

국제학술회의  
International  
Conference

# PEACE FORUM 2022

The U.S.-China Strategic Competition and Its Impact:  
Perspectives from South Korea, Japan and Taiwan

**미중 전략적 경쟁과 영향: 한국, 일본, 대만의 관점**

18<sup>th</sup> November 2022 | 14:00~18:00 (KST)

SGI Jeju Korea-Japan Friendship Training Institute / Online

2022. 11. 18.(금) | 14:00~18:00 (KST)

한국SGI 제주한일우호연수원

주최



SOKA University

후원



재단법인 한국SGI  
KOREA SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL



## 미중 전략적 경쟁과 영향: 한국, 일본, 대만의 관점

### The U.S.-China Strategic Competition and Its Impact:

### Perspectives from South Korea, Japan and Taiwan

18th November 2022 14:00~18:00(KST GMT+9)

Hosted by Kyungnam University

#### 14:00~14:30 Opening Ceremony

Greetings from the host	Park, Jae Kyu (President, Kyungnam University)
Opening Remarks	Suzuki, Masashi (President, Soka University)
Opening Remarks	Chao, Chien-min (Dean of the College of Social Sciences, Chinese Culture University)

#### 14:40~15:30 Session I "Perspective from South Korea"

Moderator:	Lee, Byong-Chul (Kyungnam University)
Presenter:	· US-China Competition and Impact on East Asia: Perspective from Korea Choi, Young Joon (Kyungnam University)
Discussants:	Koide, Minoru (Soka University) Huang, Rong-Yang (Chinese Culture University)

#### 15:40~16:30 Session II "Perspective from Japan"

Moderator:	Luckhurst, Jonathan (Soka University)
Presenter:	· The positive consequences of superpower détente: The case of Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973 Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)
Discussants:	Kim, Dong-Yub (University of North Korean Studies) Chia-yin Wei (Chinese Culture University)

#### 16:40~17:30 Session III "Perspective from Taiwan"

Moderator:	Yang, Philip (Chinese Culture University)
Presenter:	· US-China competition and implications on East Asia: Leader's narrative analysis Wang, Shun-Wen (Chinese Culture University)
Discussants:	Shin, Bong-kil (University of North Korean Studies) Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)

## Resume of All Participants

### ❏ **Kyungnam University**

#### **Choi, Young Joon (Kyungnam University)**

Dr. Choi, Young Joon is Assistant Professor at Kyungnam University's Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, South Korea. He joined the Ministry of Unification in 1992. He worked in various areas including dialogue between the South and North, information analysis on North Korea, economic cooperation with North Korea, etc. He was Deputy Minister (Unification Policy) in 2019, and Vice Minister of Unification in 2021.

#### **Kim, Dong-Yub (University of North Korean Studies)**

Dr. Kim, Dong-Yub is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of North Korean Studies and the Director of North Korean Nuclear Issue Center at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies (IFES), Kyungnam University. He served as a Director of Research at the IFES, Kyungnam University from 2016 to 2021.

He holds B.A. at the Republic of Korea Naval Academy, and an M.A. in International Relations at the Korea National Defense University. He has received a Ph.D. in North Korean Studies (Military & Security) at the University of North Korean Studies. He had a successful 20-year career in the ROK Navy before retiring as a commander. Previously, he had served as a North Korea specialist at the Ministry of National Defense taking part in several military talks between North and South Korea.

His academic interests focus on North Korean military, North Korean nuclear issues, Northeast Asian security, peace regime, and arms control.

#### **Lee, Byong-Chul (IFES, Kyungnam University)**

Dr. Lee Byong-Chul is Assistant Professor at Kyungnam University's Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, South Korea. His research interests include North Korean denuclearization, nuclear non-proliferation and policies on the ROK-US relations. His recent research has focused primarily on "What explains variation in South Korea's commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation regime?"

