit. However, there have been some challenges and uncertainties within East Asia with regards to the future of the regional cooperative frameworks. At the moment, there is a weak collective incentive and shared leadership to achieve regional cooperation.

Session Three addressed the issues of the modernization of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). An analysis of Chinese weapon acquisitions indicates that the strategic motive behind Chinese military modernization has been to deal with smaller security threats such as Taiwan’s independence and Tibetan separatism. Other speakers noted that the PLA was undergoing a transformation and was modernizing rapidly—elaborating that China’s military strategy revolved around fighting intense local wars that were generally short duration, high intensity conflicts as well as around creating surprise through the speediness of attack.

Session Four discussed the issues on cross-strait relations. The Chinese side thinks that there has been a significant development of cross-Taiwan Strait relations since Ma Ying-jeou took office, with both sides emphasizing pragmatic issues. Other speakers concurred that relations between Mainland China and Taiwan were at their best since China was split by civil war in 1949. However, both speakers agreed that China had continuously considered the United States as a barrier to China’s unification with Taiwan.

The final (fifth) session addressed several special issues concerning China’s maritime security. It was noted that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) had an impact on the maritime security of China. Although China has been consistent in complying with the law, some provisions in China’s laws are very controversial that they undermine the legitimacy of China’s policies and claims in the South China Sea.

Opening Remarks



Mr. Kwa Chong Guan

Mr. Kwa Chong Guan, Head of External Programmes at RSIS, welcomed attendees to the conference by observing that the topic of the conference was not a new issue. He noted that one could imagine in the year 1404 the lord of the new port of trade in Malacca must have pondered similar questions about China's role in the region upon receiving the Ming emperor's envoy and an invitation to pay him tribute. Today, this debate about how to respond to China's rise continues. No doubt, this conversation would continue for many years into the future.

In this conference, one of the topics for exploration would

be China's military transformation, particularly with the PLA Navy. From a short-term perspective, it might appear very unique. On the other hand, this transformation of a continental power towards the sea was not new. The Persians, the French and the Ottoman Empire all did the same. Mr. Kwa recalled that China's Yongle Emperor sent out seven great voyages. These, however, were in the end not very successful. Therefore, we did not need to assume that this second Chinese attempt at maritime transformation would succeed either.

Another issue of much discussion today was China's economy. Here again, if one were to look back at the long-term perspective, this was also not unique. There had been a dynastic cycle in China accompanied by an ebb and flow of economic prosperity. It started with the Tang Dynasty and, by the time of the Song, China had become a capitalist economy and a great consumer. Chinese fleets of gold were the underpinning of Zheng He's voyages. In neighbouring territories, economies were transformed. In that perspective, China's neighbours today were looking with hope to Chinese consumers again.

In that light, the conference was yet another link in a historical chain of exercises in examining China's role in the region. Mr. Kwa closed his remarks by wishing all the participants a stimulating and productive experience over the course of the two-day conference.

SESSION 1

China and East Asian Strategic Dynamics: Part 1

China's Encumbered Rise: Implications for Sino-American Relations



Professor Robert Sutter

Robert Sutter began by observing that while China's rise and challenge to U.S. influence in Asia had been long predicted, it had not occurred. This was because China had neither the will nor the ability to challenge the United States in Asia.

Sutter noted a number of challenges that encumbered China's rise. First, there was a negative legacy from Mao Zedong in China's support for the Khmer Rouge and the invasion of Vietnam. Second, China has been too tough on territorial issues, such as with Taiwan in the 1990s. Third, China's relations with some of its Asian neighbours are not as good as they could be. Ties with Japan have improved but are still not warm. Relations with India and Russia are worse than they were in the past. Ties with South Korea were much closer in 2004 than they are currently. He felt the same could be said about Australia and Indonesia. The exception was where China has made progress with Taiwan.

In further assessing China's influence, Sutter noted its strengths and weaknesses. Trade and investment were major strengths for China, as were its bilateral and multilateral relations, which asked little of neighbouring countries. China also derived power from its cultural influence in the region, including overseas Chinese. In terms of weaknesses, China's nationalism conflicted with other nationalistic countries in Asia. China's territorialism, military expansion, authoritarianism and

lack of transparency have also weakened its ability to have stronger influence. Further, China was unwilling to undertake the risks necessary to address these weaknesses.

Sutter compared this with the U.S. influence, which had been weakened in recent years by George W. Bush's unilateralism, the war in Iraq, among others. However, the United States has retained a strong security influence in the region, as Asian countries do not trust one another and rely on the United States as a guarantor of security. The United States continues to absorb debt, which contributes to the growth of Asian markets and is vital to the economic health of the region. Another strength of the United States is in its relationships with Asian countries, whether through official channels—such as the U.S. Pacific Command—or through non-governmental interactions, like churches and businesses. Lastly, an open immigration policy continues to build strong ties through recent immigrants from Asia.

In closing, Sutter assessed that it would be unlikely for China to emerge in a dominant position in Asia to challenge the U.S. leadership. He found it far more likely that Chinese leaders would continue to make careful and incremental efforts and adjustments to overcome the array of complications and obstacles to increasing Chinese influence, interests and status, but there were number of challenges, as mentioned above, that it could not overcome.

Financial Crisis and China's Global and East Asian Strategies

Chen Yugang's presentation addressed China's regional and global strategy in the aftermath of the world financial crisis. He noted that the financial crisis had thrust China to the centre of the international stage, and had increased international expectations for it to be a responsible power.

Chen organized China's global strategy into four periods: (i) from 1949 to 1979, when it was largely closed to the rest of the world; (ii) from 1979 to 1997, with the opening and reform policies; (iii) from 1997 to 2008, when it extended its diplomacy; and (iv) from 2008 onwards, which has been marked by global engagement. The three pillars

of China's current global strategy are integration with East Asia, further developing relations with other regions, and participating in most of the major international institutions. Some trends of China's

According to Chen, the overall objective of China's regional strategy for East Asia was to push for more regional integration. He noted several examples, which included: the continuing emphasis that China affords ASEAN+1 (China-ASEAN) as a venue for cooperation; China's plans for numerous projects to connect the infrastructure of neighbouring countries; the building of cooperation mechanisms, such as the Chiang Mai initiative and the regional economic surveillance system; China's economic aid to Southeast Asian countries most affected by the financial crisis; and China's willingness to engage Japan with its recent change in leadership.

In comparing China's approach to regional strategy to the strategies of other major powers, Chen noted significant differences. He described the British strategy towards Europe as one of balance of power, and the former Soviet Union's strategy of using Eastern Europe as a buffer zone, while the United States treated Latin America as its backyard. The similarity between these regional approaches for Chen was that they all supported the global approach of each country to be a hegemonic power.

Chen argued that China found none of the above regional strategies necessary, as it was not pursuing a global hegemony strategy. Rather, China thinks of East Asia as its "front gate", which must be highly socialized. Therefore, China focuses on good neighbourliness and cooperation.

Rise of China, an Indian Perspective

Rajesh Basrur began by noting that, from a strategic perspective, how India saw China's role in Asia was tied to how India saw its own interests in the region. Therefore, the presentation would be focused on three topics related to direct issues between the two countries. First, is the India-China relationship one of rivalry or cooperation? Second, should the idea of an India-China rivalry be taken seriously? And third, how might the two craft a more stable relationship to move forward?

