

New East Asia Regional Order and the Role of the UN

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

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PARK Soo-gil

This year is the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the World Federation of United Nations Associations. It witnesses unprecedented challenges on the global and regional levels, thus requiring a strengthened role of the United Nations and multilateralism.

East Asia, in particular, is faced with great challenges arising from the emerging new order characterized by structural shift in the regional power balance, the nuclear armament of North Korea, nationalistic and more assertive foreign and security policy of major countries in the region and their intensified confrontational competition, an arms race, and eroding commitment to UN principles and international justice.

The UN stands for universality, legitimacy and soft power. East Asia has to more actively utilize the UN and strengthen regional cooperation to guarantee peace and prevent conflicts in the region and particularly on the Korean Peninsula.

KIM Won-soo

The Northeast Asian region has no comprehensive regional security cooperation system. The UN has a great potential role in maintaining peace and strengthening security in East Asia. The UN is willing to actively support the institutionalization of security talks and a cooperative system in the region. Chapter 8 of the UN Charter encourages the establishment of regional agencies for cooperation.

Inclusivity and pragmatism are required for the talks on regional security. North Korea should be invited to these talks. It is desirable to build trust by addressing such soft issues as drug control, health-care, disaster management and energy security, before dealing with hard issues.

To resolve the North Korean nuclear and missile issue, sanctions against North Korea are a crucial means, and the global community should take a firm stance on this. However, as sanctions alone cannot work to bring about the desired result, the international community should bring North Korea



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to the dialogue table.

Cyber attacks, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Arms (CBRN) and terrorism are major threats to security. The UN can support the efforts of Northeast Asian countries to respond to these threats.

YOO Dae-jong

The East Asian order faces challenges from intensified competition among countries in the region, the return of geopolitics, the fourth nuclear weapon test by North Korea, socio-economic inequality, violent extremism, historical issues and territorial disputes.

The UN is at the center of global governance over international standards and universal values. The legitimacy of the UN is based on the universal membership of the world, and it is the most universal, democratic and legitimate organization that resolves the challenges global society faces.

The UN contributes to the stability of the Northeast Asian order by offering opportunities for multilateral cooperation. It also provides an effective mechanism to maintain peace and stability through universal standards. Sanctions by the UN Security Council to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue are a good example. The UN regards the North Korean human rights issue, which raises global

concern, as a sin against humanitarianism and treats it by the standards of universal values.

The UN can contribute to regional prosperity by encouraging regional cooperation and multilateral initiatives. In this respect, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change offer new opportunities for regional cooperation.

Korea is bolstering the foundation of regional peace through the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative.

Alexei BORISOV

East Asia needs a regionally integrated security system in which member countries have an equal footing. Exclusive military and political alliances cannot solve problems. Russia has proposed multilateral talks to establish new security cooperation system at the East Asia Summit (EAS).

The situation on the Korean Peninsula has been seriously aggravated due to the nuclear and missile tests of North Korea. Pyongyang should refrain from reckless behavior. The actions of Pyongyang are incompatible with efforts to maintain strategic stability and the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the resolutions of the UN Security Council. Russia understands the need of North Korea to safeguard its sovereign rights to peacefully use its

nuclear power for its security and space exploration, but cannot accept the status of North Korea as a nuclear power. It should also be opposed by other countries.

The moves of certain countries to build up arms by taking advantage of the adverse conditions of the Korean Peninsula raise concerns. One of them is the plan by the U.S. to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles in South Korea.

The six-party talks should reopen. The agreement of September, 2005 should be implemented, and talks on a Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism should be resumed. To restore the six party talks, the parties involved should promise efforts to stabilize Northeast Asian security; the U.S. and North Korea should respect each other's sovereign rights and express their willingness to pursue peaceful coexistence and to normalize diplomatic ties; and a statement should announce a compromise measure admitting to the need for peaceful use of nuclear power such as the experimental light water reactor project as a preliminary measure to resume the six-party talks.