Before joining the IFES, Dr. Lee worked as an aide to the Presidential Senior Secretary for Foreign and National Security Affairs and served as foreign and national security policy planning staff member at the Presidential Office of South Korea from 1993 to 1999. He also served as a special aide and policy planning secretary to the Speaker of National Assembly from 2015 to 2016. He previously worked as a senior policy researcher at the Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control (KINAC). Currently, he works as a non-resident fellow at the Nuclear Research Institute for Future Technology and Policy, Seoul

National University.

He received a Ph.D. in North Korean Studies from Korea University. His op-ed pieces and comments have appeared in The New York Times, 38North, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Yale Global, Project Syndicate, The South China Morning Post, among other publications. Professor Lee has been an Opinion columnist for The Kyunghyang Daily Newspaper.

#### **Shin, Bong-kil (University of North Korean Studies)**

Dr. Shin, Bong-kil is a Chair Professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, Korea. He had been a career diplomat for almost four decades and had served long time particularly in Asian countries like China, Japan, India and Myanmar. His service includes Deputy Chief of Mission at the Korean Embassy in Beijing, China, Ambassador to Jordan and Ambassador to India. He also had served as President of Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) and Secretary General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) of China, Japan and Korea. He has been following up North Korean Issues for a long time and visited North Korea a number of times during the KEDO mission in 2002. He studied at the Seoul National University and got a Ph.D. at the University of North Korean studies.

## **Soka University**

#### **Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)**

Dr. Ulv Hanssen, Ph.D. in Japanese Studies (Free University Berlin), is an assistant professor at Soka University's Faculty of Law. His current research is centered on Japan-North/South Korea relations and Sweden-North Korea relations. His latest publication is "Hate on the Bookshelves: Explaining the Phenomenon of Anti-Korean Hate Books in Japan" (co-written with Eun Hee Woo), Social Sciences Japan Journal, August 2022.

#### **Koide, Minoru (Soka University)**

Dr. Minoru Koide, Ph.D. in International Relations (the University of Southern California), is the Dean of the Graduate School of International Peace Studies, Soka University. His research area includes international relations in Asia, Japanese foreign policy, and South Korea-Japan relations. His latest publication is "The Japanese Discourse on Japan-South Korea Relations under the Moon Jae-in Government," Soka Hogaku (Departmental Bulletin of the Faculty of Law, Soka University), March 2022.

#### **Luckhurst, Jonathan (Soka University)**

Dr. Jonathan Luckhurst is Professor of International Relations at the Graduate School of International Peace Studies of Soka University in Tokyo. A British academic with a doctorate from the University of Essex, his publications include the books 'G20 Since the Global Crisis' (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and 'The Shifting Global Economic Architecture: Decentralizing Authority in Contemporary Global Governance' (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), plus several academic journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. Prof. Luckhurst's research focuses on the

G20 and global governance networks, as well as linkages between global economic governance and policy challenges such as COVID-19, the SDGs, and the environment. He participates in the G20's official Think 20 forum as a task force member and policy brief author; and is a member of the Global Solutions Initiative expert working group on 'Rethinking Multilateralism and Global Governance.'

## ❑ Chinese Culture University

### **Chao, Chien-min (Chinese Culture University)**

Dr. Chien-min Chao is a Distinguished Chair Professor at the Graduate Institute for National Development and Mainland China Studies, and also Dean of the College of Social Sciences at the Chinese Culture University. Between 2008 and 2012, Dr. Chao served as a Deputy Minister for the Mainland Affairs Council in the ROC government. Dr. Chao was a visiting Distinguished Professor at the George Washington University and visiting teaching professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Chao has written and edited thirteen books, including *Decision-making in China: Leadership, Process and Mechanism* (in Chinese) (Taipei, 2014). The book has won him a distinguished award here in Taiwan and has been translated into Korean in 2018 by 學古房. Other publications include *Introduction to China and Cross-Strait Relations* (Taipei, 2010); *Lee Teng-hui's Legacy* (M.E. Sharpe, 2002); *Rethinking the Chinese State* (Routledge, 2001); *Analysis to Contemporary Chinese Politics* (Taipei, 1997); *Authoritarian Politics* (Taipei, 1994). Dr. Chao has also produced over 100 articles in academic journals such as the *Asian Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, the *China Quarterly*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Issues & Studies*, *Chinese Law and Government*, *Zhongguo dalu yanjiu*.