Within India, there is divided opinion on the first question. The main stream of opinion sees China as a potential threat. The problem is a distorted perception within India that the two are rivals. In fact, trade and military



Dr. Rajesh Basrur

cooperation are increasing. So it is a mixed game of cooperation and competition, which should hardly be a surprise. The problem with much of the literature is that the realist perspective is still very strong in the analysis of these relations. While there is no guarantee that there will be no conflict, interdependence is a strong motivator for peaceful relations. Both are nuclear powers and they cannot risk fighting. India may not have ballistic missiles that can reach Beijing but they have aircraft that can reach major Chinese cities.

On the second question, Basrur felt that the rivalry should be taken seriously. There are some problems that need to be addressed, chief among them being the border crisis. In 2003, there were incidents along the border and there is always a risk that another incident could slide into conflict. Nationalism is also a problem with both countries. India's government is a coalition and cannot be seen as accommodating China. China as an authoritarian state has two sources of legitimacy: economic strength and nationalism. This means that if there is an internal domestic problem, Beijing can use conflict to shore up domestic support.

India is also very concerned about China's relationship with Pakistan. China may be concerned about India's relationship with the United States but India is concerned that China has provided Pakistan with weapons. China has very strong issues with maintaining its identity but it does not grasp that India may have the same issues concerning Kashmir.

On the final question of crafting a more stable relationship, first there needs to be a settlement of the border demarcation. Then both countries need dialogue to settle future conflicts of interest. Confidence-building measures such as joint patrols along with other powers in

the Indian Ocean should be undertaken. There is no need, however, to engage in dialogue on nuclear weapons. The Indians are not looking for formal recognition as a nuclear power. There is already indirect recognition. So there is no reason not to bring India into the nuclear suppliers group. While there is no major crisis in which Pakistan and China will go against India militarily, China must show India that it will not back a state that has engaged in cross-border terrorism.

India is growing very rapidly. By some estimates, its economic trajectory will lead it to overtake major economies like Japan in the near future. In summary, China must recognize that India is no longer a minor power, to be treated dismissively. Both countries should take each other seriously and seek ways to draw closer to create a more stable world.

Discussion

The discussant opened the session by making some general comments on the preceding three presentations. He saw some agreement among panellists in the conclusion that China posed no serious challenge to U.S. dominance in Asia at present. But he raised a question on how China's incremental gains in capabilities over the next 20 or 30 years might have the eventual consequence of eroding U.S. influence in the region. He noted that China seeking to regain its great power status in the world was not a strategy, but a goal. Other presenters concurred that

China was faced with many challenges that it would be difficult for China to dominate the region.

Other presenters raised the issue that in the last year or so China had blamed the United States for a lot of economic problems and had challenged the U.S. dollar's position as a reserve currency. China has also been very assertive on some core national interest issues, like Tibet and Taiwan. One discussant then questioned how these positions had affected Sino-U.S. relations—issues such as China's relations with the United States and India had been discussed. A member of the audience noted that despite China and India being nuclear powers, this did not preclude them from engaging in conventional war. He commented that China was concerned about growing relations between India and the United States, but he noted that since the beginning of the Obama administration, the temperature of things had cooled down. Others in the audience commented on the difficulties of resolving the India-China border disputes.

A few others observed that China liked to think about its power in terms of economic capabilities, but in political terms China was weaker in Asia. In terms of China's bilateral relations, an observer felt its relationship with India was more critical than its relationship with Japan. This was because China and India knew each other less than China and Japan and arrogance and pride in the militaries of both countries could potentially lead to something unfortunate.

SESSION 1

China and East Asian Strategic Dynamics: Part 2

The Korean Peninsula and China's Grand Strategy

Chung Chong Wook examined the impact of China's rise on its strategic and diplomatic engagement with its neighbours in the Korean peninsula. Relations between China and North Korea are quite unique, insofar as North Korea is the only country where China dispatched soldiers to fight in a foreign war. As the old saying goes, Korea was the lips to China's teeth. But that relationship between the lips and teeth no longer exists. North Korea is now as much a strategic asset as a risk to China. The North's nuclear programme is an example. Not only does this issue threaten peace in the peninsula, it also has the potential



Professor Chung Chong Wook

to draw China into conflict with the United States, and seriously jeopardize China's peaceful rise.

Chung then discussed the evolution of China's role in negotiations over North Korea's nuclear capabilities. This role began rather passively with North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1993. By 2002, China was atypically proactive and enthusiastic in dealing with the crisis over North Korea producing highly enriched uranium. China went on to host and carries the main burden of the Six Party Talks. He noted that the difference in China's approach was rooted in many factors, including the diplomatic normalization between South Korea and China in 1992, which came as an enormous shock to North Korean leaders. China's domestic situation also played a part in the passive first phase because of Tiananmen and the lingering suspicion that the United States was trying to contain it. Most importantly, though, was the development of China's new security strategy.

Despite China's proactive role, which included impressive amounts of diplomatic and economic efforts, its effectiveness was limited. Among other reasons, China's top priority was peace and stability; denuclearization was secondary. Therefore, China opted for mild measures. After North Korea's missile firing and nuclear test of 2006 and 2009, China's attitude hardened somewhat. These actions were a slap in the face to China but it did not reciprocate, and subsequent UN resolutions towards North Korea lacked any real teeth because of China's role.

In conclusion, Chung noted that although China's role has changed, it is still very cautious on North Korea. It is willing to embrace multilateral regimes and cooperation, but it is still uneasy with itself and others. Its primary concern is with economic growth and stability, while at the same time fearful of a U.S. strategy of containment and cooperation. A wariness of the implications of a unified Korea, which might become a U.S. ally, also looms large. Therefore, Chung felt that China lacked a firm vision for the region, and thought this was unlikely to change much in the coming years.

Tango without Trust and Respect? Japan's Awkward Co-Prosperity with China in the Twenty-First Century

Yoichiro Sato began his presentation by delivering its conclusion, which was that China's rise was viewed by Japan, as with most other countries in the region, as a mixed blessing that both promotes and undermines its



Professor Yoichiro Sato

security. From an economic security perspective, the growth of China is not just an opportunity for a larger market but also a challenge. Coming after a period in the 1980s and 1990s in which the United States was a significant source of trade problems for Japan, China's economic rise was in some ways welcomed.

China has abided by the multilateral agreements it has since signed although it has not signed others, like those concerning intellectual property rights. This has resulted in a measured loss for Japanese companies. Japan and China signed a number of agreements in the 1980s but these old agreements are not very detailed and provide only minimal protection for investors. Newer agreements to protect these investors are needed.

Japan used to be considered a trading country. Since 2005, Japan has become more like a developed European nation or the United States because it has focused more on investment than production. Japan invited China to upgrade their investment agreements but it was not successful. Subsequently, Japan invited Korea to join in a trilateral approach to add some pressure but negotiations have not yielded much yet. The other complicating factor is that as Japan's trade with China increases, it also surpasses trade with the United States. One implication of this is that the United States lose interest in Japan. U.S.-China trade is on the rise as well, compounding Japan's concerns about the U.S.-Japan alliance. Japan therefore has to consider diversification of trade, increasing its trade with China.

While other presentations would focus on the military aspects of China's rise, Sato emphasized Japan's broad maritime concerns about China. Some scholars believe China is the best situated maritime power given its location on the edge of the continent. China's maritime ambition

appears to be re-emerging after a long dormancy. This poses a problem to the co-dominant maritime powers of Japan and the United States. China's submarine base in Hainan Island is an example. In 2008, a Chinese admiral told U.S. admiral Keating that the two powers could split the Pacific Ocean east and west of Hawaii. China's second archipelagic defence line puts Japan and its sea-lanes inside of that line, which was troubling for Japan. Japan did not find it acceptable to rely on Chinese naval protection for its maritime trade.

