

# **Chairman's Summary**

## **Japan's National Security and the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War**

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The theme of the 2023 International Forum on War History was “Japan's National Security and the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War.”

It goes without saying that Japan's national security has a close relationship with the Korean Peninsula. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, this forum aimed to provide a historical perspective for delving into the current international situation on a deeper level through a historical examination of the relationship between Japan's national security and the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War by taking up the relationship between the Korean War and Japan, Japan-U.S.-R.O.K. relations in the history of the Cold War, and other issues.

This forum consisted of two sessions: Session 1, which focused on the Korean War that broke out in 1950, and Session 2, which focused on Japan-U.S.-R.O.K. relations throughout the Cold War period. Each session comprised (i) a keynote speech, (ii) presentations by panelists, and (iii) a general discussion, in that order.

Session 1, titled “The Korean War and Japan,” featured a keynote speech by Mike Mochizuki (Director, Japan-U.S. Relations, George Washington University), followed by presentations by Futoshi Shibayama (Professor, Kansei Gakuin University), Kijeong Nam (Director, Institute for Japanese Studies, Seoul National University), and Marc Gallicchio (Mary M. Birle Chair in American History, Villanova University).

In his keynote speech titled “Strategic Linkages between Japan and Korea: American Perspectives during the Cold War,” Dr. Mochizuki focused on the strategic linkages between Japan and Korea during the Cold War period from an American perspective, highlighting how the United States tried to maintain and develop U.S. forces in Japan in response to contingencies in Korea during the period from the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, a significant reduction of U.S. forces in South Korea was being considered, in contrast to the situation in Japan. Mochizuki pointed out that this was evidence that the United States was strategically more concerned with Japan than with South Korea, despite its strategic ties with both countries.

The panelist presentations for the session began with Dr. Shibayama's presentation titled “The Strategic Significance of a New Japan and the Establishment of a Western Alliance Network in the Far East in 1951 from the Perspective of the Western Powers.” Dr. Shibayama touched on the U.S.-Japan alliance in the aftermath of the Cold War by discussing the security situation in Northeast Asia, starting with the Korean War, not only in terms of the relationship between the United States, South Korea, and Japan, but also by taking a more global view and focusing on Japan's role in the total war between the East and the West through the

incorporation of Japan, a country with the capability to engage in total war, into the Western military alliances led by the United Kingdom and the United States. In particular, he focused on the rearmament of Japan, positioned Japan within the global network of Western military alliances, and pointed out that Japan played a major role in the Cold War which was fought as a global total war.

Next, Dr. Nam gave a presentation titled “The East Asian Armistice System and the Position of Japan: Taking Clues from the Korean War Fought by Japan.” Dr. Nam took a long-term view of the wars in Northeast Asia, examined the attributes of the Korean War from that historical perspective, and discussed the role played by Japan in the Korean War as well as the problem of forgetting that role. In particular, with regard to the origin of the Korean War, he pointed out that the war was sparked by the rivalry between Japan and continental nations in Asia that had been ongoing since the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, and that Japan had a direct and decisive involvement in the Korean War not on the level of a “nation” but on the level of “individuals.” Dr. Nam then stressed the significance of recognizing Japan as “the hidden existence” in the Korean War. Finally, he highlighted Japan’s hesitation on making progress toward peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Dr. Gallicchio gave a presentation titled “Korea and Japan in US Strategy, 1945-1955.” Dr. Gallicchio suggested that U.S. policy before and after the Korean War was not calculated but comprised of ad hoc and improvised responses. In particular, he pointed out many inconsistencies, such as the difference in views between the military and the Department of State regarding the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan before the Korean War, the unclear significance of the defense of Korea following the outbreak of the Korean War, as well as the Department of State’s confidence in the U.S.-Japan alliance despite the military’s concerns about Japan’s neutralism orientation.

During the general discussion for Session 1, which featured these presentations, Junichiro Shoji (Senior Research Fellow, Center for Military History, National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense) alluded to the impact of the Korean War on Japan as well as the role played by Japan in the Korean War, pointing out that it was undeniable Japan had been greatly affected by the war and had played a decisive role in it. He then proceeded to offer comments and asked questions of each panelist.

Mr. Shoji asked Dr. Shibayama how the United Kingdom managed to overcome the distrust of Japan sparked by Australia and New Zealand’s memories of the war during the incorporation of Japan into the network of Western European military alliances. He also asked how the Japan National Police Reserve was able to exert an effect of deterrence on the communist forces within Japan, given the fact that the police force alone was sufficient to maintain security in Japan at the time.

Mr. Shoji then asked Dr. Nam about the suggestion of Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs before and after the Korean War that division on the Korean Peninsula would continue, and whether this was an outlook and not the same as a preferred outcome. He also asked Dr. Nam for his views on the continuity between the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars and the Korean War from the perspective of the Northeast Asian War, and the problems in overemphasizing this continuity.

Finally, Mr. Shoji asked Dr. Gallicchio why the United States used large-scale military force in the Korean War despite its traditional East Asia policy principles of preventing the emergence of a hegemonic power and refraining from the use of military force on the Asian continent. He also asked about Japan-U.S.-R.O.K. security relations, specifically the large gap that existed between the United States and Japan over the value of the Korean Peninsula.

In responding to Mr. Shoji's questions, Dr. Nam replied that the root of the issue lies in the extent to which the Japanese government and people understood the Korean War, and that it is problematic that diplomatic efforts have approached the current situation on the Korean Peninsula as a premise instead of something that can be changed. In response to Mr. Shoji's second question, Dr. Nam agreed with Mr. Shoji's suggestion but pointed out that when looking at history, it is impossible to determine without considering the larger scheme of things or the depth of history how much effect or significance a certain option would have. He reiterated that even an option that seemed right at the time may complicate the problem from a historical point of view.

Next, Dr. Shibayama responded to Mr. Shoji's first question by saying that although Australia and New Zealand had strongly resented Japan, the United Kingdom needed to come together with Australia, New Zealand, and the British Army to protect the Cairo-Suez region, the heart of the British Empire, and that the United Kingdom therefore pushed back on this resentment and consulted with the United States. With regard to the second question, Dr. Shibayama indicated that security was no doubt offered by the police and security authorities in addition to the National Police Reserve, but given the nature of communist forces within Japan, they felt threatened by the National Police Reserve, which gave rise to the effect of deterrence.

In response to Mr. Shoji's two questions, Dr. Gallicchio stated that unlike its policies toward Latin America and Europe, the United States maintained an ambiguous foreign policy toward Asia with respect to, for example, how to defend the Philippines, and even when the United States occupied the southern part of the Korean Peninsula after World War II, its policy toward East Asia was unpredictable. He added that U.S. intervention in the Korean War was, in addition to the backdrop of the Cold War, due to the fact that U.S. senior officials had linked Asia to the war on the European front, as was the case in World War II.

The audience was invited to ask questions before the end of Session 1, and Dr. Mochizuki, who delivered the keynote speech, was asked for his opinions on whether the dysfunction and lack of understanding in the United States' Korea policy a problem of the U.S. administration and personnel at the time or a structural problem. Dr. Mochizuki noted that while there was a focus on bureaucratic disagreements within the government when the United States turned its attention to East Asia, there was ultimately a consensus that Japan was the most important entity for U.S. strategic interests and that South Korea was of secondary importance. He explained that although the United States intervened in the Korean War, it was the result of the presence of the Soviet Union and China as well as the domestic pressure on President Truman to do so, and that the fundamental difference in the relative importance of Japan and South Korea could not be denied.

Session 2, titled "Japan-U.S.-R.O.K. Relations in the History of the Cold War," featured

a special lecture by Sumio Hatano (Director, Center for Asian Historical Records, National Archives of Japan), followed by presentations by Somei Kobayashi (Professor, Nihon University), Kyungwon Choi (Professor, Tokoha University), and Yoshihide Soeya (Professor Emeritus, Keio University).

The special lecture delivered by Dr. Hatano was titled “The Korean Peninsula and Japan’s National Security: A Historical Perspective.” Hatano noted that since the 19th century, Japan has adopted a perspective on security that it was essential, for the sake of Japan’s own national security, that the Korean Peninsula not come under the control of “unfriendly powers,” which has informed Japan’s policy toward the Korean Peninsula. He stated that this traditional perspective on security adopted by Japan persisted even after Japan started relying on the United States for its security following its defeat in World War II in 1945. He argued that although the Korean Peninsula has not been controlled by “unfriendly powers” hitherto, the Korean Peninsula has been experiencing a crisis on a different level since the 1990s due to North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles, and that there is a need to reorganize a framework of military cooperation between Japan, the United States, and South Korea.

The panelist presentations for the session began with Dr. Kobayashi’s presentation titled “International Relations in East Asia Before and After the Okinawa Reversion, as Seen Through South Korean Diplomatic Documents.” At the time, South Korea was concerned that the reversion of Okinawa would diminish the functionality of U.S. military bases in Okinawa and the resulting impact on its own security, and it engaged in active diplomacy with the relevant countries to resolve these concerns. Dr. Kobayashi elucidated Japan’s response to these concerns of South Korea and the diplomatic course adopted by South Korea, which were unable to fully assuage these concerns, based on R.O.K. diplomatic documents. In particular, he pointed out that the reversion of Okinawa was not only a matter between Japan and the United States but also an issue affecting all of East Asia, and that it served as a catalyst for South Korea to establish a new direction for its diplomatic and security policies during that period.

Next, Dr. Choi gave a presentation titled “U.S.-China Rapprochement and Japan-South Korea Security Relations: Was the Reconciliation of Deterrence and Diplomacy Possible?” Choi pointed out that although the Taiwan Clause lost its effect following the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, it was differentiated from the Korea Clause which remained a focus of security considerations for Japan, the United States, and South Korea. At the same time, Japan promoted security and economic cooperation with South Korea concurrently with economic exchange with North Korea, thereby creating a multilayered policy that went beyond the dichotomy of “cooperation” and “conflict.” He then concluded that it was difficult to promote a stable Korean Peninsula through an institutional framework in order to ensure the security of South Korea by pointing to the policies of Japan, the United States, and South Korea surrounding the Korean Peninsula during the transformation period of the Cold War, which included U.S.-China rapprochement and the heightening of tensions in the 1970s.

Dr. Soeya gave a presentation titled “The End of the Cold War, and Japan-U.S./

Japan-Republic of Korea Relations.” Dr. Soeya argued that the state of Japan-R.O.K. relations was the key to the development and institutionalization of trilateral security cooperation between Japan, the United States, and South Korea. In particular, he pointed out that even though anti-communist conservative administrations had unexpectedly formed in Japan, the United States, and South Korea and de facto cooperation was established in the 1980s, this cooperation never developed into the coordination of specific security policies, which could be attributed to public opinion and political communities in Japan and South Korea.

During the general discussion for Session 2, which featured these presentations, Shingo Nakajima (Chief of Military History Division, Center for Military History, National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense) proceeded to offer comments and ask questions of each panelist. First, he asked Dr. Kobayashi whether there were any concerns in the late 1960s within the R.O.K. government that Japan, which had achieved economic growth, would become actively involved in regional security affairs. He then asked for a detailed explanation of the background of the explicit inclusion of support for bolstering Japan's military capabilities and even nuclear armament in the draft of “Policy Direction of South Korea's Security and Diplomacy: Medium- to Long-Term Plan” (hereinafter the “Policy Plan”) prepared by the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1972.

Turning to Dr. Choi, Dr. Nakajima alluded to a statement made by then Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira in the Tanaka Cabinet at the Japan-U.S. summit meeting in August 1973, in which Ohira compared Japan's economic assistance to South Korea to its prewar military involvement on the Korean Peninsula. Dr. Nakajima asked why Ohira, who was typically dovish on foreign policy, would have made such a statement, as well as what Dr. Choi had specifically envisioned when he referred to the “institutionalization of a détente.”

