

JAPAN AND THE TWO KOREAS: THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

The millenary relations between Korea and Japan have been intense, fruitful and conflictive. They are now largely determined, in the wider regional context, by the evolving power equation between China, Russia and the USA whose rivalries resulted in the division of Korea into two inimical states. Both Japan and China are interested in the stability of the Korean peninsula on the basis of the "status quo".

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INTRODUCTION

There is a tendency to view the situation in the Korean Peninsula in the context of an emerging triangle involving relations between Korea, the United States and China, as if to say that Japan's interest in the triangle is subsumed by the American interest. Yet, the relationship between Japan and Korea dates back to the fifth century when emigrants from the peninsula went to Japan with their cultural heritage. The geographical proximity of the peninsula to Japan is a factor which is supposed to promote intimate relations between the two nations. Having once colonised Korea, Japan succeeded in greatly impacting the socio-economic and political history of the peninsula, to such an extent that the contemporary policies of the two Koreas are phrased in reaction to Japan's interest. Although Koreans are often emotional when they reflect on Japan's colonial rule, it is however incontestable that the historical record of

their colonial tutelage under Japan can neither be re-written nor wished away; it was a period and an experience which has continued to influence the tempo, tenor, stress and strains of the Japan-Korea relations.

Post-Second World War politics and Cold War politics in the Asia-Pacific region strengthened the Japan-US relations at the expense of Japan's autonomous relations with the Koreans. Although Japan may not welcome the short-term effects of the Korean unification, it would in the long-run. What then, would happen to the US-Japan security treaty after the reunification of Korea? What confidence-building measures should Japan put in place in the period preceding the Korean reunification, since many Koreans believe that Japan would dislike a strong and unified Korea?

THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE-KOREAN RELATIONS

The historical record of the relationship between Japan and Korea has always evoked strong passion among the Koreans. The designation of 2005 as the 'Year of Korea-Japan Friendship' happily coincided with the Fortieth anniversary of the normalisation of ties between Japan and South Korea (ROK). That year also marked the centenary of the national humiliation suffered by Korea when it was forced by Japan, to sign the protectorate treaty in 1905, a treaty which stripped Korea of its statehood and diplomatic rights. It is on record that Korea experienced harsh Japanese colonial rule, a historical circumstance the Koreans remember with indignation, pain and anguish.

Prior to the Japanese colonial rule, the Koreans had always considered themselves superior to the Japanese, a mindset that was obliterated by the Japanese colonial onslaught against the Korean nation. The eventual defeat of Japan in the Pacific War in 1945 automatically led to the liberation of Korea and

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brought to an abrupt end the forty years old Japanese rule over Korea. According to Professor Okonogi of Keio University, Tokyo, "the subsequent partitioning of the Korean Peninsula along the Thirty-Eighth parallel between the United

States and the Soviet Union, coupled with the resultant polarisation of Korea into two countries with different and conflicting ideologies patterned after the two diametrically opposed superpowers, created the basis for the outbreak of war between the two Koreas—Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1950” (interview with the author on March 7, 2006).

In his book *Japanese Foreign Policy At The Crossroads: Challenges And Options For The Twenty-First Century*, (Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press,

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2003), Yutaka Kawashima avers, “Although, the United States and the Soviet Union had been variously blamed for the division of the Korean Peninsula, the Koreans believe that the Japanese colonial rule underdeveloped the Korean State by destroying the historical course of Korea’s political

development while paralysing their country’s socio-economic and political institutions, a situation which they claim, created the predisposing conditions that warranted the disintegration of Korea”.

ROK–JAPAN RELATIONS

As expected, the relationship between the ROK and Japan in the early period of the post-war years was full of acrimony and hostility. Japan’s quest for self-preservation, maintenance of its security, and advancement of its economy resulted in its signing a military pact with the United States. In a similar vein, the ROK entered into a military alliance with the United States, an action born out of its interest to preserve its newly evolved statehood and to keep in check the threats posed by Japan and North Korea to its security. The separate military alignment of both South Korea and Japan with the United States gave rise to the normalisation of diplomatic relations between the hitherto hostile countries in 1965. It is noteworthy that president Park Chung Hee of the ROK disregarded the anti-Japanese sentiment among the Koreans to establish ties with Japan.