Other issues, such as piracy in the Malacca Straits, have invited Chinese participation in security matters. This is not all bad from the Japanese perspective. Japan had in the past complained that China was a free rider in the Malacca Straits in terms of maritime safety. On Somalia, it is a slightly different picture. The Japanese Self Defence Forces were deployed to Somalia coast to match Chinese deployments. It was not because they were worried about Chinese dominance of this area—there are a lot of European and American ships there—but Japan cannot let China cooperate more with the United States than Japan. Since Japan's role in post-9/11 actions has decreased, this is a way to re-engage the United States.

Non-traditional concerns like bird flu, food security and proliferation security for state and non-state actors are also important. Such issues are an opportunity for China to be a responsible actor. Japan is not yet ready, however, to call China a responsible stakeholder on these issues. Perhaps the Six Party Talks are another opportunity for China to prove itself.

Discussion

The discussion chair for the session observed that the speakers provided the historical context and salient areas of cooperation and friction in Northeast Asia. He noted that China had engaged economic reform while North Korea had maintained its dictatorship and was a failing state. It is a patron-client relationship, like the one between China and Myanmar. Sometimes the interests of the client are at serious

odds with those of its patron. China's activities in the Six Party Talks are an effort to prove that it is not only a responsible stakeholder but also a sign of its growing confidence on the world stage. China's growing political relations with Seoul offers it an opportunity. South Korea has been much less accommodating to the North of late, while North Korea is in the middle of a power transition. China's end game or goal in the Korean Peninsula remains unclear.

There is a mutual economic and military dominance and rivalry between China and Japan. Mutual perceptions are less than positive. Japan sees China as a potential military threat. China is concerned with Japan's relations with the United States as part of an encirclement strategy. Historical baggage between the two also plays a large role. Stability seems to have been enhanced by Hatoyama's election. Yet Japanese policy may not have really changed significantly with the Hatoyama administration.

The presenter's discussion on Japan answered that when Koizumi was normalizing Japan his concerns were not about what Korea and China would think about it, but what the United States would think. When some scholars went through the Yasukuni historical displays, they made sure that there was nothing that the United States would find offensive. The Hatoyama government is doing the opposite, looking at what might upset China. The current inquiry into the secret agreement between Japan and the United States is another example.

Another speaker remarked that he had heard some Chinese scholars discussing a neutral unified Korea and that North Korea was becoming more of a strategic nuisance, but wondered if there was really such a debate within China. The presenter on Korea responded that there had been some public writing in China on the subject, but not much. From his perspective, China was more tolerant with divergent views about North Korea being published than with other issues. On the whole, he felt that China was concerned with an eruption within, if not a collapse of, the political system in North Korea. This was a major priority for China.

SESSION 2

Regional Integration and China's Role

Zhao Suisheng discussed the strategic thinking of China with regards to East Asia Cooperation. In his paper entitled “China’s role in regional integration particularly in light of the current financial crisis”, he elaborated that China had been active in a leadership role and had been promoting East Asian regional cooperation. China launched the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Six Party Talks. In his presentation, Zhao explored how the strategy adopted by China in East Asian Cooperation had both been a motivator and a detriment to cooperation efforts in the region.

Zhao said that China had made a strategic change in regional policy to embrace multilateralism, based on the following calculations. The first is to create a stable and peaceful peripheral environment for economic growth and political stability on which the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party now depends. The second is stronger border security and stability. The third is to enhance its position in managing relations with other major powers in the region, particularly the United States and Japan. However, he continued, this strategy had also set constraints on its participation in regional cooperation. Firstly, competition with other powers, particularly the United States and Japan, had made it difficult for China to play a leadership role. Secondly, concern over the possibility of the erosion of state sovereignty and the imposition of Western values within China has led it to prefer a more informal approach towards regional cooperation.

Zhao elaborated that for a long time, China had been reluctant to participate in East Asian cooperation due to

its possible exploitation by the United States and other powers. Many smaller nations within the region preferred to deal with China with a multilateral setting to increase the region’s overall bargaining power with China. Since the launch of its modernization programme in the 1980s, China has strove to create an image of building a peaceful and stable economic environment by adopting a good-neighbour policy. He continued to say that another force driving China to embrace multilateralism was the sheer interest of China to handle cross-border issues with its 14 neighbours. He said that there were over 30 trans-border nationalities—ethnic groups residing near the Chinese border—with strong ties with the neighbouring countries.

This presents a serious threat to Chinese border security. China’s neighbours were also interested in maintaining peaceful relations with regards to border security and this has led China to adopt a regional leadership cooperation strategy.

Zhao further elaborated that China was also interested in fostering relations with powers in the region such as Japan and the United States. China has been aware of Japan’s insistence of the U.S.-Japan cooperation as a means to regional cooperation with the United States. China’s suspicion is that Japan is attempting to hedge its risk with regards to its relations with the United States while not maintaining civil relations with China.

He asserted that although China had the military might, it was not in a good position to balance the power between the United States and countries in Asia, particularly Japan. However, China’s leadership role in the SCO has helped check U.S. intentions in Asian foreign policy.

Zhao also highlighted that Japan’s vision of Asian cooperation was at odds with China envisioning ASEAN and East Asia cooperation, whereas Japan had included South Asia and Australasia as well. He said that this had increased the competition between China and Japan within the region. The Western values of liberalism, coupled with its commitment of sovereignty, have helped relax China’s stance to foreign relations and consequently has fostered talks with various Western nations such as France and Germany. Zhao concluded that China’s soft approach to foreign policy has helped China maintain its sovereignty. However, the strategy of preventive



Professor Zhao Suisheng

diplomacy as opposed to conflict resolution in East Asia has prevented institutionalization of an East Asian Cooperation Organization.

An Analysis on East Asian Regional Two-Level Architecture-Building: A Chinese Perspective



Professor Su Hao

Su Hao's presentation highlighted on the Chinese policy on the integration of East Asia. He began by saying that there were regional cooperatives in East Asia that had been started. ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit are the two macro-frameworks for East Asian regional cooperation. However, there have been some challenges and uncertainties within East Asia with regards to the future of regional cooperative frameworks. Su said that his paper attempted to explain the current model of East Asian cooperation using the open regionalism theory and tried to design a framework for successfully building East Asian cooperation, the Walnut Model.

Su stated that since the end of the Cold War, there had been three stages of international cooperation. The "European model" and the creation of the European Union exemplify a traditional cooperation architecture based on geographical proximity and boundaries. He said that in the trans-regional cooperation model, developed countries stood to benefit as they reaped benefits from this trans-regional cooperation due to economic cooperation. However, in his opinion, the trans-regional cooperation model did not work well for regions such as Asia and Africa due to the need for a dominant, developed power. This model does not seem to be a good framework for cooperation among developing countries. He elaborated that this necessitated the development of a new process, which led to the creation of ASEAN+3. He argued that

this new framework was the "open regionalism" model—the third stage of post-Cold War model for international cooperation.

Su said that since the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997, after ASEAN+3 was created, the member countries have been developing support structures for regional cooperation. Each country, as part of ASEAN+3 for regional cooperation, has created regimented hierarchies. However, he elaborated that there were some challenges to fostering regional cooperation. One of them is the proliferation of additional initiatives by countries such as the Americas, Australia and Singapore. These initiatives render ASEAN+3's future uncertain and raise questions on how to carry forward East Asian regional cooperation.

