

**Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia
at the Beginning of the 21st Century
Deterrence and/or Cooperative Security?**

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For more information,

Planning and Coordination Office,

National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)

2-2-1, Nakameguro, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan, 153-8648

TEL: +81-3-3713-5912 FAX: +81-3-3713-6149

Preface

This report contains the papers presented by the guest speakers at the NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs. The theme of this year's symposium was "The Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia in the Beginning of the 21st Century." The two-day symposium was held on January 13-14, 1999, at Grand Hill Ichigaya.

The purpose of the symposium, as the theme suggests, was to obtain a clear picture of the strategic environment in Northeast Asia in the early part of the 21st century.

As evidenced by the efforts of Japan and the United States to reconfirm their commitment to the bilateral security arrangement originally formed during the Cold War era, countries in East Asia continue seeking to maintain and strengthen arrangements of alliance designed to deter and respond to adverse situations. At the same time, the four countries—Japan, the United States, China and Russia—with the most decisive influence upon the security environment in East Asia have also started, albeit at the bilateral level, political-military dialogue and defense exchanges.

In principle, arrangements of alliance are formed by nations assuming a threat posed by a common potential adversary. The continuation of such arrangements does not necessarily signify that the allies are constantly faced with a threat from a particular potential adversary. Cooperation between allies can extend beyond military matters to include the political and economic spheres as well. Where such cooperation goes on for many years and evolves into permanent systems, dissolution of the arrangement of alliance could have a serious negative impact upon the national interests of the allies. The Japan-U.S. alliance is a very good case in point. NATO is another.

On the other hand, the main purpose of an alliance is to provide for military deterrence and armed response to adverse developments. Furthermore, an arrangement of alliance is basically exclusive in its nature. As such, depending on how

the relationship is handled, such an arrangement can bring about unnecessary apprehension among third parties. Furthermore, even though the allied partners might not point to any particular nation as the target of the arrangement of alliance, and might view it instead as nothing more than an effort to maintain regional stability, if the arrangement involves the major powers in that region, there is a risk that the very act of seeking stability itself can be viewed as a quest for hegemony.

Political-military dialogue acts to counteract these drawbacks, which derive from an arrangement of alliance. Over and above the immediate purpose of resolving mistrust based on past history, sustained political-military dialogue can also facilitate the establishment of trust and lead to more transparent defense policies. Furthermore, if agreements lead to the establishment of permanent systems, countries within a given region can start to take a look at working together to build cooperative security regimes for maintaining and improving the security environment.

However, it must be noted that although a cooperative security regime seeks to promote a cooperative approach to security issues, this cooperation can itself lead to conflicts of interest. Differences in the interests provided by the cooperative security regime can undermine the effectiveness of dialogue, and there is always the danger that one or more countries could disregard existing agreements and take unilateral action, thus destroying the process of dialogue. The risk of this happening is especially high where security cooperation is concerned.

Also, even when multilateral cooperation on security matters successfully prevents deterioration of the security environment, it is still unlikely that a cooperative security regime could actually guarantee the ultimate security of the countries involved. Even when a cooperative security regime is built through the use of confidence-building measures and arms control agreements, it is only useful as a means of preventing armed conflict; it is of no use whatsoever once armed conflict has begun.

From this perspective, it seems clear that there is a complementary relationship between arrangements of alliance aimed at deterrence and military response, on the one hand, and multilateral cooperative security regimes, on the other. In other words, understanding the relationship between arrangements of alliance and

cooperative security regimes is arguably one of the keys to understanding the Northeast Asian security environment in the beginning of the 21st century.

We invited scholars from the United States, China, Russia, Singapore, and Japan to submit papers on this subject, and these studies served as the basis for two-day discussions held on January 13 and 14.

In addition to the papers that were submitted at the symposium, this report also contains the keynote speech of Professor Joseph S. Nye, Jr. of Harvard University, the speech delivered during the opening ceremony by Mr. Seiji Ema, Administrative Vice Minister of the Japan Defense Agency, and the opening remarks delivered by Mr. Yasuhiro Ohgoshi, President of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS). We were not able to obtain the permission of MG (Ret.) Luo Peisen, Senior Consultant to the China Institute for International Strategic Studies, to report on his paper.

The materials from the symposium were translated into Japanese by three NIDS research associates: Mr. Takashi Komura, Mr. Heigo Sato, and Mr. Sugio Takahashi, and proofread by Dr. Shinichi Ogawa, Senior Research Fellow, and Professor Yuichiro Nagao, Research Office Chief. In addition to acting as translator, Mr. Komura also served as editorial staff.

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Professor Shigekatsu Kondo
Director, First Research Department, National Institute for Defense Studies
Chairman, NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs