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Designing a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia

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Abstract

The current Six Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear programs, if successful, could provide an opportunity to build new and unprecedented multilateral institutions to enhance strategic stability and security in Northeast Asia, historically one of the most volatile, geopolitical regions in the world. After working with colleagues on the linkage between historical reconciliation and cooperative security over the past several years,* I attempt in this paper to pull together ideas about the possible component parts for a multilateral security institution in Northeast Asia.

* For a report on our workshop on 'Reconciliation between China and Japan: A Search for Solutions', see <<http://reconciliation-papers.blogspot.com/>>; and for a special issue of the journal *Asian Perspective* on the same topic, see <www.asianperspective.org/past-issues.html>.

Designing a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia

PETER VAN NESS*

A CONCEPT OF COOPERATIVE SECURITY

This essay is about how and why states could cooperate more effectively to their mutual benefit, and how successful security cooperation among some states within East Asia might serve as a public good to be enjoyed by all.¹ Inevitably, this requires a critique of realism, the dominant paradigm in the field of Strategic Studies, and an argument in support of the advantages of an alternative approach, cooperative security. The brief comparison presented here inevitably over-simplifies the theoretical nuances of the two quite different understandings of our political world.

The 'realist' understanding of national security begins with the assumption that the world is anarchy, in which states, as the most important actors, are confronted with a Darwinian struggle to survive. They find that self-help is the only reliable strategy for survival, and that a logic of zero-sum games is most likely to define their relations with other states. Cooperation with other states on any other basis than 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' is difficult for the typical realist to comprehend. But this insistence that when national security is at issue, governments will inevitably think in terms of self-help and assume that threats will appear largely as zero-sum games, is becoming anomalous in today's world.

Analysts are increasingly sceptical that realist prescriptions for achieving security (i.e., strategic alliances, military intervention, and arms races) can in fact provide real security, and many of the new proposals being suggested for security institution-building in East Asia are based on an alternative

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1 Peter Van Ness, 'US Policy toward China: Engagement, Off-Shore Balancing, or Cooperative Security' (in Chinese), *Taipingyang Xuebao* [Pacific Journal], 4 (December), 1999: 23–31; and Peter Van Ness, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four-Plus-Two—An Idea Whose Time Has Come', *Asian Perspective*, 27(4), 2003: 249–75.

concept of 'cooperative security': building relationships *with potential adversaries*, rather than making military alliances against them. Part of the reason for these changes is that perceptions of threat have changed. Traditional concerns about military threat remain, but the new kinds of threat to the national security of nations that have emerged appear to require a different kind of response.

Each of the most serious security threats today is quite different, and each requires a special strategic approach; but what is common to many of them, like the threat of nuclear proliferation, is that they appear to require a cooperative solution. For example, how can any one country by itself deal with the problems of global warming, climate change and environmental degradation? Similarly, with respect to economic security, autarky is no longer an option for any industrialised country in our increasingly interdependent world. Public health is another: how can any one country alone adequately defend its citizens against pandemic diseases like bird flu H5N1? Defence against terrorism is yet another example.² The search for energy security may lead to competition and even confrontation among states, but in many cases, governments have found that cooperation is more fruitful.

Moreover, as all states become increasingly interconnected and dependent on relations with other states for export markets, investment capital and technological innovation, they, day by day, become more vulnerable to any disruption of those international ties and, hence, more likely to value strategic stability. Given the changing nature of security threats, cooperation rather confrontation appears to be the more realistic approach.