Su proposed a unique model to reflect the practice of East Asian Cooperation. He elaborated that the architecture of East Asian cooperation was akin to a walnut. The core of the walnut, the fruit, is the core cooperation framework for East Asia—ASEAN+3. Within this architecture, there are four parts of regional cooperation. However, building a model for regional cooperation alone is not enough because countries in East Asia have a lot of traditional relationships with countries outside the region. Su asserted that these relations should be kept intact while developing the regional architecture infra-regional cooperation. In conclusion, Su reiterated that the model for regional cooperation in East Asia could not follow current known models. He asserted that by using the Walnut Model, a regional architecture for cooperation could be formed, while keeping existing relationships with countries outside the region intact.

Too Big to Fit: China and East Asia's Amorphous Regionalism

Deng Yong elaborated on the amorphous nature of China and East Asia's regionalism. He began by saying that China's position in the world had changed over the last 10 years. In the late 1990s, countries were encouraging China to participate more actively in regional cooperation and development. He elaborated that, in contrast, China today had risen to become one of the world's most prominent superpowers, which most countries were wary of.

Deng said that China's approach to regionalism was organic in nature. It is a natural extension of its domestic politics. He opined that China used regional cooperation initiatives such as the SCO to further its domestic



Professor Deng Yong

objectives such as infrastructure projects and financial cooperation. In his opinion, this approach had weakened China's position in the region but at the same time given China distinct advantages. China's success has unsettled countries such as Japan, which has sought to align itself with the West through initiatives such as a strong emphasis on democracy, which resonates with countries such as the United States and Australia.

Deng argued that, unfortunately, U.S.-China cooperation was "too big to fit" in the context of East Asia cooperation. Due to the bilateral nature of U.S. relations with other countries, U.S. relations with East Asia do not include the region as a whole but with individual countries such as China and Japan. Deng opined that this was potentially damaging to multilateral East Asian cooperation initiatives. However, China does not have bilateral relations with countries in East Asia, which puts it in a good position to foster multilateral cooperation within the region. Deng continued to say that China was not eager to impose an agenda or its ideas on the region. He asserted that, due to this profound power transition, the United States and China had redirected their efforts to their bilateral relations and multilateral diplomacy had taken a backseat.

Due to these factors, Deng concluded that the time was not right for the creation of a collective regional cooperation movement. He stated that there was no collection incentive and shared leadership to achieve regional cooperation and any effort to do so at this time would fail.

Discussion

The discussant commented that all three papers gave good insights into the inner workings of regional cooperation institutions. He elaborated that openness was a critical factor in East Asian regional cooperation. For example, even though the East Asian Summit is declared to be open, it does not seem to be open in reality, especially due to discussions of sensitive economic issues. There was a power struggle for the leadership of the East Asian Summit between Malaysia, China and Indonesia. He concluded that the lack of openness had resulted in distrust of China's intentions at the summit, hence undermining cooperation initiatives. He further stated that regional cooperation frameworks set up by the United States such as APEC were done so as to serve as a framework for economic cooperation. China's similar efforts such as ASEAN+3 followed a similar framework and did not strictly promote regional cooperation in the traditional sense. This is mainly because there is no clear, primary driver for regional cooperation in East Asia.

He also stated that the United States was more interested in building a bilateral cross-Pacific relationship with China, which exposes China to direct negotiations with the United States on all fronts. He continued to say that China had entered into a loose arrangement with the ASEAN countries to further its own interest while putting distance between itself and the United States, which gave China the space and leverage to negotiate with the United States indirectly. He concluded that creating a regional cooperation framework such as ASEAN+3 gave China the necessary diplomatic protection from the United States while furthering its own interests.

In response to creating regional cooperation, one speaker raised the definition of open regionalism. He defined it as cooperation between two or more countries without any hidden agenda. However, he stated that it was easy for countries to perceive their national interests in regionalism and hence it was difficult to foster cooperation in a truly secular manner in this way. Another speaker concurred that the feasibility of creating an organization to promote regional cooperation was a question that was not unique to the region. It was a question faced by every such organization in the world. It depends on the players involved and their willingness to subject themselves to the restrictions imposed by these regional institutions.

SESSION 3

PLA Modernization: Goal, Strategy and Priority

Strategic Concerns and General Direction of the PLA and its Military Build-up and Modernization



From left to right: Mr. Richard Bitzinger, Professor Roger Cliff, and Associate Professor Bernard Loo

Roger Cliff provided an overview of the modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). He also elaborated on the goals, motivation and priorities of the PLA. Cliff began his presentation by mentioning that after nearly 20 years of stagnation, the PLA had engaged in an ambitious programme in modernization since the late 1990s. Since then, he elaborated, there had been a significant transformation in the PLA.

Cliff asserted that while China did not perceive an existential military threat to its existence, there were a number of smaller security threats that China had to deal with. Foremost among them, he continued, was the possibility of Taiwanese independence and Tibetan separatism. China's approach to these issues has not changed in the recent past. Cliff said that China did not have the military strength to deal with U.S. military intervention in a conflict between China and Taiwan. However, he elaborated, China had increased its military spending, which had more than quadrupled from 1997 to 2009. On a doctrinal front, China's military strategy is to have a large number of people in the army armed with low-tech weapons. However, Cliff asserted that China would see a lot of localized conflicts rather than full-scale wars and the outcome of those would depend on the quality of military equipment rather than the quantity.

As part of the modernization of the PLA, the military has been acquiring and upgrading. Cliff elaborated that China had acquired military weapons like medium-range and land mobile Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). These are unique because they are very difficult to locate and destroy in a pre-emptive strike. On the naval front, Cliff said that China had acquired modern submarines and had upgraded air defence capabilities for China's surface ships, in addition to anti-ship cruise missiles. Modern fighter aircrafts and amphibious vehicles had also been acquired. He asserted that these were expected to play a critical role in the context of a conflict in Taiwan.

The PLA has not only emphasized on acquiring equipment but has also focused on improving the quality and training of its armed forces personnel. Cliff mentioned that minimum education requirements had been increased to at least middle-school education or a technical degree (if the candidate came from a city). Thus, Cliff said that the PLA was now recruiting and maintaining a non-commissioned officer cohort similar to the model followed by Western countries.

Cliff elaborated that China's military was in fact a regional military that functioned within the region and was not an organization that was focused on dominating the world. China does not engage in official long-range military deployments. Cliff mentioned that although parts of the military had been modernized and were comparable to the military in the region such as Japan, the PLA modernization process was still incomplete, as much of the equipment and the quality of personnel left much to be desired when compared to Western military. However, he elaborated that due to the sheer numbers of the military, modernization was not an easy task. Cliff further highlighted that China's equipment modernization efforts had been mostly on the ballistic missile front. The equipment for large-scale land warfare has not been adequately modernized and hence China is possibly incapable of waging a full-scale war with large neighbours such as Russia and India, which, in his opinion, should have no worry over the supposed strength of the Chinese military.

Cliff concluded by saying that the future of the PLA modernization depends largely on the outcome of the Taiwan issue. If the issue is resolved to Beijing's satisfaction, there may be a de-emphasis on military modernization. On the other hand, if the Taiwan issue remains unresolved,

China's military modernization will continue with a focus on regional military combat and the possible need to counter U.S. intervention in the Taiwan issue.

China's "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA): How Fast? How Furious?

Richard Bitzinger provided an overview of China's revolution in military affairs and its speed and implications. He said that the PLA was undergoing a transformation and was modernizing rapidly. However, he wondered if these were really "revolutionary" and a "remarkable transformation". Bitzinger first defined Revolution in Military Affairs as a fundamental shift in the way we perceive warfare. He elaborated that an RMA was nothing less than a fundamental change in the manner in the character and conduct of warfare. Thus, an upgrade in technology while keeping the same military structure was not an RMA. Given this definition, Bitzinger questioned if China was undergoing an RMA.

Bitzinger elaborated that China's military strategy revolved around fighting intense, local wars that were generally of short duration, high intensity conflicts as well as around creating surprise through the speediness of attack. Thus, in recent years, the PLA has put in considerable visible effort to acquire the military hardware necessary to further this objective. The quality of the hardware acquired is fast approaching technological par with the Western military. Bitzinger said that the PLA was currently engaged in a "generation leap strategy", where it was acquiring military hardware while simultaneously trying to link the hardware to the informatization of warfare.

Bitzinger elaborated that while the PLA had boosted the quality and quantity of its military, it had moved from platform-centric warfare to a more network-centric warfare, one where information systems linking the traditional platforms such as ships and submarines resulted in a more effective military strategy. When the small changes were accumulated and put in a larger context, he continued, it did seem as if the PLA was undergoing a genuine, massive transformation. However, the real question was whether this was a transformation radical enough to qualify as an RMA.

Bitzinger opined that this transformation did not qualify as an RMA. He elaborated that unfortunately, despite this transformation, much of China's military was engaged in traditional, infantry-based tactics. Thus, even though the acquisition of military hardware may seem revolutionary, the basic paradigm of warfare remains the same. He

said that the much touted acquisition of medium-range ballistic missiles, which made China the first in the world to do so, might have risen out of necessity since China did not have the technological capability to create long-range, stand-off ballistic weaponry. Even the process of modernizing the PLA is not revolutionary in itself. He elaborated that the deployment of military hardware in sections of the military was a consequence of a 30-year period of economic progress due to policies adopted by the Chinese government, which had resulted in increasing military budgets over the past few years.

In his conclusion, Bitzinger highlighted that an RMA was not defined by the presence of high technology systems. However, he added, undergoing an RMA was not necessary to see the benefit of acquiring high technology systems. He then asked what it was then if it was not an RMA. In his opinion, this transformation might be simply termed as a twenty-first century people's war, which was a natural consequence of the evolution of the technology industry. This transformation, he said, was a standard transformation that a country undergoes given the increase in the availability of high technology. Thus, it was an increase in military capabilities but an RMA. However, Bitzinger elaborated that this did not denigrate the PLA and its achievements. An RMA was not needed to achieve military prowess and the current transformation will lead China to greater ability to project its military force.

Discussion

The discussant for this session elaborated on how military transformation as projected by American literature was a continuous process. He said that in an era of rapid technological change, the shelf life of military hardware would become increasingly shorter. The current modernization of the PLA brought about the key issue of the likely strategic effectiveness of the PLA, which spawned two separate issues. Firstly, he continued, the speaker could have paid more attention to discussing what to expect of the organizational changes in the PLA, especially with regards to the changes in rigid hierarchies present in the PLA. Secondly, he elaborated, more discussion on the doctrinal changes of the PLA would have been appropriate. He said that even though both papers alluded to it, the PLA's likely strategic effectiveness was a result of these doctrinal changes and thus they should be discussed in more detail. Lastly, he opined that it was also important to probe into the internal policy workings of the Chinese defence ministry and the foreign ministry, as they might have differing viewpoints with regards to the military positioning

against the United States, or vice versa, especially in the wake of the Taiwan Straits crisis.

During the question-and-answer session, a speaker asked what strategy changes one should look for in the PLA if the U.S. military saw the need for greater countermeasures to deal with the rise of China as a superpower. He further questioned that there seemed to be a capabilities race between China and the United States, and wondered what would happen next. In responses to the question, the presenter elaborated on issues of the organizational changes in the PLA. He stated that the Gulf War certainly

played a part in galvanizing the Chinese military elite into a military transformation. While the U.S. military is concerned about the rise of the PLA's capabilities, in reality, all that China is doing is replicating the U.S. military technological advancements and strategy. This does not indicate a trend that will result in the PLA transforming and developing capabilities that are better than the U.S. military. From within a Chinese perspective, the transformation is indeed revolutionary. However, this transformation will result in the PLA catching up with U.S. military capabilities and not going beyond them in the foreseeable future.

SESSION 4

Cross-strait Relations

Mainland China's Policy towards Taiwan



Professor Xia Liping

Xia Liping outlined Mainland China's policy towards Taiwan. First, the one-China principle should be the common understanding between two sides. Second, economic cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges, and other constructive proposals should be conducted. Third, China is willing to support Taiwan's participation in international organizations as long as it does not violate the one-China principle. Fourth, the two sides should cease confrontations and find peaceful means to resolve them. Fifth, Mainland China would respond positively to Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) when it ceases its secessionist activities.

Xia moved on to introduce some significant developments in cross-Taiwan-Straits relations since Ma Ying-jeou had

taken office, focusing more on economic and relative uncontroversial issues, China's efforts to help Taiwan to join international organizations, and pragmatic discussions to ease hostilities towards each other.

Next, Xia noted that there were currently some contentious issues between Mainland China and Taiwan. First, the proposal of signing the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) by Mainland China and Taiwan has been contested by the opposing party. Second, Ma Ying-jeou's administration has been pressured domestically and thus it is reluctant to respond to political dialogues and peace accords initiated by Mainland China. Third, it is still unclear how Mainland China and Taiwan should deal with the sovereignty issue. Considering this problem, Xia proposed that while sovereignty could not be divided, it could be shared by both Mainland China and Taiwan. Fourth, Taiwan's decisions of allowing the Dalai Lama to visit Kaohsiung and showing separatist Rebiya Kadeer's film have a negative impact on the number of tourists from Mainland China to Taiwan and hurt relations between the two.

Xia further pointed out four major factors that would have an impact on cross-strait relations. These factors include the Pan-Green pressure on Ma's policy towards cross-strait relations, the U.S. strategic consideration and its role as a barrier of China's reunification, distrust between Mainland China and Taiwan, and Ma's weakened political profile due to his failure in dealing with Typhoon Morakot. In his conclusion, Xia highlighted some implications of China's policy towards Taiwan for China's relations with the United

States and East Asia. First, the peaceful development of cross-strait relations would benefit the stability in East Asia as well as cooperation between China and the United States. Moreover, the ECFA between Mainland China and Taiwan would benefit economic development in East Asia though it might have a negative impact on exports to the region from the United States before the United States reaches an FTA with China and ASEAN. However, it is worth mentioning that the United States still wants to maintain its major role and has an intention to use Taiwan to restrict the rise of China.

U.S. Policy and Cross-Strait Rapprochement: What Beijing may Expect from Washington



Professor Dennis V. Hickey

Dennis V. Hickey first analysed a few points of China's consideration of the importance of resolving the Taiwan issue, such as the restoration of China's territorial integrity, Taiwan's strategic importance, Taiwan's economic prowess, the PLA's military interests, the PRC's domestic political considerations, and Taiwan's threat to the legitimacy of the Beijing regime.

Hickey agreed that relations between Mainland China and Taiwan were at their best since China was split by civil war in 1949 and there are some significant changes in cross-strait relations, such as the realization of cross-strait flights, Mainland China's tourists visits, Mainland China's direct investment in Taiwan, and the "diplomatic truce" that seemed to have appeared between the two sides. Moreover, China supports Taiwan's participation in the same international organizations under the name of "Chinese Taipei" and China has proposed to sign a broad framework agreement on liberalized trade relations (the ECFA).

Considering the triangular relationship between Beijing, Washington and Taiwan, Hickey observed that China had continuously considered the United States as a barrier to China's reunification with Taiwan though the United States has expressed that they were not willing to get involved in the issue. He then analysed the arms-sales issue as one of the major contentions between China and the United States towards the Taiwan issue. China's consideration is that arms sales hinders efforts towards a peaceful resolution while the United States believes that arms sales allow Taiwan to negotiate from a position of strength. However, the United States concedes that the F-16 sales to Taiwan would almost certainly strain Sino-American relations at a time when the United States needs China to support it to cope with a host of complicated international challenges. Next, Hickey illustrated the U.S. policy towards cross-strait rapprochement. First, a number of Americans have voiced reservations about warming relations across the Taiwan Strait and they prefer to maintain the status quo. But the CCP is passionate to know the United States' position on the Taiwan issue and it has the perception that the United States is opposed to reunification.

Hickey further spoke about the positions of the United States and China towards Taiwan's international space. Washington applauded the move of the PRC to allow Taiwan to attend the WHA. However, Beijing expects Washington to understand the limits on Taiwan's international space. Moreover, there is call for Washington to mediate a peace settlement between Beijing and Taipei from time to time but Chinese officials have expressed reservations about what the United States will be doing as a broker. Hickey also analysed some implications for the U.S. policy towards the Taiwan issue. First, regarding the arms sales issue, he believed that the F-16 sale was not likely to continue. He suggested that the United States should use the F-16 issue as a bargaining chip to help promote cross-strait peace and stability, such as using it to negotiate with China to exchange for the removal of missiles deployed against Taiwan. Further, he suggested that Washington needed to stress its welcome of cross-strait rapprochement, which would be helpful in assuring Mainland China and Taiwan that they moving were in the right direction. Hickey concluded that the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue is not beyond the realm of possibility and it would benefit U.S. interests by removing the military confrontation between the United States and the PRC.

Power Shift, Asymmetric Interests and Buck-Passing: Assessing the Dynamics of Recent U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

Simon T. Chang presented the Taiwanese perspective on cross-strait relations based on some theoretical analysis. Neorealism has given a pessimistic view on the China-U.S. competition. The power shift between the United States and China will cause a fear of power competition and Taiwan in this competition as the most likely detonating spat between the United States and China. However, Chang observed that this prediction did not materialize. To explain this, Chang argued that there were two reasons. First, the danger since the mid-1990s has been well managed due to an asymmetric and ordered interest configuration well realized by Washington and Beijing. Second, the strategic value of Taiwan for U.S.-China security is declining.

Next, Chang explained the concept of “power shift” and the logic of power. He stressed that power is a tool rather than an end. Thus countries should avoid “excessive power”, which may lead to distrust and challenges from other small powers. If power cannot be well managed, it may easily lead to dangerous consequences, such as preventive war or hegemonic war. However, this consequence did not happen in the Taiwan Strait. Basically, this can be explained by two concepts, which are asymmetric interests and buck-passing calculations. When applying these two concepts to China-U.S. relations, asymmetric interests are concerned with how two players measure their power gap and their relative positions, and buck-passing is related to the strategic value of Taiwan for the security of the two great powers.

To support his argument, Chang reviewed two periods of U.S.-China-Taiwan relations as case studies. The first period is from the late 1990s to 2008, when Taiwan’s economic interdependence on Mainland China tied its hands from declaring independence. The dangerous clash did not happen due to two reasons. First, both China and the United States measured their power gap carefully. China gave its priority to economic development rather than reunification and it was not willing to irritate the United States. The United States was not willing to challenge China by risking a nuclear showdown. By doing this, “excessive power” was not attained. Moreover, Taiwan is vital for the U.S. credibility more than for its survival, thus the United States was willing to “take the buck” in exchange for China’s support for its global commitment, such as the issues of Iraq, Iran, North Korea and the RMB rates.

The second period is from 2008, which is characterized by increased strategic assurance with insufficient political trust. Both new leaders Obama and Ma-Yingjeou have moved closer to Mainland China and stabilized the triangular relationship. Each party has its own interests and priorities, and need support from each other. In return, they assured each other by subtle measures to maintain the positive trend and avoid any misreading of intentions. However, Chang noted that there was one factor that could rattle the situation—Taiwan’s identity politics. Taiwan’s internal distrust, scepticism of “Chineseness” and its identity crisis are long-term and chronic, and will endanger the very foundation of trilateral assurance. Thus, he concluded that in order to avoid worst-case scenarios, the most important thing was not only to design a sophisticated strategic assurance but also to build mutual political trust.

Discussion

Paul Bolt in his discussion observed that all three papers have agreed that Taiwan-Mainland relations are particularly good now and many remarkable changes have taken place in the past couple of years. However, they may have some disagreements about what the future holds. Hickey’s presentation is optimistic for the future of cross-strait relations and he suggested that the good future would be positive for the outside world while Xia and Chang’s presentations admitted that Taiwan domestic problems are the main challenges.

Bolt commented on all three papers respectively. First, he noted that Xia’s presentation was very detailed and comprehensive, in which all the progress and challenges have been identified. And he appreciated the idea that “sovereignty is unable to be divided but can be shared”.



From left to right: Associate Professor Ralf Emmers, Professor Simon Chang, Professor Dennis Hickey, Professor Xia Liping, Professor Paul Bolt

However, he pointed out how sovereignty to be shared in the practical sense should be further elaborated. Bolt suggested that the paper could be more balanced if it had discussed a bit more about Mainland China's policies towards Taiwan. Besides, the Green protest seemed to him to be more than just annoyance and he was wondering what the future might hold for KMT if the Green regained power.

Next, Bolt had a brief overview of Chang's paper and revealed that the discussion about Taiwan's political identity was very sustainable and interesting. However, he suggested that the paper could benefit more if it had mentioned more about the economic role in Mainland-Taiwan ties and it might be more convincing by explaining more about why the Mainland economic exchange did not benefit Taiwan very much. Moreover, as he noted, the paper concluded by suggestions of building trust between the two sides. However, it is not clear whether

this can be attained given that Taiwan has domestic identity politics struggle.

Finally, he moved on to Hickey's paper by raising some questions. First, what counted for Hu Jintao's policy change? Second, referring to Hickey's suggestion of using the F-16 sales to negotiate with Mainland China in exchange for the reduction of Chinese missiles targeting at Taiwan, what was Mainland China's perspective over this? Moreover, the paper could summarize some thinking of the United States, considering that the sentiment between Mainland China and Taiwan might not be in the U.S. interest since the paper was not convincing enough where this point was concerned. Finally, the paper could have analysed the impact of the "China threat" perception on the process of reunification, and how the resolution of the Taiwan issue could affect China's long-term grand strategy and military build-up.

SESSION 5

China's Maritime Strategy

UNCLOS and the Maritime Security of China

Robert C. Beckman presented on China's maritime issues from the legal perspective, and discussed China's domestic provisions, in particular for some major legal issues related to the South China Sea. First, he indicated that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) had impact on the maritime security of China. He acknowledged that China had actively participated in regional and global cooperation and, for the most part, China's national laws and policies were in accordance with UNCLOS. However, he argued that some

provisions in China's laws were highly controversial while others were not consistent with UNCLOS, particularly some of China's policies pertaining to the South China Sea, which had raised doubts and suspicions in some countries. Therefore, legal issues had undermined the legitimacy of China's policies and claims in the South China Sea.