### **Huang, Rong-Yang (Chinese Culture University)**

Dr. Rong-Yang Huang is Professor & Chair at the Department of Public Administration and Management, Chinese Culture University. He also served as 2022 President in the Taiwan Association for Schools of Public Administration and Affair (TASPAA), and a senior member of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). Dr. Huang was awarded Ph.D degree in Government at the University of Essex in 2004. His areas of research focus on Public Management, European Union and regional integration. Huang's recent publications and researches include *Public Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice* (Taipei, 2020), and *Local and Regional Governance in the UK: History, Institutions and Change* (Taipei, 2019).

### **Wang, Shun-Wen (Chinese Culture University)**

Dr. Shun-Wen Wang is a faculty member of Department of Political Science at Chinese Culture University. He received his Ph.D in Political Science from National Taiwan University. His main research interests lie in the fields of the Middle East (especially focus on Turkey and Iraq), Cross-Strait Relations, and conflict resilience and has published some papers related to these subjects. Dr. Wang got projects from the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was also a visiting scholar at AVIM center in Ankara under MOFA's project "Turkey's reaction on the Chinese 'One-Belt-One-Road' policy". His recent research project

is related to Turkish foreign policy on Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Current course offerings range from International Relations, BRI and RCEP, Islam and the Middle East Politics, and post-conflict reconstruction.

**Wei, Chia-yin (Chinese Culture University)**

Dr. Wei, Chia-yin (Judy) is an assistant professor of political science department in Chinese Culture University. She had been an assistant research fellow and a post-doc research fellow in Center for Hufu East Asia Democratic Studies in National Taiwan University between 2016 and 2021. She got her Ph.D. of political science in University of South Carolina in 2016. Her major is comparative politics, and she specializes in economic voting, political communication, political behaviors, elections, democratization, and area studies. Her dissertation explores the effect of information sources (especially the media) on retrospective and prospective national economic evaluations and their subsequent voter choice in comparative perspective. The results show that consolidated democracies are most strongly associated with national economic evaluations. Moreover, she has been interested in Hong Kong politics since she was a graduate student in Institute of National Development in National Taiwan University. Her MA thesis explores the evolution of political parties and groups after the handover in 1997. Her journal article- "The Strategic Coordination under Quasi-SNTV: A Case Study of Hong Kong" was published in Japanese Journal of Political Science in 2017. It centers on the strategic behaviors of parties, political groups, candidates, and voters in proportional representation in Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong. She is currently working on the media effects on presidential election in Taiwan, impacts of Sunflower Movements in Taiwan and Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, and the influence of quality of governance on support for democracy.

**Yang, Philip (Chinese Culture University)**

Prof. Philip Yang is a well-known professor, commentator, and former governmental official in Taiwan. He was former deputy secretary-general of the Taiwan's National Security Council and former Minister of Governmental Information Office, a cabinet member of Taiwanese government. Prof. Yang is currently a chair professor at the College of Social Science of the Chinese Culture University, and an adjunct professor of International Relations at National Taiwan University, and he is also the Chairman of the International Committee of the Taiwan Federation of Industry and Commerce, and advisor for the National Association of Industry and Commerce. In addition, Prof. Yang is an influential scholar in Asia-Pacific economic and security issues and Japanese studies. He was a Fulbright Scholar and received the prestigious Nakasone Yasuhiro Award in 2008. Prof. Yang publishes extensively in English, Japanese and Chinese, including US-China Trade War and Tech War (2019) Rise of Asia (2018) and History of Japan-Taiwan Relations 1945-2020 (University of Tokyo Press, 2021). He received his B.A. and M.A. from National Taiwan University and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.





# Session I

## Perspective from South Korea

Moderator: Lee, Byong-Chul (Kyungnam University)

Presentation: · US-China Competition and Impact on East Asia:  
Perspective from Korea

Choi, Young Joon (Kyungnam University)

Discussant 1 Koide, Minoru (Soka University)

Discussant 2 Huang, Rong-Yang (Chinese Culture University)



# US-China Competition and Impact on East Asia: Perspective from Korea

Choi, Young Joon (Kyungnam University)

## 1. Introduction

The relations between U.S. and China that started in a formal way with President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972 were smooth until the Clinton administration. During the period, China pursued opening and renovation based on America-backed engagement policy, and it culminated with Chinese membership in WTO in 2001. China developed into a world top manufacturing country, and the U.S. also enjoyed stable growth with a low level of inflation partially due to cheap imported goods from China. War on terrorism had President Bush spent tremendous resources in Middle East, and financial crisis incurred by Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy played a triggering role to cast doubt on America's leadership and capability as the world leader country. On the other hand, China emerged as world No. 2 country in all aspects. It was around this time that U.S.-China relations began to change.

In 2013, then new Chinese President Xi visited the U.S. and proposed to President Obama 'new type of great power relations', which showed a dramatic image of China on the rise and America on the wane. China's foreign policy principles have evolved from "Hide our capabilities. Bide our time. Never claim leadership." under President Deng through "China's peaceful rise and development" under President Hu and finally to "Chinese Dream" by President Xi. China, then, put forward the Belt and Road initiative as means of realizing the dream. The U.S. didn't stand still. President Obama declared 'Pivot to Asia' that was followed by President Trump as Indo-Pacific Strategy to hold China in check. President Trump waged a trade war against China using tariffs and enlarged the war fronts in technologies, exchange rates, and intellectual assets. Recalling "President Nixon once said he feared he had created a 'Frankenstein' by opening the world to the CCP (Chinese Communist Party)", Pompeo, then Secretary of the State, argued that Washington and its allies should adopt more assertive approach to China. (Brunnstrom and Psaledakis, 2020). President Biden is in line with his predecessors in keeping pressing China although he sophisticatedly displaced a harsh Trump style 'America first' with close consultation with allies and stressed importance of cooperation with China in the realm of non-proliferation, climate change, and health

issues. (The White House, 2022)<sup>1</sup> The rivalry between the U.S. and China for securing supply chains of raw materials and cutting edge middle parts has been getting more intense.

It is rational to expect that the competition for the best between U.S. and China will continue for a considerable time. (Byun, 2016) The problem is that the U.S. and China are sure to make great efforts to foster a world order that works for one but works against the other. The other nations in this process are likely to be pressured for a choice. Against this backdrop, countries need to expect possible impact of the U.S.-China rivalry on them and establish their strategies to secure their national interests. To do so from the Korean perspective, this article first discusses distinctive situations of Korea and then look into the effect of the strategic competition between G2 in terms of security, economy, and denuclearization of DPRK.

## **2. Characteristics of Korea**

Characteristics of Korea (hereafter abbreviated to ROK, Republic of Korea) refers to the identity of ROK as a country that has been formed and developed in history. (Chun, 2019) First, ROK is the only divided nation. After World War 2, Germany was divided into four parts as a penalty for causing the inhumane war against humanity. In Asia, the Korean Peninsula was divided although it had suffered Japanese colonial rule for 36 years and fought for the Allies. Division made the security issue of ROK more complicated. Unlike the other nations, ROK came to have an additional security threatening factor other than hostile foreign countries, North Korea. (Hereafter abbreviated to DPRK, Democratic People's Republic of Korea) For ROK, peace on the Korean peninsula is critical. Experience of the Korean War and DPRK's nuclear ambitions are fertile land for internal ideological conflicts on ROK's policies toward DPRK. Second, memories of tragic history are running in the vein of people of ROK that they fell victims to geopolitics. Intrusions from the ancient Chinese empires at their power transitions, Japanese invasion in 1592 where then Joseon dynasty was sandwiched between Ming dynasty and Japan, pillages by world powers at late period of Joseon, and the Korean War and division with the advent of the Cold War are real cases of sacrifice of ROK by power politics. Third, ROK is one of the top trading nations with China being 1<sup>st</sup> importing country of its products and the U.S. the 2<sup>nd</sup>. (Park, 2021) With rare natural resources ROK achieved initial stage of economic growth through processing trade strategy and then developed into an advanced economy with relative strength on semi-conductor, IT, and automobiles that are technology-driven industries. The three distinctive

---

<sup>1</sup> "The PRC, by contrast, is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to advance that objective," (p. 8)... "Heightened competition between democracies and autocracies is just one of two critical trends we face. The other is shared challenges—or what some call transnational challenges..." (p. 9.) "On one track, we will cooperate with any country, including our geopolitical rivals...to address shared challenges....On the other track, we will deepen our cooperation with democracies and other like-minded states" (p.12.)

features are also functioning as conditions affecting or confining ROK's strategic options amid the intense competition between the U.S. and China.

### **3. Impact of the Rivalry on ROK's Security**

#### **< Major Trends of U.S.-China Competition for Military Domination >**

The U.S. has been conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations on an almost regular basis in the South China Sea, Taiwan Strait, and East China Sea where sovereignty over the waters are in dispute. The purpose of the operations is to send a clear signal that the U.S. would not acknowledge China's claim and show America's firm will to check China in Indo-Pacific area.

The U.S. is also strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and supporting military buildup of its military alliance partner. President Obama confirmed that America's commitment to protect Japan includes Senkaku islands (Chinese name, the Diaoyu Islands) under the security treaty. The U.S. has also been putting in diverse efforts to encourage military collaboration between ROK and Japan. On September 30<sup>th</sup> the U.S., Japan, and ROK exerted joint military drill in ROK's East Sea in response to recent DPRK's series of ballistic missile launches. And the Pentagon Press Secretary added that "the exercises also demonstrate the deep strength of our trilateral relationship..., which is resolute against those who challenge regional stability." (Vergun, 2022) ROK had not participated in this type of trilateral military exercise since 2017 in which the three nations conducted joint salvage exercise in Jeju island of ROK. It was the U.S. that played an important role in signing the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) between ROK and Japan and dissuaded ROK from leaving the bilateral intelligence-sharing pact in 2019 for deterioration of the relations with Japan. (Park and Yun, 2016; Kim, 2019) America considers better relations between its two allies in East Asia critical to hold China in check.

President Trump pulled out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 2019 after accusing Russia for its violation of the pact by stealthily deploying forbidden missiles in Europe. He later demanded that not only Russia but China should be included in a new pact. (BBC, 2019. August 3.) President Biden formed Quad the members of which have strategic stakes in the relations with China. AUKUS is another form of trilateral military partnership that was established under the current U.S. leadership. America is also known to plan to upgrade the THAAD system in ROK. The Biden Administration is also increasing its sales of arms to Taiwan following historical visit of Pelosi, Speaker of the House, to the focal point in U.S.-China tensions.

China developed the notion of island chain for its maritime security against the U.S. The first island chain refers to the line linking Kyushu, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, and South China Sea, while the second line is from Japan, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, through Micronesia, and to Palau. (Lee and Park et al., 2020) China now proposes the third line ranging from Hawaii via Samoa in the South Pacific to New Zealand, which goes far beyond the East China Sea. (Cho, 2020)

China's goal is to block an American fleet within the first island line based on

A2 (Anti/Access) strategy. China's military strategy within the second line is AD (Area Denial) in order to interfere with free of navigation operation of an U.S. fleet. (Cho, 2020) China also conceptualized the core interests consisting of state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity, national reunification, etc, and defies any country if it sees part of them infringed. (Zhaokui, 204) Investing huge resources in the military, China has been making efforts to catch up with the U.S. Deployment of Chinese stealth fighters and series of Dongfeng missiles, stockpiling of nuclear arsenals, and construction of military bases on and around the Paracel islands and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea are among those means for military buildup. There is a growing worry about Chinese military-civil fusion strategy in which People's Liberation Army (PLA) has a full access to all the R&D projects by state-run and private companies and universities.

