

The Security Situation in East Asia and the Six-Party Talks

By Wang Fan

Assistant President of Foreign Affairs University

Since 2014, the situation on the Korean Peninsula has seen no emergency crisis, but a potential crisis and a crisis risk have not been eliminated. There are many reasons. A simple summary is: Firstly, a historical reason. The Korean Peninsula since the Korean War is divided into two countries, and their development is unbalanced. Both North Korea and South Korea have very strong aspirations for reunification. While security has shaped an asymmetric security structure due to historical reasons.

Secondly, inadequate security structure. Here there also exists an asymmetric security structure. Although it is formed by history, yet, objectively is targeted and exclusive, and has shaped the security dilemma and security concerns.

Thirdly, North Korea's program of nuclear weapons, which has formulated new security issues and the risk of nuclear proliferation.

Fourthly, a shortage of a more rational multilateral security mechanism. The national security of some countries is ensured at the cost of worries about national security by other countries; some countries have security safeguards among them, but other countries have non.

To solve security problems facing East Asia needs two methods: one is the guidance of a new security concept, and another is new security mechanism building.

I. Taking the New Security Concept for

Asia as an Important Guidance to Solve the Problem

At the 2014 CICA Summit, President Xi proposed a new security concept for Asia, providing an idea to settle the regional security issues having existed for a long time.

It has a consistent thinking, namely analyzing the theory of power politics from the whole and macroscopic perspective. The new security concept is about understanding of security, in fact is an analysis of zero-sum game concept of security at the expense of other countries. This new security concept is to base security on win-win and non-zero sum, and on sharing rather than confronting each other, and is to explore a new historical route to completely get rid of the security dilemma, and collectively pursue lasting stability. The newness of China new security concept, first of all, is transcending the cold war thinking, and abandoning the thought of pursuing security by confrontation. China holds that on the basis of mutual benefit and mutual trust, we establish cooperative relationship by transcending ideologies and social systems, and seek common interests and conflict resolution in cooperation. This new concept is a product to adapt to the developing and changing international situation.

Firstly, the awareness of comprehensiveness and complexity of security, traditional security and non-traditional security intertwined, and security interaction. Natural threats such as terrorism, epidemics, natural disasters and others and man-made traditional

threats all affect human beings. Only emphasizing the traditional security and ignoring the non-traditional security is an incomplete security concept.

Secondly, emphasizing cooperative security, common security: hand-in-hand cooperation, sharing interests, and sharing danger and security, emphasizing no one-sided security and local security, but seeking common security.

Thirdly, highlighting sustainable security, fundamentally getting rid of zero sum and competition, taking non-confrontational approach, and changing the traditional security mechanisms. The alliance system is an outdated product of the cold war, the cold war is brought to an end for many decades, but this system also lingers in the global security system, which is really unreasonable and unsuitable.

Of course, this process will continue for some time. Their parallel presence and mutual replacement will take place to a certain extent, this new security concept for Asia is compatible with the Asian reality, and has a strong guiding significance and practical feasibility. It abandons the power balance concept of the traditional realistic power politics, transcends the views of power politics of the zero sum game, with cooperation as the foundation, and mutual aid as the principle.

The security alliance system defended hard by the United States is the historical legacy after the Second World War. The United States still emphasizes its role in international peace maintenance, but completely ignores the system's boosting impact on regional hotspot issues and conflicts as well as structural damage. This system is favorable for the United States to maintain its global hegemony, so it will no longer take into account the security demands of the countries outside the alliance system. Damage by the U.S. alliance system to other countries' security is obvious, which lays

over-emphasis on locality than the whole. While China is in favor of the comprehensive multilateral security structure, from which most countries can benefit.

China advocates openness and inclusiveness. In the aspect of international responsibility, it also performs a major country duty. In the UN peacekeeping operations, China's contribution is the biggest, and in support of the development of the developing countries, China clearly expresses its welcome to them to take a ride. This is not only a growing generosity, but is a mind and a sense of responsibility by a major country. The conception and implementation of the "One Belt and One Road", and the establishment of the BRICS bank are not the traditional bloc-defined consideration or regional consideration, but ideas striving for bloc-free, trans-regional and global common development at higher level, and in a larger scope, which is unimaginable by an exclusive and monopolistic hegemony.

China's national security strategy has no clear-cut country-defined threat, but emphasizes making joint efforts to respond to non-traditional security threats. This is groundbreaking in the modern history of international relations since the birth of state for more than 500 years. Chinese security strategy is based on development and on common development. Strategically to guarantee inclusiveness and no man-made threat against other country. Win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum game concept is also integrated with the security strategy.

II. Taking a Multilateral Security Mechanism Building for the Future Direction of Development

Take the North Korean nuclear issue for example, to solve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is not exclusive solution of the nuclear issue, but is also a process of

establishment of a multilateral security mechanism. In other words, the Six-Party Talks mechanism must be resumed, and must contribute to promotion of multilateral security mechanism building under a new design.

Multilateral security mechanism on the basis of Six-Party Talks or the future Northeast Asian community based on the compartmentalization of alliance system in order to solve the security issue in East Asia has historical significance, but the security structure is not reasonable enough. The man-made division on security produced by the U.S.-led bilateral alliance system network also intensifies the sensitivity of some countries for their security, leading to difficult establishment of basic mutual trust on security. In the long run, if such structure cannot be properly resolved, it will lead to the possibility of confrontation by establishment of another alliance system. If this comes true, the Asian cold war will deepen in the structure. Fortunately, countries such as China try to avoid segmentation, confrontation of the cold war thinking in handling the Northeast Asia security issues, but promote establishment of an overall security architecture including all the relevant parties, change the unfair security situation that some countries have mutual protection under an alliance system while some other countries are lack of the basic guarantee of security mechanisms through the common and overall security assurance.

Therefore, it is necessary to improve the two functional roles of the Six-Party mechanism in guaranteeing security and abandoning nuclear program. Guaranteeing security and abandoning nuclear program are inseparable two functions. The nuclear issue is security mechanism issue. If North Korea is to

abandon its nuclear weapons plan, it must be connected with safety protection and nuclear assurance. This is the next step the Six-Party mechanism need to consider. The Six-Party Talks mechanism must realize the shift to the Six-Party cooperative security mechanism.

The existing Six-Party Talks mechanism is in trouble, but its roles and functions are still irreplaceable, the key-matter is to have new and innovative initiatives. In terms of security commitments to provide security to North Korea, the Six-Party mechanism can still play a constructive role. The current North Korea doesn't trust any single country's promise, it can be only in the multilateral way to influence North Korea, and bilateral way is very difficult to since bilateral effect is more limited than multilateral effect. The issue can be mitigated but cannot be fundamentally solved. Therefore, it can only be effective through multilateralism and restricted commitments to each other. Security assurance must take the lead in realizing the irreversibility, which can safeguard irreversibility of nuclear abandoning. But irreversibility of security safeguard must have multilateral constraints.

The Six-Party mechanism must have a long-term arrangement for the security mechanism building in Northeast Asia. Now Northeast Asia still continues the security structure of the cold war, the cold war security structure and nuclear issues are interconnected. Therefore, to solve the nuclear issue should be tied with a new multilateral security mechanism together. Of course, considering the reality of the historical development of this region, a Six-Party security mechanism may coexist with the U.S.-ROK alliance for a long time.