

Comments on Sub-Theme 4: Security in East Asia

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A Few Thoughts on Regional Security

- Supposing common problems for all the region's actors: war, insecurity
- Common goals for all the region's actors: peace, mediation
- Creation of technical (institutional) solutions to allow cooperative action
- Security cooperation often promotes “non-political” techniques to resolve political problems, without stating what political steps and choices will be necessary
- The question becomes “how do we achieve this together,” not “what must I/we sacrifice to achieve it?”

Nuclear Security in East Asia

- Professor Akiyama: 6-party talks essential for the flexibility needed to manage different priorities
- Excellent discussion of relationship between nuclear energy and nuclear security strategy
- But what will governments in the region give up?
- And what commitments would, for example, the USA and Japan be willing to make?

Security through Culture

- Professor Ashiwa: Cultural connections that can bypass non-intervention norms and mutual suspicion
- Superb connection of arts and culture to regional politics
- But debates about culture largely national in nature
- What is distinctively “Asian” about the mostly progressive, global values she encourages (peace, environmental, gender-equal)?
- Would these be accepted even within Japan as meaningfully or distinctively Japanese?

General Thoughts

- Security cooperation often means depoliticizing the political – but it may mean openly engaging the political first
- The divisions in Asia (within countries and between them) may be deeper than in today's discussions
- May grow even deeper for Japan after the March 11 disaster: is this an opportunity for a new security environment, or a dangerous moment that demands caution and conservatism?