There are two prominent, historical precedents for effective cooperative security. The first is Soviet-American arms control during the Cold War. If the United States and the former Soviet Union had thought exclusively in realist terms about nuclear war, they would never have agreed to stop nuclear testing or to begin to control their nuclear arms race. Instead, jolted

² See, for example, Joseph S. Nye, 'After Iraq, the US Can No Longer Turn Inward', *Canberra Times*, 15 March 2007, p. 19. Nye observes that on 'issues outside the control of governments, including everything from climate change to pandemics to transnational terrorism, power is chaotically distributed, and it makes no sense at all to claim American hegemony. Yet it is [here] that we find most of the greatest challenges today. The only way to grapple with these problems is through cooperation with others, and that requires the soft power of attraction as well as the hard power of coercion. There is no simple military solution that will produce the outcomes we want.'

by their realisation after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis of how close they had come to igniting a nuclear conflagration, Washington and Moscow both decided that, despite their ideological and strategic differences, they had to work together to manage this common threat to their national security. While it is true that the arms race continued and new weapons and delivery systems were developed, the two sides nonetheless concluded that working with each other to limit the arms race and the possibility of an accidental nuclear exchange made good sense. Given the nature of the threat, working with one's adversary with respect to nuclear weapons appeared to be the right thing to do.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a second, different example of cooperative security. Often derided by realist scholars as 'only a talking shop', ASEAN's undeniable achievement has been to make the likelihood of inter-state war among any of its ten member-countries virtually unthinkable.³ It is true that ASEAN has not been effective in dealing with a number of major crises in the region (e.g., the 1997–1998 financial crisis, East Timor and human rights in Burma); but the strategic stability that it has maintained among its diverse member-nations has helped to provide a foundation for continued economic growth, peace and prosperity for the region. As Mel Gurtov has pointed out,⁴ ASEAN has established an organisational culture based on 'the habit of dialogue' and confidence-building, and many of the current proposals for East Asian multilateral cooperation, like the East Asian Community, can be seen as cases of learning from ASEAN.⁵

The argument that follows is divided into five parts. The first section describes some of the experimental work that has been done to identify how and why individual people cooperate in confrontational situations. Trying to keep in mind the potential problems of reductionism, I infer five major propositions that might also apply to cooperation among states, taken

3 Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

4 Personal email, 12 December 2007.

5 David Martin Jones and Michael L. R. Smith, 'Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order', *International Security*, 32(1), 2007: 148–84, take great pains in attempting to refute the argument that the major powers in the region are learning from ASEAN. For a more balanced yet critical assessment, see Beverley Loke, 'The "ASEAN Way": Towards Regional Order and Security Cooperation?' *Melbourne Journal of Politics*, 30, 2005-06: 8–37.

largely from the work of Robert Axelrod.⁶ The second section discusses the importance of learning how to make cooperation work; and the third addresses the problem of numbers of participants in a multilateral cooperative arrangement. The fourth section discusses the relationship between human security and multilateral cooperation; and the final part draws together a number of the policy implications from the analysis for an evaluation of the strategic promise of the current Six Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear programs.

PROPOSITIONS DRAWN FROM EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON COOPERATION AMONG INDIVIDUALS

Cooperation has never been easy for human beings. The mystery is how, despite their history of battling to survive, human beings have learned nonetheless to cooperate with each other. Evolutionary biologists, carrying out meticulous research, have linked kinship and blood relatedness to a likelihood to cooperate.⁷ But what they could not explain was how humans who are *not* related by blood have learned to cooperate and build institutions capable of sustaining cooperation despite the Darwinian imperative. Scholars in the social sciences, like Axelrod and Paul Seabright,⁸ have helped to answer this question and have produced findings about cooperation at the individual-person level that provide insights on how states might more successfully cooperate with each other to achieve mutual benefit at the international level.

Axelrod developed his Cooperation Theory by means of research in game theory. Carrying out repeated experiments with the classic ‘prisoner’s dilemma’,⁹ he studied the behaviour of unrelated ‘individuals who pursue

6 Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (London: Penguin Books, 1984).