Beckman also introduced the legal regimes of the oceans and airspace, which are the Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zones, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the Continental Shelf and High Seas. He examined China's domestic provisions and its practice in relating to these regimes respectively. First, China's law in requiring foreign military ships to get permission from its government in its territorial sea has conflicted with the U.S. position. Second, its application of straight baselines around its coast is not consistent with UNCLOS. Third, the enforcement of its security laws in the Contiguous Zone is inconsistent with UNCLOS. Fourth, its law on Marine Scientific Research in the EEZ is controversial because it also covers "surveys". Concerning military activities in the EEZ, it is unreasonable for China to classify them as Marine Scientific Research, which had resulted in some incidents between China and the United States in recent years. Therefore, he suggested that China should eventually re-evaluate its position on this issue and decide that it was in its national interest to



Professor Robert C. Beckman

adopt the traditional position of naval powers on military activities in the EEZ.

Next, Beckman moved on to the South China Sea issue that pertained to China's claims, practice and legal problems. First, China's using of a "U-shaped" line map has raised ambiguities and it is not clear how this map relates to China's claim. Second, when Vietnam and Malaysia made a joint submission to the United States Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to claim the extended shelf, China objected to it. Besides that, he also introduced the island regime in UNCLOS, and explained all the relevant definitions and regulations about "islands", "rocks" and "low-tide elevations". He doubted China's position on the applicability to the South China Sea of the UNCLOS provisions on islands and low-tide elevations. In view of this, he suggested that the claimants must decide which islands would get EEZ, which would get only 12 nm of Territorial Sea and which features would not get any maritime zones of their own. Finally, he observed that China's policies towards fishing in disputed waters in the South China Sea were unilateral and its proposal of "shelving the disputes and joint development" in the Spratly Islands should be clarified. In concluding, Beckman briefly mentioned about the implications of Chinese economic and military power development for the South China Sea issue, and he stressed that it would be helpful for China to alleviate much of the suspicion and anxiety from small countries if its laws and policies could comply with UNCLOS.

China's Maritime Security Considerations under the International Law of the Sea

Zou Keyuan's presentation started with analysing some factors that influence China's considerations. First, the change in China's traditional mentality has forced people to be aware of the importance of maritime waters. Second, China has brought its maritime security into a broader security perception. Third, China's rapid economic development and increasing demand for energy require efforts to protect its maritime interest. Finally, with its rise, China is inevitably projecting its national interests into the oceans.

Next, Zou introduced China's maritime legal system, including UNCLOS, the SUA Convention and its domestic laws. Zou discussed more about China's attitudes and behaviours in international anti-piracy cooperation. China's initial attitude was one of reluctant, given its consideration on the Law of the Sea and other existing

international legislation. However, China actively participated in naval operations in Somali and has integrated these activities into UN peacekeeping activities.

In terms of China's maritime claims, both East China Sea and South China Sea issues have been discussed. The reason for countries competing for broader areas of waters lies in UNCLOS (which entitles countries to claim large areas of territorial sea), EEZ, and the continental shelf surrounding islands. This is also the reason for disputes between China and its neighbouring countries over Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. Furthermore, resources around the island in the seabed have been considered as another fundamental reason.

Moving to the South China Sea issue, he discussed the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (the 2002 DOC). Through this document, all claimants agree to conduct confidence building and cooperation in the South China Sea. However, the agreement has no binding effect. Moreover, there have been setbacks in recent years that have affected the effective implementation of the 2002 DOC. First, the claimants have continued their unilateral actions, such as domestic legislation. Second, the tripartite joint programme between China, the Philippines and Vietnam has been suspended after the completion of its first stage activities. Third, China has recently shifted its attitude from multilateralism back to bilateralism. A possible solution that Zou identified was joint development. However, this is only a temporary rather than a final solution. Though there is discussion about a third-party dispute settlement mechanism, Zou noted that China was not willing to deal with the South China Sea issue with third-party intervention and it preferred negotiation and consultation.

In conclusion, Zou addressed two points. First, the LOS Convention has established a rule-of-law regime for the oceans and compliance with international law is one of the requirements when states interact and cooperate in international relations. Therefore, in order to maintain a harmonious maritime order, it is important for China to strengthen its international rule of law with UNCLOS as the legal basis. Second, international law has its limitations and different interpretations of international law can trigger maritime disputes. For China, it should use its smart power, instead of hard power and soft power, to introduce its maritime consideration.

China's Two-Level Navy: Bifurcated Development to Secure Specific Territorial Claims and Expansive Commerce



Associate Professor Andrew S. Erickson

Andrew S. Erickson's argument in his presentation was that China's naval development was naturally and externally-oriented. This development is in keeping with its rapidly growing economic interests in the broader region and beyond, and is aimed at protecting its territorial interest in the immediate maritime periphery. His presentation covered a few main points, including China's navy's current status and configuration, possible future force postures, indicators of future SLOC projection capabilities, potential overseas facilities, and larger implications.

Erickson described PLAN as "one navy, two levels" by explaining that China's levels of interest were different and China's ability to pursue and enforce those interests were different. China's current policies and the discussions further reveal that China is not going to follow the failed policy of the former Soviet Union's over-extension. He further explained that China had many immediate interests to pursue, such as the Taiwan issue, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. Therefore, it is not likely that China is going to project its powers far beyond this region.

Currently, China does not have the number of naval platforms as well as long-term power projection strategy, which is far beyond its immediate periphery. What China has now are advanced active-defence capability weapons, which may include different kinds of missiles, ballistic cruise, sea mines, submarines and some other weapons. On the other hand, China's navy is seen operating in the Gulf of Aden. But it is not at a level that can support high-intensity major combat operations. It cannot defend itself against very high intensity threats. It is designed to shake the

overall strategic situation and have a positive and influential Chinese presence in the region. It can only indicate China's interest in the ex-regional level, which is protecting sea lane security and trade and energy supplies.

Further, he examined the range of possible force postures for China's navy in the future. According to his opinion, there were usually two categories of force postures: "sea denial" and "sea control". China's current force is classified as "sea denial"; this is because China's current high-level capabilities are designed for the immediate maritime periphery rather than areas further away, such as the Indian Ocean. Currently, there is no indication that China's naval capability can be viewed as blue-water power, since China has not yet reached global-level capability. This can be examined by the different indicators identified by Erickson. So far, China does not have strong anti-submarine warfare capability. Furthermore, he mentioned that the possibility for China to build overseas bases was debatable and he tended to believe that China would not establish a "string of pearls".

Finally, he concluded with some implications. First, he stressed that China had some significant challenges in its immediate maritime periphery. Thus it has interest to protect. Second, in the Gulf of Aden, China has made some contributions, and it is good for other countries to cooperate with it to deal with certain common challenges. Therefore, he restated that it was a mistake to view it as China's projection of military power and it was necessary to understand China's critical role in the region and beyond.

Discussion

Ralf Emmers, the discussant, highlighted two initiating points. First, he acknowledged that both international relations and international law should be examined and integrated with each other. Second, he doubted that Beijing's naval strategy and maritime strategy was still not clear and convincing. Referring to Beckman's paper, he viewed that there were three instructive points. First, the level of ambiguity created by China's policies can be illustrated by China's policies towards the South China Sea issues such as the adoption of the U-shaped line. Second, he observed that China had deliberately created the controversy. Third, UNCLOS has been abused to push certain positions in the South China Sea issue. Next, Emmers moved on to Zou's paper, where he doubted that the ideas expressed by Zou were of much optimism. His own observation of China's behaviours in the South China Sea and the policies it had adopted were of great concern for the neighbouring countries. Moreover, the possible solutions to the South China Sea mentioned by Zou were

less consolable by using the word “solution”. Therefore, an explanation was needed. Finally, Emmers acknowledged that the two-level approach adopted by Erickson was helpful in balancing both the strength and limitation of PLAN, while at the same time suggesting that some of the concerns such as the “string of pearls” and the possibility of building overseas bases might need to be elaborated more, especially China’s decision-makers’ considerations before forming any conclusion.

