

Reengineering PEACE for Asia

The Jeju Forum has to date sought in earnest to formulate useful yet effective ways to achieve and sustain peace and prosperity for the ever-dynamic region of Asia. Over the years, however, Asia, as in other regions, has been facing an increasing array of security problems and non-traditional security challenges to maintaining peace and stability.

These problems and challenges include the following. First, they refer to the debris of the Cold War's demise. Various sources of inter-state conflicts formerly tightly contained during the Cold War era – such as the rise of territorial disputes and maritime jurisdictional clashes, and the eruptions of historical controversies – have resurfaced to threaten regional peace and stability in the 21st century.

Second, the ever-growing dangers of arms race, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, “space wars” and resultant security dilemmas are lurking in the region, further complicating Asia's fragile security landscape.

Third, the fast-evolving dynamics of geopolitics and great-power rivalries are also on the list as they tend to raise the level of tension in the region and limit the options available to regional states. The exclusivity question of “are you with us or against us” can only aggravate an already strategically competitive environment in Asia.

Fourth, the rise of artificial intelligence, online communications, and space technologies appear to cut both ways in making life more convenient and, at the same time – with unmanned weapons, cyber security, and “space wars” – rendering life more dangerous as well.

Fifth, the weakening of the neoliberal pillar of the international order appears to be an additional drawback on Asia's arduous search for peace and prosperity. The Brexit, the WTO on life support, the premature death of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the absence of an encompassing regional institution, and so on seem to contribute to a worsening situation in the region.

It is thus high time to re-engineer peace for Asia as neither the usual mode of dealing with peace nor simply playing with concepts are deemed any longer workable. More specifically, the task of re-engineering PEACE can be approached in the following five ways.

Pace and prosperity should be the priority for the region and regional states as conflict,

instability and war can only undo what they have been building and accumulating so hard over the last half century.

Energize the process of achieving and preserving peace and prosperity – it is high time to put new momentum on regional and sub-regional peace mechanisms, which have been stagnating for some time.

Alternatives must be actively sought after – the proven failures must not be repeated and new workable solutions need to be tried out boldly.

Cooperation is always better than competition. The region as a whole and regional states must seek cooperation (i.e., win-win solutions) rather than cost-attached competition or conflicts.

Eco-systems ripe for cooperative alternative for peace and prosperity in Asia must be actively cultivated among all the regional states in Asia.

The Jeju Forum has always pioneered in thinking and acting ahead in working out and sustaining peace and prosperity in Asia. This year, the Jeju Forum is ready to re-visit, rethink, and re-design the ways peace can be preserved for the region, thereby guaranteeing prosperity of the region.