7 See, for example, Lee Alan Dugatkin, *The Altruism Equation: Seven Scientists Search for the Origins of Goodness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

8 Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers: A Natural History of Economic Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

9 According to Wikipedia, in game theory, the prisoner's dilemma is ‘a type of non-zero-sum game in which two players may each “cooperate” with or “defect” (i.e. betray) the other player. In this game, as in all game theory, the only concern of each individual player (“prisoner”) is maximizing his/her own payoff, without any concern for the other player’s payoff. Will the two prisoners cooperate to minimize total loss of liberty, or will one of them, trusting the other to cooperate, betray the other one so as to go free?’ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prisoner%27s_dilemma>. It is interesting to note how competition among countries for scarce energy resources today, at a time when available petroleum worldwide is reaching its peak, is in some respects similar to a prisoner’s dilemma game

their own self-interest without aid of a central authority to force them to cooperate with each other' to find out how and why they would nonetheless cooperate.¹⁰ Richard Dawkins, in his Foreword to Axelrod's book, wrote: 'The world's leaders should all be locked up with this book and not released until they have read it. This would be a pleasure to them and might save the rest of us.'¹¹

Axelrod invited experts in game theory to submit programs to compete in a Computer Prisoner's Dilemma Tournament which he compares to a computer chess tournament. He held two rounds of the tournament with different participants playing repeated games to find out which strategies were most successful in achieving cooperation. What follows are my inferences for state behaviour from Axelrod's findings, sometimes presented with comparisons to realist understandings.

'Don't be envious', Axelrod advises.¹² In state-to-state relationships with the potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, leaders should think in terms of absolute gains, rather than relative gains. The key question to ask is: do we benefit substantially from this cooperation? If so, ensure in your negotiations that you sustain or increase that gain, but don't worry if other states seem to gain more. The preoccupation in realism with relative gains tends to increase the probability of zero-sum, rather than positive-sum, outcomes.

'Don't be the first to defect'. Once cooperation is begun, participants should take a long term perspective and build new arrangements which have substantial mutual benefits. In that context, it is important for each not to be the first to opt out when the going gets tough.

However, it is important to 'reciprocate both cooperation and defection'. While it is vital to reciprocate cooperation with cooperation, participants

in that possible confrontation by major powers to achieve control of energy sources might give them short term relative gains compared with their competitors, whereas long term cooperation, rather than confrontation, could provide greater absolute gains for all by finding global answers to the problems of energy scarcity and climate change.

¹⁰ Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, p. 6. For a detailed description of the tournaments, see his Appendix A.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. x.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 110–26.

must be prepared to punish others who defect in order to avoid being exploited themselves and to send a message that defection has a cost.

‘Don’t be too clever’. Transparency and consistency are important to signal to other participants your cooperative commitment. By contrast, in a zero-sum game, realists would emphasise the importance of keeping your strategy secret to put your opponent off guard; but in a potential positive-sum situation, since the objective is to gain the cooperation of the other parties, it is important to make public your strategic intent. Hence transparency helps to build confidence in others about your willingness to cooperate.

Axelrod adds that: ‘no form of cooperation is stable when the future is not important enough relative to the present.’¹³ In other words, we tend to cooperate today with the intention of deriving substantial benefits in the future from continued cooperation. As Axelrod puts it, what sustains patterns of cooperation is ‘the anticipation of mutually rewarding transactions in the future.’¹⁴ He argues further that the design of new institutions should keep this key point in mind.

Finally, unexpectedly, Axelrod asserts that trust in the other parties is not essential to sustain cooperation, nor is friendship necessary for cooperation to evolve.¹⁵ The durability of the process can provide sufficient incentive for participants to continue to cooperate. Axelrod seems to be saying: trust the process and work to create institutions purposefully designed to elicit cooperation from their members. They may or may not become friends, but if they continue to be convinced that they benefit from the interaction, there is a high probability that they will keep cooperating.

Seabright¹⁶ adds a different perspective. Beginning with the observation that cooperation through a division of labour among genetically unrelated members of the same species has never evolved in any species other than human beings, Seabright analyses how institutions have provided the basis for accepting strangers (and potentially even adversaries) as trustworthy.¹⁷

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 187–8.

¹⁶ Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2, 244.

His analysis of the role of institutions examines how they have facilitated cooperation but also how fragile and vulnerable those institutions actually are.

To summarise, the experimental work discussed above suggests five major propositions for building cooperative arrangements:

1. Focus on absolute gains, rather than relative gains.
2. Transparency and consistency are important to signaling to other participants your cooperative intent and commitment.
3. Once cooperation is begun, participants should take a long term perspective and build new arrangements which promise substantial mutual benefits for the future. Cooperate today with the intention of deriving substantial benefits in the future from continued cooperation.
4. When the going gets tough, it is important for each participant not to be the first to opt out. However, while it is vital to reciprocate cooperation with cooperation, participants must be prepared to punish those participants who defect in order to avoid being exploited themselves, and to send a message that defection has a cost.
5. Trust in the other parties is *not* essential to sustain cooperation, nor is friendship among the participants necessary for cooperation to evolve. Instead, trust the process and work to create institutions purposefully designed to elicit cooperation from their members. Participants may or may not become friends, but if they continue to be convinced that they benefit from participation in the institutions that they have created, there is a high probability that they will keep cooperating.

LEARNING HOW TO MAKE COOPERATION WORK: PARALLEL THINKING

Constructivists would add, and Axelrod would agree,¹⁸ that learning and socialisation by the participants in a fundamentally different strategic perspective must be a key factor in building cooperation. Amitav Acharya's work on ASEAN as a 'nascent security community' is a good

18 Axelrod, *Evolution of C-operation*, pp. 158–68. He talks about how cooperation can be sustained by what he calls 'diffusion by imitation', a learning by others from the successful cooperation of the most effective participants.

example. Acharya describes the contribution of constructivism as demonstrating how cooperation can be understood as a socially constructed process that 'may redefine the interests of actors in matters of war and peace.' He emphasises 'the transformative impact of norms' and the importance of socialisation 'in creating collective interests and identities.' Acharya argues that a key indicator in the formation of a successful security community is a shared 'we' feeling or common identity among its member-states, a vital element to be cultivated over time.¹⁹

As a modest step in that direction, consider, for example, the training of strategic analysts, especially the new recruits for ministries of foreign affairs and defence. My suggestion is that they should continue to be taught, as they have traditionally been, to think from a realist perspective in terms of worst-possible-case scenarios because we want them to be able to anticipate the most dangerous potential problems; but they should also learn to understand the opportunity cost (i.e., the cost of something in terms of an opportunity forgone and the benefits that could be received from that opportunity) of failing to cooperate with other states when the possibilities for mutually beneficial arrangements become available. This might be called 'parallel thinking', that is to train analysts to be able to utilise more than one paradigm in their assessment of important security problems.

For example, more than 60 years after the end of the Second World War, there is no formal peace treaty between Japan and Russia because of their lingering territorial dispute over several of the Kurile Islands northeast of Hokkaido. When you ask Russian and Japanese diplomats and analysts about the problem, they typically tell you how difficult it would be to make the concessions needed to achieve a resolution of the dispute. Never discussed, at least in my experience in observing this situation, is the opportunity cost of the lost potential benefits that cooperation might have brought to the two countries if they had resolved their differences. Think, for example, of the immense potential mutual benefit that might have been gotten over those many years from creating a positive diplomatic environment for a greater linking of Japanese capital and technology with Russia's immense natural resources to create projects for joint exploration and development.

19 Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*, pp. 3–4.

This dispute over the Kurile Islands is, in my opinion, a classic case of what happens when government officials limit themselves to pursuing status-quo policies of confrontation. It is especially common with respect to contested issues where the continuing confrontation is perceived to be virtually inevitable, despite the substantial benefits that mutual cooperation might provide to both parties to the dispute. In other words, there is an insufficient accounting for the price of failure to resolve the conflict, i.e., the opportunity cost of maintaining the confrontational status quo.

If one were to apply the concept of opportunity cost to the East China Sea dispute between Japan and China, another example, it would be important to compare the potential benefits for both countries of a collaborative exploitation of the resources of the area, with the price of the current contestation and confrontation over competing territorial claims. Such an analysis would include both an evaluation of the lost opportunity to benefit and the cost of continuing to mobilise forces to defend the current competing claims. Thinking this way might help to break the vicious cycle of reinforcing confrontation, on the one hand, and help to build a positive cycle of re-informing mutual benefit, on the other.²⁰

One of the striking events of the last decade in East Asia has been the unprecedented shift by China to multilateral security as part of its response to the Bush Doctrine.²¹ The establishment of ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and its role as host of the Six Party Talks on North Korea all represent a fundamental change in Chinese security thinking. In October 2003, China signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the first non-ASEAN country to do so, and negotiated a 'strategic partnership for peace and prosperity' with the ten member countries of ASEAN.

These initiatives by China, at least in part, represent a process of learning from the experience of ASEAN—the rare case of a major world power

20 For an excellent analysis of the problems in the East China Sea dispute and realistic proposals for how they might be resolved, see Mark Valencia, 'The East China Sea Dispute: Context, Claims, Issues, and Possible Solutions', *Asian Perspective*, 31(1), 2007: 127–67.

21 Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, 'China's New Diplomacy', *Foreign Affairs*, 82(6), 2003: 22–35; Peter Van Ness, 'China's Response to the Bush Doctrine', *World Policy Journal*, 21(4), 2004/05: 38–47; Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

learning from the inventiveness of a community of less powerful countries. Previously, China, like many major powers, had typically bilateralised its foreign relations in order to maximise its influence by playing the different countries against one another. This strategy was typical of Chinese governments, both imperial and communist regimes.²² During the last ten years, however, Beijing has begun to make a major commitment to multilateralism, both in its declaratory and operational policy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NUMBERS

The Six Party Talks also illustrate another key component of successful multilateral security cooperation: the importance of numbers.²³ When attempting to design a cooperative security arrangement, especially on highly sensitive issues, it is vital to include all of those states whose interests are most directly involved, because if you leave one out, that state will almost inevitably view the multilateral agreement as a pact against it. At the same time, however, it is important to include as few states as possible, because each additional state creates one more hurdle to achieving consensus among the member-states of the organization.

In the case of the current Six Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear programs, it is essential to include all six countries (China, the US, Russia, Japan, and both North and South Korea); but probably no others. Some

22 Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975); Allen S. Whiting, 'The Use of Force in Foreign Policy by the People's Republic of China', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 402(1), 1972: 55–65; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

23 For the most comprehensive account of the North Korean crisis to date, see Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007); and Charles L. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007). See also Jonathan D. Pollack, 'North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program to 2015: Three Scenarios', *Asia Policy*, 3 (January) 2007; Gavan McCormack, 'A Denuclearization Deal in Beijing: The Prospect of Ending the 20th Century in East Asia', *Japanfocus.org*, 14 February 2007; David Albright, 'North Korea's Alleged Large-Scale Enrichment Plant: Yet Another Questionable Extrapolation Based on Aluminum Tubes', *Nautilus.org*, 27 February 2007; Don Oberdorfer, 'So Far, So Fast: What's Really Behind the Bush Administration's Course Reversal on North Korea and Can the Negotiations Succeed?', *Nautilus.org*, 20 March 2007; and Robert L. Gallucci, 'The Summit, the North Korean Nuclear Issue, and Prospects for Peace and Prosperity on the Korean Peninsula', 5 December 2007, IFES Forum No. 07-12-5-1, from <ifes@kyungnam.ac.kr>.

commentators have suggested that Russia could be left out. But Russian participation is essential to the success of the Six Party Talks for several reasons. If Moscow were excluded, not only might the Russians begin to think the talks were somehow being designed contrary to their interests and therefore try to sabotage it, but also North Korea might try to play Russia against the others to obstruct the formation of a working consensus within the arrangement. On the other hand, if the talks are successful, the member-states might want to obtain United Nations sanction, and Russia could help facilitate that endorsement by means of its role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Finally, Russian participation is central to achieving multilateral cooperation for the development and transmission of energy resources in the region. This kind of economic cooperation can benefit all parties and could serve as a major foundation stone for political and strategic cooperation in Northeast Asia.

From discussions with analysts here in Australia and in New Zealand, it is clear that both countries would be eager to participate in the Six Party Talks process and are anxious about being left out. Both countries can help facilitate the negotiations in a variety of ways, but paradoxically it is in their best interests not to insist on direct participation while the six countries work to achieve consensus. If the Six Party Talks are successful, they will resolve one of the most serious security problems in the region and, in addition, their agreements might serve as the basis for building a new multilateral security institution in Northeast Asia.²⁴ That success would make a major contribution to strategic stability from which all countries would benefit. It would be a public good to be enjoyed by all countries in the region, including Australia and New Zealand, whether or not they directly participate in the negotiations.

HUMAN SECURITY AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was a renewed global interest in human rights and the reconciliation of violent conflicts

24 For additional analysis, see David C. Kang, 'The Next Nuclear Agreement with North Korea: Prospects and Pitfalls', www.nautilus.org/fora/security/08006Kang.pdf, 17 January 2008; Gregory J. Moore, 'How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese "Duplicity" on the North Korean Nuclear Issue', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 8(1), 2008: 1–29; and Chung-in Moon, 'From Symbols to Substance: Comparing the 2000 and 2007 Inter-Korean Summits', *GlobalAsia*, 2(3), 2007: 76–88.

in many different countries (e.g., South Africa, Argentina and Chile).²⁵ The United Nations *Human Development Report 1994* published the first comprehensive definition of what it called ‘human security’,²⁶ and in 1999 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan argued for the importance of ‘individual sovereignty’ as well as state sovereignty.

This paper has focused so far on the state as the unit of analysis, and has discussed security largely in conventional, military terms. But obviously a sustainable multilateral agreement for East Asia must consider, as Annan has argued, security at both the state and individual citizen level. Annan’s 1999 paper ‘Two Concepts of Sovereignty’ mainly addressed problems of humanitarian intervention, but his concept of individual sovereignty is fundamental to any serious analysis of security:

State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined—not least by the forces of globalisation and international co-operation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. At the same time individual sovereignty—by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties—has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights. When we read the charter today, we are more than ever conscious that its aim is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them.²⁷

In fact, a strong sense of citizen well-being is probably the best indication of state security, while human *insecurity* signals a danger both to the country and potentially even to its neighbours. An extreme case is the so-called ‘failed state’, but, even in democratic countries like the US and Australia during George Bush’s ‘war on terror’, governments have played on citizen fears to gain support for foreign war-making.²⁸

25 A good place to begin in this extensive literature is Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

26 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), chapter 2. For a more recent effort to quantify measures of human security, see Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

27 Kofi Annan, ‘Two Concepts of Sovereignty’, *Economist*, 19 September 1999.

28 Zbigniew Brzezinski, ‘Terrorized by “War on Terror”’: How a Three-Word Mantra has Undermined America’, *Washington Post*, 25 March 2007, p. B1.

When governments demonise their adversaries, describing them as evil and announcing that ‘you are with us or with the terrorists’, this fear-mongering rhetoric undermines the citizen’s sense of security. Seabright comments on how ‘the fear of violence exerts a poisonous and disruptive effect on human relations’ in our fragile societies. He notes that

for every death at a stranger’s hands there are many thousands of living victims. Their newly awakened fear of strangers disrupts the whole web of relations that bind people together in a healthy modern society and undermines all the institutions on which such a society depends, from schools to hospitals, shops, government departments, and the legal system.²⁹

Real security should be focused on individual well-being, not just state or regime considerations. Moreover, human security should help to enhance citizens’ confidence to protect themselves from cynical government manipulation of images of foreign threat. One of the best defences against war-making, therefore, is a well established human security, because citizens are unlikely to support a leader claiming to defend them by making war if their human security is intact. This is an important link between domestic human security and regional strategic stability.

