



上海论坛 2012 学术简报

Academic Bulletin of Shanghai Forum 2012

Creating a New Regional Order in East Asia (I)

May 26, 2012

A lively discussion about the shaping of a new order in East Asia was held by participating scholars.

Professor Wu Xinbo, the chairman of sub-forum presided over the beginning by expressing his thanks to the arrival of the guests and introducing the significance of the topic---shaping the regional order in East Asia. He was followed by two scholars' keynote speech.

Mr. Ruan Zongze, deputy director of China Institute of International Studies, pointed out that from an economic perspective; the East Asian region has undergone great changes. China's economic strength will surpass the U.S. in the future, the East Asian intra-regional economic ties have reached a new height. But the East Asian region still faces dilemma. First, China is growing more powerful, but the concerns over of China's strength have not yet been dispersed significantly. On the other hand, despite the smooth progress of economic cooperation in East Asia, there are many obstacles of political and security cooperation. The United States has made a strategic return to Asia-Pacific, which brings uncertainty to the future of regional order in East Asia. East Asia should focus on the prosperity and stability in the region, and carry out the construction of innovative mechanisms to shape an environment conducive to all members of the East Asia region. The shaping of the regional order depend on internal members in East Asia, as well as the U.S. China and the United States in particular need to cooperate and seek common ground while reserving differences in order to safeguard regional peace.

Chung-in Moon, professor from Yonsei University, noted the positive trend of the East Asian region development, the support for market factors and regional identity

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and the depth of regional integration. In the development of East Asia, China's rise is prominent. In addition, another obvious trend is the growing nationalism in East Asian countries which bring uncertain negative impact on the shaping of this region.

To achieve a better development of the regional order in East Asia, mechanism construction is very important. From economic perspective, more regional economic cooperation mechanisms need to be consolidated and established, including China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Agreement. In the political and security aspects, the institutionalized cooperation also needs to be initiated, both for China and the United States and the Sino-Japan. The establishment of the regional order in the future needs the East Asian members to update their concepts, and to abandon some of the outdated ideas, among which the most critical one is realism with the balance of power as the core idea. More liberal thinking should be introduced. In addition, social and cultural exchanges are important and positive factors, too. Through non-governmental exchanges, the relationship between two countries will be closer.

Five scholars from different countries in the ensuing discussion explored the regional order concept of the East Asian members and other related issues from different perspectives. Professor Ken Jimbo held that Japan's domestic situation is changing rapidly. It is difficult to capture a continuous regional order concept for the Japanese government. However, the Japanese government believes that the rise of China in East Asia is more certain, and even may fully surpass the United States. In spite of some uncertainty, the East Asian regional order is the order of a collective will which will build balance to some degree. Japan should promote the balanced development of the regional order in East Asia.

Dr. Liu Aming from Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and Dr. Le Dinh, Tinh from Vietnam discussed the concept of regional order in ASEAN. They agreed that ASEAN's regional order is based on the following considerations. The first is the security and sovereignty of the ASEAN countries. The second is to prevent conflict of ASEAN countries within and with the countries outside. The third is to promote



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economic prosperity and development in ASEAN. The main challenge of ASEAN regional order is the lack of internal cohesion and the interference of big powers, as well as a number of sensitive issues. In addition, the leadership of ASEAN in East Asian regional order is weakened.

Professor Jin-Young Kim from University of Pusan, South Korea discussed the concept of regional order in South Korea. She recalled policies in East Asia by the successive South Korean government and believes that the Korean government attaches great importance to East Asia, especially Northeast Asia's regional order, and takes measures to promote the development of an East Asian community. The mainstream view in South Korea is that Korea should play a role to balance East Asian countries in the region, especially between the major powers. She made two recommendations. First, the key to the establishment of East Asian regional order is cooperation among China, Japan and South Korea. These three countries should have in-depth cooperation. Second, East Asia must handle the relations with the DPRK properly.