Finally, Dr. Nakajima asked Dr. Soeya about the reasons behind the concerns repeatedly expressed by the R.O.K. government when the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation were revised in 1997, despite the fact that, as Dr. Kobayashi pointed out in his presentation, there were opinions in South Korea in the 1960s that were rather critical of Japan's restrained approach to regional security. Dr. Nakajima also asked Dr. Soeya about the kind of impact that post-Cold War democratization of the South Korean political system had on Japan-R.O.K. security relations.

In response to the questions from Dr. Nakajima, Dr. Kobayashi first replied that the R.O.K. government's concerns about Japan in the 1960s were, at least from what we could tell from South Korean diplomatic documents at the time, ostensibly “neutral” but could be seen as “hopeful.” Dr. Kobayashi cited two possible factors for the choice of the word “neutral”: the external factor of not stirring North Korea and the presence of China, and the internal factor of placating public opinion at a time when public opinion toward Japan was still severe. As for the background to the inclusion of support for Japan's nuclear armament in the draft of the Policy Plan, Dr. Kobayashi pointed to the external factor of China's successful nuclear tests and the internal factor of expectations in Korean society for nuclear energy that led to South Korea's desire to leverage nuclear power for its own security, which may have sparked similar expectations for Japan.

Next, Dr. Choi responded to Dr. Nakajima's questions by explaining that, first, Ohira's

statement at the Japan-U.S. summit meeting was made against the backdrop of the United States attempting to check Japan's efforts to promote diplomacy with North Korea at the time, to which Japan responded by demonstrating that it remained focused on South Korea and that having a security relationship with South Korea was important for Japan. As for the term "institutionalization," Dr. Choi indicated that it referred to ensuring that the diplomatic changes seen in various regions in the early 1970s were enshrined in a concrete manner, i.e., to convert the Korean War armistice agreement into a peace agreement, and ultimately, to terminate or restructure the UN Command.

Dr. Soeya, on the other hand, noted that while there was little concern expressed by the South Koreans on the government level when the Guidelines were revised in 1997, there was "concern in a broad sense" to the extent that Japan was urged to be cautious. He pointed out that although there was a tendency to view the revision of the Guidelines as a new direction for Japan-U.S. strategy toward China, it was difficult for South Korea, which had positive sentiments toward China at the time, to welcome the revision. Moreover, he noted that the democratization of South Korea, rather than having a direct impact on Japan-R.O.K. security relations, emerged as an important issue for the two countries because the end of the Cold War sparked a temporary setback for the logic of the Cold War and amplified the importance of theories of postwar reorganization, i.e., of historical issues, which in turn had an effect on the democratization of South Korea. Dr. Choi also pointed out that in the 1990s, both the Japanese and R.O.K. governments had addressed these issues properly, but the conservatives in Japan and the leftist liberals in South Korea started speaking out against their own governments, and thus the rise of the leftist movement in South Korea could also be attributable to democratization.

Following the panelists' responses to the discussant, the panel proceeded to take questions from the audience. First, Dr. Choi was asked, "If the UN Command had been terminated, how would the Korean Minute or the Korea Clause, which were premised on the existence of the UN, have been guaranteed to remain in force?" Dr. Choi emphasized that it is essential to make guarantees regarding the use of U.S. military bases in Japan, etc., not in the form of secret agreements but in a public manner. Dr. Soeya also noted that Japan would have been forced to articulate its policy toward U.S. military operations in the event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula because of the U.S.-R.O.K. Mutual Defense Treaty, to which Dr. Kobayashi chimed in by questioning whether South Korea was aware of the existence of the "Korean Minute." Next, Dr. Hatano was asked by a member of the audience about what a balance of power system like that of Europe would look like if such a system were to be established in East Asia, to which Dr. Hatano responded that in East Asia, where there are no shared norms or values such as religion as in Europe, it may be possible to build a system of cooperation through the alignment of national interests. In relation to this, Dr. Kobayashi also pointed to the importance of regional integration in Europe, which led to further lively discussions among the panelists.

Feedback from the audience included a sense that this forum successfully achieved its objective of presenting comparative research involving different countries, as well as praise for the high quality of presentations relevant to the forum's theme, the excellent choice of speakers, the incisive remarks and questions by the two discussants, and the content of the

panel discussions.