

plans about it to draw support and cooperation from Russia. It is important for South Korea to build a high level of trust first with Russia, starting with the cooperation on the project of a natural gas pipeline connecting the two Koreas and Russia, which has been discussed since South Korea’s special envoy to Russia, Rep. Song Young-gil, visited Moscow earlier this year. A thorough examination should also be carried out on how the relations between Russia and North Korea will develop in the future.

Keywords

Security of Northeast Asia, Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, North Korea policies



Policy Implications

- The uncertainty in the Northeast Asian region is increasing as the U.S. and China are at odds over economic, military, diplomatic and security issues. But the most important factor behind the tension in Northeast Asia is the threat of North Korea’s nuclear program.
- The new South Korean government is required to handle North Korean issues as well as the THAAD issue while it seeks to improve relations with the North. And it is essential that South Korea maintain pressure through economic sanctions on North Korea and implement its engagement policy through dialogue and exchanges with the North simultaneously, not sequentially.
- This session contributed to a better and detailed analysis and understanding of the security conditions on the Korean Peninsula in terms of international politics by presenting different views of the major powers about the unification of the Korean Peninsula as well as the political situation in Northeast Asia.
- The comparative analysis of the interests that major powers around the Korean Peninsula have in connection with the issues of the two Koreas also helps people to understand what kind of political challenges the Moon administration is facing and provides indications about how to cope with the challenges and work out policies on national unification and North Korea.

Historical Reconciliation in East Asia and Europe



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Discussant	KIM Yongdeog Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies LEE Won-Deog Professor, Kookmin University NAM Sanggu Research Fellow, Northeast Asian History Foundation
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YOO Euysang This session on “Historical Reconciliation in East Asia and Europe” sets itself apart from other meetings with similar topics because it will discuss Europe’s historical reconciliation in terms of Poland-Russia relations instead of Poland-Germany relations. The history of conflict between Poland and Russia dates back to earlier than the 19th century, long before the Nazi regime’s relations with other European countries became worse. I believe the presentation by Director Miroslaw Filipowicz about how the long history of conflict has been resolved and what has been done in the spirit of historical reconciliation will teach us another lesson. Concerning historical reconciliation in Northeast Asia, I suggest that we discuss ways on how to resolve the historical disputes between Korea and Japan, most notably the comfort women issue. There is no doubt that the normalization of Korea-Japan relations will mostly depend on how the two nations deal with the lingering conflicts over the controversial bilateral agreement on the comfort women

issue in December 2015. With these circumstances in mind, I expect today’s presentation by professor Haruki Wada, who has been critical of how the Japanese government handled the comfort women issue, and another by professor Alexis Dudden, who has held critical views of the Abe administration’s interpretation of history, will live up to our expectations. We have consistently called on the Japanese government for actions to overcome the bitter historical legacies of the Japanese colonial rule of Korea, including Japan’s recognition of its legal responsibility and a formal apology and compensation based on it. The Korean public does not approve of the 2015 comfort women agreement because these demands have not been met. It is hard to imagine the Japanese government taking action in favor of the comfort women, victims of wartime Japan, as long as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe keeps his job. I think how to settle the long-standing historical issues and promote true historical reconciliation is an important topic that deserves sincere discussion among diplo-

matic policy makers and all of us here.

— **Haruki WADA** Today, overcoming the legacies of colonialism is one of the most pressing tasks for mankind. The comfort women issue which became a diplomatic issue for the first time in 1990 has been thought to be the most important problem to both of our peoples. For 25 years, sincere efforts have been made incessantly in the ROK and Japan. The movement to resolve the comfort women issue is divided into three rounds. The first began in 1990 when the Korean women's organization that later became Chongdaehyop, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan War raised six comfort women's demands. After the "coming out" of Kim Hak-sun as a comfort woman in 1991, the Japanese government began to investigate the problem and in 1993 issued the Statement of Apology by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono. The second round began with the birth of the Democratic Party of Japan(DPJ) government in 2009. Then, Japanese civic groups organized a "National Action 2010" to seek a legislative resolution on the comfort women issue, but the DPJ government refused to do this. On the part of Korea, the Korean Constitutional Court ruled in 2011 that the Korean government's inaction concerning the comfort women issue was in breach of the Constitution. In 2012, the Korean government approved a three-point proposal for the resolution of the comfort women issue, calling for: an apology that would resonate in the hearts of the victims; atonement money to be provided from a government fund; and the Japanese government's assumption of humanitarian responsibility. But this was rejected by the Japanese government. The third round followed the birth of the Shinzo Abe cabinet in 2012. The historical revisionist Abe called for a probe into and revision of the Kono and Murayama statements. When President Park Geun-hye took office in March 2012, she put pressure on Prime Minister Abe by refusing to hold any Korea-Japan leadership talks until the resolution of the issue. Korea-Japan relations sank to a dangerously low level, and U.S. President Barack Obama then intervened.

Prime Minister Abe was forced in March 2014 to honor the Kono Statement. At this time, the 12th Asian Solidarity Conference adopted a proposal for the resolution of the Comfort women problem in the principle of the Kono Statement. In April 2015, Prime Minister Abe visited the U.S. and changed his position on the comfort women issue. In November 2015, a Korea-Japan summit was held in Seoul and came to an agreement to seek an early solution. And suddenly, on Dec. 28, a Foreign Ministers' meeting was held in Seoul and an agreement was announced.

The expression of apology contained a new element. The Japanese government admitted its responsibility straightforwardly for the first time without limiting it with the modifier "moral." And payment of one billion yen was a completely new measure from the Japanese government for the victims. However, Prime Minister Abe made every effort not to give the impression that he made an official apology and promised the compensation as a token of atonement. His efforts appeared in various forms. He never allowed his words of apology to be printed in the form of a letter to the victims. It is natural that Korean victims and activists criticized such an attitude of Abe. But the significance of the December 2015 agreement can never be denied totally. The Japanese government handed over one billion yen to the Korean government, and the newly formed Foundation for Reconciliation and Healing gave "cure money" to 35 out of 45 victim-survivors. No one can deprive victims of their right to receive atonement money from the Japanese government. What is necessary from now on is to officially record the fact that Japanese Prime Minister has apologized to the victims. The Foundation for Reconciliation and Healing is advised to construct a memorial monument for the deceased victims and former Comfort women jointly with the new government of Korea. The monument's epitaph should contain Abe's words of apology so that the Japanese government's apology and atonement will be irreversible. And this measure should be taken for the victims of other countries.

— **Mirosław FILIPOWICZ** As neighbors, Russia and Poland have influenced each other to a great extent. But tragic and negative elements have prevailed over positive experiences in their relations. I would like to emphasize that historical issues should not be left to politicians and there is no one true, universal version of history. Every nation has its own interpretation of the same history. It is natural to see the facts of history differently. History has many facets. Russia and Poland decided to establish a "Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Issues" in 2002 with the governments playing a central role. Though its initial activities were led by the governments, the group has engaged in fruitful activities since experts and scholars took part in 2008, producing tangible achievements. Some of the group's positive achievements include the publishing of a book titled *White Spots-Black Spots* on difficult matters in Polish-Russian relations from 1918 to 2008, which deals with the major conflicts over history between the two nations.

Others include the beginning of historical dialogue in 2012 between Polish and Russian historians and teachers of history, the partnership between the Institute of East-Central Europe, the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of World History in publishing a three-volume edition of essays and historical sources on the history of Polish-Russian relations. We should stop thinking there is only one history book to write to tell about only one neutral history and start to think of history in the spirit of mutual empathy. Historians of both countries need to meet each other to exchange views over sensitive bilateral issues and get to know about each other's perspectives better by listening to each other carefully. These approaches will never harm the national identity or our patriotism. We should be more sensible to each other. In the history of relations, positive and negative elements coexist. We need to pay attention to both sides.

— **KIM Namkook** A growing number of Koreans recently have an interest in Poland because the country has several things in common with Korea, including its geographical location between powerful states

and the historical consequences from this. A lot has been discussed regarding relations between Poland and Germany, but this session provided a fresh opportunity to look into Poland-Russia relations as well as deeply insightful, interesting and touching proposals.

— **Alexis DUDDEN** It is necessary to note the Abe administration's maneuver not only in terms of "Korea versus Japan" or "China versus Japan" but also in terms of the ongoing and more fundamental "Japan versus Japan" divide within Japan. A way to understand this "Japan-Japan" divide is to begin by understanding that the Abe administration's preoccupation with history runs counter to Japan's economic and security interests. Since late 2012, the administration made clear its will to erase the "Asian" component of "Asia-Pacific" reconciliation efforts. Why? Prime Minister Abe and his supporters seemingly want to view the history of Japanese imperialism in Asia as being irrelevant to today's Japan. Thus, concerted efforts and policies to erase or distort its history are underway, causing intense friction throughout Northeast Asia.

Abe made it clear enough that his administration's views would fly in the face of decades of discussions in Japan and Asia that held the Japanese empire accountable for the war crime. Moreover, Abe's remarks about the year 1905 clearly demonstrated that he would not care about improving relations with Korea, Japan's closest neighbor. In 2017, Abe recalled Japanese Ambassador to Seoul over the peace statues in Seoul and Busan dedicated to the comfort women. And just because of a small bronze statue known as the "Comfort Woman Peace Statue?" Today, it is commonplace for groups around the world to demand the removal of statues of perpetrators of war crimes. Only Japan is seeking the removal of a statue of victims of its past crimes. Because of this, the Japanese government finds it difficult to justify its position to seek to redefine its security posture for the first time since 1945 to engage militarily abroad for peace.

Sociologist Akiko Hashimoto at the University of Pittsburgh has lucidly explained what this "peace"

would entail in real terms for the Japanese generations to come. In her recent book, *The Long Defeat*, Hashimoto argues that: "... this choice of strategy is not geared toward raising nascent critical thinkers who would assume responsibility for past atrocious deeds of their forefathers as in a culture of contrition like Germany, but focused instead on not raising the type of Japanese people who could perpetrate another abhorrent war in the future."

Fast forward to Hirohito's death in 1989 when public discussion about the emperor's guilt and responsibility came into renewed focus within Japan. Bookstores throughout Tokyo gradually added shelves dedicated to the sections of "War Responsibility" studies and "Peace Studies." Ironically, such behavior radically contradicts that of the incumbent Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Japanese who long to break free from the constitutional ban on war.

The imperative now for all throughout Northeast Asia who seek to build a peaceful and stable future of the region is to accept an internationally coordinated understanding of modern history and to work with Japanese scholars, politicians and activists seeking to preserve the universalisms inherent to Japan's standing Constitution. Education is as critical as is leadership, and the need to engage Japan with Asia has never been more important. And I wish history education in the region will provide not a division of the region, but a new opportunity for the region.

— **KIM Yongdeog** What do we have to do to settle the history disputes between the two countries? Is it reconciliation, repentance or agreement? Korea has always sought apologies, among other options, in its relations with Japan. But European countries, particularly Germany, chose reconciliation. Although Poland suffered the most from the German occupation, Germany pulled off reconciliation with Poland on history. The joint publication of a German-Polish history textbook during the reconciliation between the two countries has significant implications for us.

Korea and Japan have made efforts to jointly publish a history textbook since 2009, but it ended up as

a non-binding wishful thinking. I think that the governments' support is critical to materializing commitments by historians from both nations, as seen in the case of Poland and Russia. Russian President Putin agreed to set up a joint Russian-Polish commission on historical issues when he visited Warsaw in 2002. What was behind the agreement between the presidents of both countries? Their once chilly relations have improved since they resumed talks in 2008, which resulted in the release of a book titled *White Spots—Black Spots* last year. We need to look into whether the two nations' move towards reconciliation on history had any effect on the three countries located between Russia and Poland—Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. Poland has always been on the victim's side, while the three countries bordering Poland, on the other hand, were victimized by Poland. It remains to be seen if Poland has any plans or intention to seek historical reconciliation with them.

— **LEE Won-Deog** There are two points I need to make. First, I see the importance of broadening our perspectives by conducting a comparative study when addressing the history issues involving Japan's wartime past, post-war measures and legacies of Japan's colonial rule. Second, it will be difficult to resolve historical issues if governments start to intervene in them with the means of policies. I think, therefore, that we should approach and resolve history issues with civic and academic efforts, instead of by diplomatic or political means.

I interpret the comfort women agreement of December 2015 as a "3+3 deal" that has three essential provisions with three complimentary ones. The first half of the statement read by the foreign ministers of the two countries constitutes the core part of the deal: the Japanese government's admission to its involvement in the wartime sexual slavery; Prime Minister Abe's expression of apologies to the comfort women; and Japan's agreement to provide compensation to surviving comfort women with its government's budget. I believe this was the core part of the deal and I think there would have been no disputes, if the deal had had no more than this. However,

er, there were complementary provisions that Seoul should make efforts to solve the issue of peace statues in an appropriate way; the agreement should be irreversible; and Seoul should refrain from accusing or criticizing Tokyo in the international community regarding the issue.

As the limitations of the agreement, first of all, the failure to stipulate an official apology and legal responsibility for the compensation. The deal provided something close to the concept of compensation, but failed to provide legally binding compensation. Second, as regards the comfort women statues and the irreversibility, the agreement has no provision for the removal of the statues. But the provision requiring the Korean government to strive to solve the issue aroused suspicion among the Korean people that the two governments struck a backdoor deal. Their confirmation of the issue being "resolved finally and irreversibly" should be interpreted as meaning they will not discuss it as a diplomatic issue, not as disallowing any mentioning of the issue, as the Japan's right-wing has asserted. The word, "irreversible," also leaves room for ambiguity, but Korea's Foreign Ministry interprets it as meaning that the issue should be considered resolved irreversibly, only as long as there are no remarks from the Japanese government contradicting the spirit of the agreement and the apology extended by Abe.

It is very important for the new Korean government led by Moon Jae-in to formulate its own stance on this issue when it normalizes ties with Japan. I personally think the new government does not have to invalidate or renegotiate the agreement, if the backbone of the agreement remains intact and the two governments manage to abide by the spirit of the bilateral agreement without any misunderstanding.

— **NAM Sanggu** I think more opportunities should be provided to historians, and historians should go further to provide more opportunities. It is up to historians to collect and arrange historical facts. They have trouble making their voices heard, however, because they are often overwhelmed by rank-and-file citizens who take to social media and other means to

offer their own interpretations of history. That is, I believe, why historians should have more opportunities than any others to express their views.

Then, what should we do with the comfort women statues? I have two points to make. Some see the statues as a symbol of the issue of how to remember Japan's wartime sex slavery, how history should be understood without just blaming Japan and what should be remembered and done to correct past injustices. Others, on the other hand, say that the installation of a statue in front of the Japanese Embassy is a violation of international treaties.

I see the issue of comfort women as one involving universal human rights of women as well as peace. The memories of comfort women should be respected and shared by the community. Therefore, the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese Embassy should not be seen as an illegal exhibition or a violation of international treaties, but as a symbol of a common value to be remembered and to heal the wounds of the victims.

The essence of the statue is the demand that victims of Japan's wartime slavery be remembered, and actions taken to resolve the issue. I think the issue will be settled naturally if the Japanese government takes measures accordingly. It is important to take actions to move the hearts of the victims in the course of reconciliation and resolution of this historical issue.



Policy Implications

- The session stressed the necessity of a comparative study on the case of historical reconciliation between Russia and Poland, noting the similarity of the geographical features of Korea and Poland, surrounded by powerful countries. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of broadening perspectives through a comparative study to have a better insight into the universal issues of colonization and aggression in world history.
- Regarding the comfort women agreement on Dec. 28th, 2015, experts from Korea, the U.S. and Japan presented diverse views and interpretations, as well as suggesting solutions to the issue.