An additional benefit of a self-confident and secure citizenry is that there is an improved opportunity for decisions about the expenditure of public funds for ‘defence’ to be made as part of a calm and rational assessment of competing social priorities, rather than in the fear-dominated tension often associated with national security debates. A secure citizenry might feel more confident to ask, for example, how long we must spend billions of dollars for greater and more technologically elaborate arsenals while public needs for health care, education and general welfare are ignored. A paradigm change in security thinking can bring importantly different implications for many aspects of social life.³⁰

MULTILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

In this final section of the paper, let me pull together some of the ideas that have been presented here as they relate to the Six Party Talks. To

29 Seabright, *Company of Strangers*, pp. 246–7.

30 This paper has focused almost exclusively on issues of state security, but ultimately the best measure of security is how truly secure the individual citizens of any society actually are. For a comprehensive analysis of this fundamental dimension, see Mel Gurtov, *Global Politics in the Human Interest*, 5th edn (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

achieve an acceptable resolution to the North Korean nuclear crisis, much less to construct a new multilateral security institution, will not be easy—given the need to satisfy all six parties in the negotiation. Moreover, any viable security agreement must be based on trust, and there is obviously very little trust at present between the two key parties, the US and the DPRK. However, one of the key requirements of this kind of arrangement is *to gain the trust of all parties in the process itself*.

The cooperative-security mechanism should be constructed on a web of both bilateral and multilateral agreements in such a way that all parties gain from the arrangement, and all would be deprived if any member should fail to meet its commitments. A major advantage of a multilateral agreement, compared with a bilateral agreement, is that all of the parties have a stake in the commitments that have been made, so that if one party should fail to honour its commitments, all of the other five would have cause to pressure it to comply. This is what is meant by the idea of trust in the process.

The crisis over North Korea's nuclear weapons and the establishment of the Six Party Talks present the best opportunity yet to build new security institutions in Northeast Asia. All of the countries with the most at stake are included in the negotiations, but not others. The Six-Party arrangement includes, rather than excludes, the US, but it would limit Washington's hegemonic inclinations. The Talks offer Japan an opportunity to play an enhanced strategic role as a 'normal' major power, without the need to go nuclear.³¹ Russia would gain easier access to East Asian capital and technology for the development of its energy resources and more reliable transportation routes to foreign markets. China gains prominence as host and facilitator. And North and South Korea would be enabled to undertake their mutual reconciliation and eventual reunification protected by a multilateral accommodation among all of Northeast Asia's major powers.

If our analysis is correct, the six governments should focus on their absolute gains from cooperating with each other, rather than relative gains,

31 Richard Tanter, 'With Eyes Wide Shut: Japan, Heisei Militarization, and the Bush Doctrine', in Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness (eds), *Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views from the Asia-Pacific* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005). See also Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007); Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); and Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (London: Verso, 2007).

and work to maintain transparency and consistency in order to earn the confidence of the other partners. It will be important for them to take a long-term perspective and to identify opportunities for substantial material benefits for all parties. Reciprocity is a key. The six governments should be encouraged to reciprocate cooperation with cooperation, but they should also include in their institution-building penalties for defection or a failure to fulfill commitments.

The future material gains from cooperation for all parties are potentially immense, especially with respect to investment, trade and technology transfer for the collaborative development and marketing of Russian energy resources. Meanwhile, the US and China would maintain their institutional ties in the region (for China, most importantly, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ASEAN+3; and for the US, its bilateral security ties with Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Australia), but in Northeast Asia, the most potentially volatile region in Asia, they would work together.

Other countries in the Asia–Pacific may wonder about how such a new institution in which they do not directly participate will affect them. Seen in realist terms, those governments might worry that the security arrangement had been designed as a conspiracy against them. But cooperative security provides a different understanding. Multilateral security cooperation by a group of states in one region not only enhances their own security but also produces a public good of strategic stability for the larger community of nations.

ASEAN has shown the way. The cooperative-security design in ASEAN has been built on a network of economic and political ties and strategic dialogue. If the Six Party Talks on Korea can now achieve as much as ASEAN already has achieved for its member-states (i.e., to make inter-state war among any of its members unthinkable), all countries in the region would benefit. Other countries in the region like Australia would not directly participate in the new institution, but they would benefit from the strategic stability and shared security achieved by the new, multilateral cooperative-security consortium—a public good.

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