There is the possibility of "Peace Talks on the Korea Peninsula" to discuss a wide range of issues such as the establishment of diplomatic ties among the parties involved in the six party talks, the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, disarmament, inter-Korean economic cooperation and economic aid to North Korea. These talks may be joined in by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UN Security Council members, the two Koreas and countries that the two Koreas agree to as participants.

NAM Ju-hong

There is an indication that North Korea might be suffering from a serious problem in assessing and coping with risk.

The continued isolation of North Korea, systematic exits out of the North, defections of high ranking officials, extreme disorder due to the shortages of food, energy and foreign exchange, and confusions inside the power elite group are potential elements that might bring about the collapse of the Pyongyang regime.

China does not want the collapse of the North

Korean regime, nor for the North to opt for nuclear weapons. China has its own "Contingency Plan for North Korea" and holds on to the position that changes in the North should be discussed at the UN

Northeast Asia should brace for the worst situation and consider measures to change the North in line with UN sanctions. A pressing task for now is to set up a more concrete plan and strategy for risk management, not a pursuit of political rhetoric or vain slogans for unification.

KWAAK Young-hoon

Following the 1988 Olympics, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented the Tumen River development project jointly with Russia, China, North Korea, Mongolia and South Korea. The Silk Road development project, initiated at the same time, and the peace project for metropolitan centers to cope with increases in urban population paved the way for the establishment of the Silk Road Cities Cooperation Forum, comprising 53 cities.

Under the goal of regional peace and co-prosperity, the projects in the name of Unipeace City of District of Harmony and Reconciliation (DHR) and Lumbini of Peace and Harmony District (PHD) were implemented with the participation of citizens from diverse countries and proposed as environmental city projects for regional peace. This is a good example of the UN's role.

As communism has collapsed, capitalism now faces a crisis. The World Federation of United Nations Associations, which bridges the UN to civic society, should cooperate with civic organizations such as the Silk Road Cities Cooperation Forum and open the United Nations Association in North Korea to the ultimate end of peacefully realizing peace.

Bonian GOLMOHAMMADI

Given the European experience, regionalism and regional cooperation have in many cases failed and shows the limitations in solving the world's problems. So, multilateral cooperation is the best option for now.

The SDGs Goal 16, "Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies," stresses the importance of

peace regimes for development and emphasizes that solutions to social problems promotes development.

As Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon emphasized, narrow-mindedness and exclusive nationalism should be excluded, and that world citizenship based on understanding of world affairs, empathy with other people and new actions for change are essential for attaining peace in Asia.

PARK Heung-Soon

It is necessary to utilize a negotiation model similar to that used to solve the Iranian nuclear issue. A framework of five-party talks might be an alternative.

Policy Implications

- As the UN has great potential for significant role in strengthening peace and security in Northeast Asia, the region should more actively utilize it. Countries in the region can benefit from the enhanced role of the UN Secretary-General as an arbitrator of issues involving the Korean Peninsula, including the North Korean nuclear program. It is suggested that the UN Secretary-General visit North Korea at an early date.
- The greatest challenge East Asia faces now is the North Korean nuclear issue. To resolve this, a new attempt based on out-of-box thinking is needed to avoid "Einstein's insanity." It was suggested that the parties involved should consider a new negotiation format beyond the existing six-party talks formula, such as the Iranian model or the five party talks, or an expansion of the five or six party talks to eight-party talks which includes the UN and IAEA.
- Sanctions are necessary for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, and the UN and the international community should show solidarity over this. However, sanctions alone cannot bring about the desired results, and so it is necessary to bring North Korea to the negotiation table. Talks on regional security should also be joined by North Korea. It is desirable to build trust with discussions on soft issues before dealing with hard ones.
- At the same time, a concrete plan or strategy is needed to cope with the possible collapse of the North Korean regime or a change in the power structure of the North.
- The role of the UN is not confined to multilateral cooperation among the governments, and there have been many cases of success with the participation of civil society. Therefore, the UN is needed to closely cooperate with the global civil society to achieve the SDGs and successfully implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