The United States facilitated the reconciliation between the ROK and Japan, a relationship Washington considered as a vital step towards the consolidation of its strategic security control over the region. The calculus of power distribution in East Asia, where Japan and South Korea had willingly identified themselves as allies of the United States, was favourable to the post-war and Cold War agenda of the United States, which essentially was to rid the region of communist threats of invasion. To be sure, the relationship between the ROK and Japan was predicated on the ideological, security and economic underpinnings of the Cold War years. During that historical epoch, the United States wielded tremendous influence over the bilateral diplomatic relations of the two countries.

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In both countries, the Cold War era influenced the socio-economic and political changes. The transition from military dictatorship to democratic governance in South Korea further helped to expand the growth of its economy into a position of global leadership. In fact, one good aspect of the ROK–Japan relations during the Cold War years was the positive developmental influence of the Japanese mode of industrialisation on South Korea. Japan also attained a high level of technological development, as a result of its implementation of political, social and economic reforms, especially since the enactment of the new liberal constitution in 1947. The two countries were accorded membership of the various international organisations through the influence and support of the United States, a development that facilitated their participation in multilateral institutions, global commerce and politics.

However, since the emergence of the post-Cold War era, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the relations between the ROK and Japan have been vacillating between two extremes, one of mutual animosity, and the other of mutual amity, a reflection of the changes in both the external and domestic environments of the two countries. Different groups began to champion the evolution of a new regime of ROK–Japan–US relations, which they felt would reflect the new realities in the global setting where communist threats seemed to have fizzled out. In South Korea opposition groups clamoured for

the termination of their country's military pact with the United States and the withdrawal of about 50,000 US troops from the ROK. Of course, similar agitations and tendencies exist in Japan which harbours United States' military bases in Okinawa and elsewhere hosting about 46,000 troops. The dominant foreign policy elites of the two countries however favour the continuance of their alliances with the United States, a viewpoint anchored in the realisation that the United States was the bulwark behind the normalisation of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

There is a record of the Korea-Japan security cooperation and mutually beneficial exercises in several areas. Mention could be made of the ROK Navy's participation in the 1990 RIMPAC exercise, trilateral defence consultation meetings among Korea, the US and Japan since 1997, trilateral burden-sharing for the execution of the light water reactor project in North Korea through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), Korea-Japan Defence Ministers' dialogue, track-2 dialogue among RAND and CSIS of the

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US, Korea Institute of Defence Academy (KIDA), NIDS (National Institute for Defence Studies) and RIPS of Japan. The creation of the KEDO which was initiated by the United States, comprising the US, South Korea and Japan, has succeeded in deepening mutual understanding between the ROK and

Japan on the one hand, and fostering close ties between these allies and the United States on the other. Through the KEDO, the three countries could coordinate their dealings with North Korea. South Korea remains Japan's third largest trade partner following closely the United States and China. Despite all this visible cooperation between the ROK and Japan, there exist some constraints, which have deep-rooted historical underpinnings, and would require genuine and far-reaching palliatives. It is not surprising that history continues to be a serious cause of division between the two countries. What is unclear, is how the atonement could be made for past wrongs in order to affect the requisite reconciliation. What indeed are the historical wrongs which have acted as stumbling blocks in the ROK-Japan relations?

STUMBLING BLOCKS IN ROK–JAPAN RELATIONS

It is significant to point out that the contemporary Koreans' distrust of Japan is rooted in the perception that Japan has not taken any serious steps to address the following past wrongs:

- i) The abduction or conscription of an estimated 100,000–200,000 Korean women by the Japanese soldiers for sexual service during the World War II. This issue is laden with strong emotion among Koreans, particularly so, as they feel that Japan does not want to take official responsibility for the atrocities of its soldiers during the Second World War. Japan's establishment of Asia Women Foundation in 1995, which was charged with the responsibility of sourcing funds from the private sector, for the payment of compensation to the Korean victims, was rejected by the Seoul government and most Korean victims on grounds that Japan should first render an official apology and provide government-level compensation. The Koreans view the procrastination by the Tokyo government as a deliberate ploy to allow the Korean victims who were already in their 70s and 80s to pass away. This issue is being used by the Koreans for assessing Japan's intentions and readiness to make amends for its past wrongs. In his book, mentioned earlier, Yutaka Kawashima argues that the issue between Japan and its Asian neighbours is not about apology. Japan, he noted, had apologised amply and therefore should not have to repeat the apology whenever its Asian neighbours or others demand it.
- ii) Japan's interest in establishing sole control over the East Sea: This is another sore point in the ROK-Japan relations. The Seoul government believes that the recent aggressive adventures of Japan, evident in its 1996 declaration of the 200-mile exclusive economic zone, the 1997 unilateral expansion of the 12-mile territorial water zone with a new baseline from the coastline, and the subsequent seizure of Korean fishing boats by the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency under the new baseline, coupled with the 1999 unilateral abrogation of the 1965 fishery treaty, are clear signs of Japan's renewed aggression against the ROK.
- iii) Competing claims over the Islands of Tokdo and Takeshima: Both the countries have been claiming ownership of the Islands of Tokdo and Takeshima for decades. While Japan argues that the Takeshima Islands were incorporated into Shimane Prefecture through a resolution of the Japanese

government in 1905, South Korea insists that the Islands have been Korean territory since the *Shilla* dynasty took them in the fifth century (512) and continued to belong to the territory of the subsequent Korean Kingdoms (*Koryo* and *Yi*). The Koreans add that in 1952 its President, Syngnan Rhee declared sovereignty over the waters around the country including the Tokdo Islands.

- iv) Japan's expanded security role in the region: The qualitative superiority of Japan's navy and air force coupled with its technological advancement in the

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atomic industry as well as its military potential have heightened South Korea's fears about Japan. Seoul believes that Japan has the potential of becoming a nuclear power on the basis of its advanced capability in the enrichment, reprocessing and production of plutonium and fast breeder reactors—a possibility that it fears may be actualised with the expanded security role of a nuclear-

capable Japan in the region. It may be noted that South Korea's fears are the product of its distrust of, and misgivings about Japan.

- v) Distortion of War History: The Koreans are angered by "Japan's distortion of war history in Japanese school textbooks". The Japanese textbooks, according to the Koreans, do not mention Japan's wartime crimes; an omission, they described as Japan's chronic inability to face up to its own wrong doings and an act of 'hypocritical ostrichism'.

JAPAN'S PERCEPTION OF ROK-JAPAN'S RIFT

Reflecting on some of the above issues in the ROK-Japan relations, Professor Masao Okonogi, affirmed that, historically, the Japanese never had a good perception of the Koreans, even though they considered Korea as a strategically significant country in the Asia-Pacific region. He, however, noted that the relationship between South Korea and Japan had since the advent of the post-war era improved tremendously. The visit of President Kim Dae Jung to Japan

in 1998, he opined, was an epoch-making event, which gave the two countries' leaders the opportunity of ironing out their differences as a first step necessary to foster a better relationship. He adds that the Japanese leadership made use of that occasion to apologise to the Koreans for Japan's past colonial administration in Korea.

For Yutaka Kawashima, the problem of Japan with her neighbours had nothing to do with Japan's contemporary policy toward them, but rather their fear of the resurgence of Japanese militarism on account of its history. He expatiated:

“Whenever Japan's neighbours begin to suspect that Japan's pre-war history is going to be officially glorified, for example, in the process of certifying a history textbook or when a prime minister makes an official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to Japan's war dead, they express their strong resentment” (Ibid.).

In the same vein, Okonogi disclosed that the recent visit of Prime Minister Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine angered the South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun who, since that event, has not hidden his displeasure from Koizumi. However, most Japanese scholars believe that despite bouts of emotional distress on both sides, there are positive and remarkable signs of an increasingly cordial relationship between Japan and South Korea. About 600,000 Koreans live in Japan and, in 2001, 697 Japanese were studying in South Korea. About 4 million people from both countries cross borders yearly as tourists. In addition to that, Korean movies are very popular with the Japanese, and are aired regularly on Japanese television. With the growing appreciation and acceptance of the South Koreans by the Japanese, there are prospects of further improvement in the already warmer relations between the two countries.

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JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA

Although there are still no diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea, the Tokyo government has, since the end of the Cold War, been

under pressure from the South Korean government to normalise relations with Pyongyang. The ideological rivalry between the two superpowers, with their allies on their sides, only succeeded in pitching countries against one another on ideological grounds. Thus, South Korea and Japan being allies of the United States continued with their long-established free market economic model, while North Korea, an ally of the Soviet Union and China, patterned its *Juche* ideology after the socialist ideals being propagated during that era by its two benefactors.

Aside from the fact that the DPRK still retains its quasi-socialist system, despite the abandonment of socialism by East European countries including the Soviet Union in the 1990s, it is also the 'black sheep' in East Asia with its practice of brinkmanship diplomacy, a policy borne out of Pyongyang's desperate need for economic concessions to improve its deteriorating economic situation, since economic assistance from the Soviet Union (now Russia) and China is no longer available.

Since the commencement of discussions between Japan and North Korea in the 1990s, for the normalisation of relations, no concrete achievement has been recorded. It is argued that it was Japan that had been refusing to normalise diplomatic ties with North Korea. Yet, others including Toshimitsu Shigemura argue that North Korea has never expressed any serious desire to normalise relations with Japan, since Pyongyang believes that what Japan would offer could be better obtained from the United States (in Tae-Hwan Kwak [ed],

North Korea took centre-stage when it admitted resuming its military nuclear programme which initially was believed to have been frozen in exchange for the United States' assistance.

"Reunification of the Korean Peninsula and Japanese Foreign Policy", *The Four Powers and Korean Unification Strategies*, Seoul, 1997). According to Kawashima, the Soviet Union's decision to normalise relations with South Korea prompted North Korea to

propose normalising relations with Japan in the autumn of 1990. He added that, because of the refusal of North Korea to address squarely the issue of its abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 80s, Japan has been unwilling to normalise relations with Pyongyang.

The predictions that the regime in North Korea would collapse and pave the way for the peninsula's reunification on South Korea's terms have fallen flat. The death of North Korea's revered leader Kim-il Sung, the years of famine and

food shortages, the ascent of Kim Jong-il whose health has been described as frail, all were factors that were expected to catalyse the process of decay and eventual collapse of the DPRK, a prognosis that is far from being realised. Rather than fade out in Northeast Asia on account of its decaying economy and the uncertainty of its political future, North Korea took centre-stage when it admitted resuming its military nuclear programme which initially was believed to have been frozen in exchange for the United States' assistance. Pyongyang also confessed that it abducted a number of Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s. These disclosures changed the political dynamics among the six parties in the Korean reunification talks (the United States, China, Russia, Japan and the two Koreas), and set the stage for a renewed international offensive against North Korea. In his reaction, President George W Bush described North Korea as a 'rogue state', belonging to the 'axis of evil'. It is on record that Pyongyang's export of its *Nodong* missiles to the Middle East and South Asia was responsible for the rising tension in those regions.

It should be recalled that in August 1998, North Korea tested its *Taepodong* missile over Japan. And in March 1999, the DPRK's Spy Ships invaded Japanese sea lanes, an action that was deterred by the Japanese Self Defence Force (SDF) which fired warning shots. It is, however, noteworthy that some years before these hostilities, precisely in 1995, following North Korea's request for assistance to overcome the food shortage it was experiencing, the Japanese government supplied 200,000 tons of rice as humanitarian assistance to Pyongyang. Again in 2000, Japan extended help in the form of 500,000 tons of rice to North Korea despite the ever-growing anti-DPRK sentiment in Japan. However, the South Korean government was unhappy. But, as Akiko Fukushima in his book *Japanese Foreign Policy: The Emerging Logic of Multilateralism*, (London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999) pointed out, Japan has always been willing to carry out its foreign policy objectives in Asia-Pacific, in particular, within multilateral mechanisms such as the KEDO, ASEAN, the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council

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for Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, especially in its quest to influence the resolution of the problem on the Korean Peninsula among other issues in the region.