One panellist asked whether China had made any specific explanations about the U-shaped line except for the adoption of this map. His observation was that the baseline China claimed in 1996 did not follow the U-shaped line and also China did not argue that the waters involved in the *Impeccable* incident were China’s territorial waters. Instead, it claimed it as its EEZ. Another speaker observed that there were some activities conducted by Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei that were within the U-shaped line and some maritime boundary agreements were also within the U-shaped line, but China had never protested. So he wondered whether more elaboration could be given on the status of the U-shaped line.

Beckman first answered the point about China’s role as “troublemaker” or reactive actor. He tended to view China more as a troublemaker since he had observed that China on many occasions reacted to some issues most assertively and actively rather than reactively compared with behaviours of other countries. Second, regarding the United States and China’s potential common stance, he explained by introducing the experience of United States and the USSR, where both countries regarded that freedom of navigation in other countries’ EEZs as being vital for their naval development.

Zou first introduced some institutes and centres in relating to the Law of the Sea studies but he suspected the quality of these studies. Second, he noted that China’s historical rights within the U-shaped line had been influenced by its adoption of a straight baseline in the Paracel Islands. But he referred to the 1998 law in the EEZ and continental shelf, where Article 14 provided that China reserved historical rights in its historical waters, which can be interpreted as reserving historical rights in the South China Sea. He again admitted that China’s use of the U-shaped line to defend its interest was not strong enough. However, though the Law of the Sea has abandoned the notion of historical rights, there are international custom laws that could be referred to as well. Third, he clarified that an island regime

had been defined in UNCLOS and it was not only China’s position. Fourth, he acknowledged that China had applied natural prolongation in the East China Sea but not in the South China Sea, though it was not clear why China used these different standards.

Erickson first explained that there were many factors driving China’s naval strategy. And it was easy to understand that every policy or strategy was possible in facing external challenges. Thus China’s immediate periphery interest and strategy may be challenged by its neighbouring countries. Second, he clarified that the two-level navy was based on the Chinese concept of near-sea and far-sea. Alternatively, there are other ways to divide this concept, such as the first island chain and the second island chain. Third, in referring to the question about whether China joined the doctrine and anti-access training with the United States, he explained that since China’s primary interest focused on the immediate periphery, it used more basic ways in defusing fires and weapons to deal with its threat. Fourth, in terms of figures of destroyers, he denied that there was a large number of them. Instead, PLAN currently intends to improve its quality, not so much on quantity. Finally, Erickson agreed that in the future, China would access some places in the region, such as ports in the Indian Ocean. However, given the terrorism situation there, China is definitely not willing to get involved in this tragedy.



From left to right (front row): Professor Yoichiro Sato, Associate Professor Andrew Erickson, Dr. Lee Dongmin, Professor Chung Chong Wook, Dr. Li Mingjiang, Dr. Sheng Lijun, Mr. Richard Bitzinger, Professor Robert Sutter, Professor Xia Liping, Professor Su Hao; (back row): Dr. Simon Chang Teng-chi, Professor Chen Yugang, Dr. Rajesh Manohar Basrur, Professor Robert Beckman, Professor Paul Bolt, Professor Roger Cliff, Professor Dennis Hickey, Professor Zhao Suisheng, Professor Deng Yong, Professor Zou Keyuan

APPENDIX 1

Conference Programme

10 March 2010

Overseas participants arrival
Reception dinner

11 March 2010

Conference Day One

0900 – 0910 hr Welcome remarks

Session 1: China and East Asian Strategic Dynamics

0910 – 1040 hr Part 1: (Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 30 minutes for open discussion)

Chair

Zhao Suisheng

Robert Sutter (Georgetown University)

American perspective on China's strategic and security role in East Asia

Chen Yugang (Fudan University)

China's global and regional security strategy

Rajesh Manohar Basrur (RSIS)

Indian perspective on China's strategic and security role in East Asia

Discussant

Li Mingjiang (RSIS)

1040 – 1100 hr Tea break

1100 – 1220 hr Part 2: (Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 35 minutes for open discussion)

Chair

Xia Liping

Chung Chong Wook (RSIS)

South Korean perspective on China's strategic and security role in East Asia

Yoichiro Sato (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University)

Japanese perspective on China's strategic and security role in East Asia

Discussant

Ian Storey (ISEAS)

1220 – 1400 hr Lunch

1400 – 1530 hr **Session 2: Regional Integration and China's Role**

(Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 30 minutes for open discussion)

Chair

Robert Sutter

Zhao Suisheng (University of Denver)

China's role in regional integration particularly in light of the current financial crisis

Su Hao (China Foreign Affairs University)

China's policy and vision about East Asian integration

Deng Yong (U.S. Naval Academy)

China and regional architecture from both economic and security perspectives

Discussant

Sheng Lijun (LKYSPP, National University of Singapore)

1530 – 1600 hr Tea break

1600 – 1730 hr **Session 3: PLA Modernization: Goals, Strategy and Priority**

(Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 30 minutes for open discussion)

Chair

Lee Dongmin

Roger Cliff (RAND Corporation)

Strategic concerns and general direction of the PLA and the PLA's military build-up and modernization

Richard Bitzinger (RSIS)

The PLA's military build-up and modernization and/or PLA priorities

Discussant

Bernard Loo (RSIS)

1730 hr End of Day 1

12 March 2010
Conference Day Two

0900 – 1030 hr **Session 4: Cross-strait Relations**
(Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 30 minutes for open discussion)

Chair
Deng Yong

Xia Liping (Tongji University)
Mainland China's policy towards Taiwan
Dennis V. Hickey (Missouri State University)
U.S. perspective on cross-strait relations and its implications for Sino-US relations and/or US-Taiwan-Mainland China relations
Simon T. Chang
Taiwanese perspective on cross-strait relations

Discussant
Paul Bolt (RSIS)

1030 – 1100 hr Tea break

1100 – 1230 hr **Session 5: China's Maritime Strategy**
(Presentation and commentary 15 minutes each; 30 minutes for open discussion)

Chair
Roger Cliff

Robert C. Beckman (National University of Singapore)
The legal aspects of maritime security in the case of China
Zou Keyuan (University of Central Lancashire)
The legal aspects of maritime security, particularly on China and recent developments in the South China Sea
Andrew Erickson (U.S. Naval War College)
Strategic concerns and general direction of the PLA and particularly China's maritime security

Discussant
Ralf Emmers (RSIS)

1230 hr End of conference

1230 – 1400 hr Lunch

APPENDIX 2

List of Participants

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About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** was officially inaugurated on 1 January 2007. Before that, it was known as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), which was established then years earlier on 30 July 1996. Like its predecessor, **RSIS** was established as an autonomous entity within Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The School exists to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of Asia-Pacific security studies and international affairs. Its three core functions are research, graduate teaching and networking activities

in the Asia-Pacific region. It produces cutting-edge security related research in Asia-Pacific Security, Conflict and Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Area Studies.

The School's activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia-Pacific and their implications for Singapore.

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