In cooperation with the United States and South Korea, Japan lent support to the implementation of KEDO's agenda of building two new light water nuclear reactors in addition to the provision of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. Toward the actualisation of that agenda, Japan agreed to provide \$1 billion to

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complement South Korea's expressed readiness to foot three-fourths of the project's bill. The project was to provide an alternative source of energy to Pyongyang in exchange for renouncing its nuclear programme. But, consequent upon the 1998 missile test by North Korea, the Japanese government denounced North Korea's action and announced its refusal to sign the

KEDO documents for the assigned financial aid of \$1 billion towards the construction of light water reactors in Pyongyang.

However, as a result of pressures by the ROK and the United States, Japan on October 21, 1998, formally signed the agreement. In its relations with the DPRK, Japan could be said to have a flexible and responsive foreign policy which accommodates good behaviour and rejects bad behaviour. In all, Japan has been playing the 'big brother role' toward North Korea despite the latter's negative attitude. Japan is the second largest exporter to Pyongyang after China. Without the Japanese market the North Korean economy would lay prostrate, incapable of carrying out requisite reforms to avert collapse. Marcus Noland argues that the global community in its efforts to feed hungry North Koreans should not do so in a manner that strengthens Pyongyang's totalitarian regime. ("North Korea in Transition", *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Spring 2005).

It is obvious that even though Japan recognises its responsibility to assist North Korea in overcoming the long-drawn and seemingly endless economic crisis that has engulfed that country since the 1990s, it feels handicapped and discouraged by Pyongyang's nuclear programme and its abduction of innocent

Japanese. According to Masao Okonogi, the two issues constitute major obstacles to the creation of warm and cordial relations between Japan and the DPRK, and by implication, would prevent Japan from normalising relations with that country. Moreover, North Korea's image currently evokes strong repulsion among the Japanese. As it stands today, Japan will not normalise relations with Pyongyang unless that country is ready to work for peace in the peninsula and ceases to be a threat to Japan's security and regional stability.

KOREAN UNIFICATION AND JAPAN'S SECURITY

It is apparent from the foregoing sections that Japan's extensive involvement in multilateral institutions in Asia-Pacific accords with its foreign policy objective of promoting conditions that are favourable to peace in Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region in general. Japan's active participation in the KEDO, is an indirect policy aimed at preventing the collapse of that country, thereby forestalling Korean unification. In fact, all the six parties involved in the Korean unification talks (the United States, China, Russia Japan and the two Korea) are working for the maintenance of *status quo* in the peninsula because of the security implications of North Korea's collapse. Thus, Japan and the other three major powers, the US, China and Russia, are supportive of the 'two Korea' policy with the aim of keeping Pyongyang afloat (Michael McDevitt, "Security Challenges and Options in Northeast Asia", *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Autumn 2001).

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Although Japan may not welcome the short-term effects of the Korean unification, if it becomes inevitable, it would prefer that the unification is effected peacefully on South Korean terms, since the ROK appears a better ally with a relatively warmer disposition than Pyongyang. On the contrary, Toshimitsu Shigemura argues that Japan has no official policy towards the Korean unification; Japan has only adopted a 'reactive diplomacy', preferring

instead to accept the decision of the Koreans on the issue. But whether it is officially expressed or not, Japan worries that a unified Korea might prefer to come closer to China than to Tokyo, and given such a scenario, Beijing's Foreign Policy, aimed at establishing China's hegemony in Northeast Asia, would then appear to have been actualised.

Michael Finnegan in his article, "The Security Strategy of Unified Korea and the Security Relations of Northeast Asia", (*The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Winter 1999.) argues that it would not serve the unified Korea's interest to align with China. Some scholars have speculated that Japan, to preempt the possibility of a unified Korea aligning with China, is already embarking on constitutional amendment that would strengthen its military considerably, including its possession of offensive capabilities. In some other quarters, it is believed that Japan is overdue for its transformation into 'a normal state' with the full complement of military power corresponding to its economic power, a transformation which the proponents reasoned would enable Japan to assist in the promotion of international peace.

It should however be noted that the proposed constitutional amendment that would empower Japan's military with offensive capabilities has its opponents. Some are of the view that a nuclear Japan would complicate the security situation in Northeast Asia and the Pacific, and would defeat Tokyo's current effort at moderating nuclear proliferation in the region. In a similar vein, Okonogi debunks

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the thesis and speculation of the realists (the hawks) who feel that Japan's global pacifism has outlived its usefulness. He affirms that Japan's economic prosperity results from the single-minded focus of its foreign policy on the promotion of peaceful coexistence among countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. He explained that Japan had a peace-oriented constitution which

had survived several regimes and had become institutionalised, adding that speculations about an impending constitutional revision which would make Japan acquire offensive capabilities were conjectural. He concluded that Japan's defence strategy was defensive and that it would remain so.

Lending credence to Okonogi's explanation, Renato Cruz De Castro notes that: "Japan's new security doctrine emphasises the social, economic and political aspects of National security without seeking ways to maximise war-fighting capabilities." ("The Realist's Puzzle: Japan's Post-Cold War Defense Policy", *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1999).

Castro further noted that although the realists' pressure on the Japanese government to increase its expenditure on defence was strong, Japan's confidence in its military pact with the United States remained high, and that the Japanese government was averse to any drastic action that would undermine its relations with the United States.

None of the powers in the Asia-Pacific region has any wider expansionistic or imperialistic tendencies; all they seek is preponderance in the region. The established regime of globalisation in the world state-system does not encourage territorial adventurism, annexation, or colonisation of weaker states. On the contrary, Aaron Friedberg argues that the contemporary trend in world politics is toward regionalisation rather than globalisation. The main interest of the four powers, including Japan, in the region is to forestall any untoward development which could have security implications for regional stability. The real obstacle to the Korean unification is the lack of determination of the two Korean States.

Even the US alliance with the ROK cannot stand in the way of Korean unification, if the Koreans on both sides of the divide are genuinely interested in it. If the trade-off is between a US alliance and reunification, it is hoped that the South Koreans would opt for reunification. Yet, without a detailed

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implementation roadmap which both sides of the Korean divide subscribe to, and which would derive from the concerted efforts of the leaderships of the ROK and DPRK, the quest for reunification will remain tentative. In addition to the six-party mechanism, South Korea, with its open and democratic institutions coupled with a vibrant economy, could muster a strong political will to extensively and constructively engage North Korea as a way of opening up Pyongyang.

North Korea will not collapse, contrary to popular belief in South Korea. The earlier the two Koreas realise the benefits to result from the harmonisation of their economies, and the restoration of their common identity and historical antecedents, the more they will work towards reunification. But, as long as either of the Koreas feels it can continue to be an independent and autonomous politico-economic system, the commitment to unification will be low. This is not an exculpatory statement aimed at absolving the major powers of blame for the uncertainty that persists over the Korean unification. The major powers have a role to play in ensuring that the six-party mechanism works. For that to happen, the festering misunderstanding and competition between the United


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States and China over Korea and the Asia-Pacific affairs must be resolved. Overall, the path to the Korean unification would have to be found by the Koreans, whose first responsibility is, to lay the ground on which the major powers could build, in agreement with them, an infrastructure leading to the unification of Korea.

Japanese foreign policy is currently anchored in its peace-oriented constitution, which seeks to create and sustain conditions that are favourable to peaceful coexistence among the states in the Asia-Pacific. Japan's 'following diplomacy' which respects the Koreans' right to a unified homeland is not in any way a deterrent to the realisation of Korean reunification. If anything, Japan's 'following diplomacy' is the projection of its commitment to multilateralism as a means of forging a sense of collective responsibility among all the stakeholders in the region. Japan is satisfied with the six-party framework for the evolution of Korean unification strategies, which would promote peace in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Japan, like many other countries faces tremendous pressure from both domestic and external sources which impact the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy. In its pursuit of peaceful coexistence with its neighbours, Japan would also need to strengthen its defence infrastructure against the hawkish

tendencies of nuclear North Korea. While seeking ways to further strengthen the six-party framework for the peaceful resolution of the Korean dilemma, Japan should maintain its military alliance with the United States, and warm up to China. In fact, Japan could play the role of a mediator between the United States and China, a role that would be result-oriented because the Korean issue, which is the subject of the six-party framework, impinges on the interests of the allies of both countries. In this regard, Japan will do well to recall the prudent statement of the late Masataka Kosaka who advised: “Be friendly with the United States but do not quarrel with China”.

The festering misunderstanding and competition between the United States and China over Korea and the Asia-Pacific affairs must be resolved.