China also strengthens its relations with Russia as demonstrated by the Vostok 2022 (East 2022), a large scale joint military exercise that took place in Russia's far east region and the East Sea in September this year. (The Guardian, 2022. September 1.) It was notable that the drill was held while the tensions between Russia and the U.S. were high due to Ukraine War, thereby showing Beijing-Moscow strong military partnership. Russia is not the only strategic partner of China in East Asia. China has been acting as a patron nation of DPRK suffering from the accumulated UN and U.S. sanctions that were imposed mostly around 2016 and 2017 following its serial nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches.

#### **< Impacts on Security: ROK's Perspective >**

U.S.-China Competition for Military Domination in indo-Pacific region restricts strategic latitude of ROK that is a linchpin to U.S. and, at the same time, is heavily dependent on China for trade. The U.S.-ROK alliance is so-called iron-clad and China is ROK's No.1 export and import country. U.S.-China rivalry gives ROK hard time making choices regarding complicated issues involving G2. In 2016 when ROK decided to deploy a THAAD system in its territory, China instantly retaliated. The retaliation has been far-reaching and stubborn and inflicted massive damages on ROK. ROK may face the similar difficult situation soon with regard to the planned upgrade of the THAAD system.

Heightened tension between the two giants leads to increases in military expenditures in this region. For ROK encircled with world powers, fierce competition for military dominance poses serious security concerns and reminds it of the tragic past. Japan, for example, is departing far away from its exclusively defensive posture and trying to emerge as a country that can go to war. The ratio of Military expenses to GDP of ROK reached 2.64% in 2022 government budget. Under the leadership of President Moon, total military budget jumped higher by 36.9% than that of 5 years ago. (Gil, 2022)

Another worry is that ROK may get stuck in a complicated and expanded rivalry between U.S.-Japan alliance and China-Russia military partnership. As U.S.-China rivalry becomes acute, it reduces strategic autonomy of both South and North Korea. Then, the centrifugal force of U.S.-China competition will align the South in U.S.-Japan alliance and the North in China-Russia team, ending up a harder group rivalry:

U.S.-Japan-ROK vs China, Russia, and DPRK. In this situation, peace-making efforts between two Koreas will be more difficult and the division on the Korean Peninsula will persist.

Any sign of establishing an alliance among U.S., Japan, and ROK will cause deep split of public opinion in ROK's politics, because it means ROK has to stand at the forefront against China. If the U.S. seek to deploy intermediate range missiles in ROK's territory, for example, ROK should bear the brunt of the conflict between the U.S. and China.

Last but not least, U.S.-China conflict on Taiwan threatens ROK's security, also. In time of emergency in Taiwan, if a certain mission is given to U.S. Forces stationed in ROK, it would mean a change of status quo on the Korean Peninsula. Without mentioning of security vacuum in the face of DPRK, a nuclear armed state in a practical term, the Korean Peninsula may find itself in the middle of turbulence.

#### **4. Impact of the Rivalry on ROK's Economy**

##### **< Major Trends of U.S.-China Competition for Economic Superiority >**

President Trump argued that America had been in serious trade deficit due to unfair practices and policies of its trade partners and vowed to rectify the trade order. In 2018, he signed a Presidential memorandum targeting China's economic aggression that later laid a ground to impose high rates of tariffs on Chinese imports. (Herman, 2018) The next year he also took series of measures to drive out Chinese IT companies including Huawei and ZTE from the American market by banning the U.S. government and later private companies from buying their products for the national security concerns. U.S. Treasury also designated China a nation manipulating currency in 2019, applying more pressure on China. (U.S. Department of Treasury, 2019) President Biden is putting more emphasis on Supply Chain issues based on the concept of national economic security. Initiatives such as Economy Prosperity Network (EPN), Clean Network, and Chip 4 are designed to create groups of economic partnership with nations that can be trusted, share democratic values, and pose no security worries. The U.S. is also inviting regional partners to Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), growing the body to check China. Last year, Washington successfully launched Build Back Better World (B3W), another initiative with the other members of G7 for infrastructure development for developing countries, to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative. In Biden's era, U.S. approach to China in economic battle field evolves into a systematic, institutionalized, and cooperation-based strategy.

China, in turn, played a leading role in establishing Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that was planned to support its Belt and Road initiative. Among the member states are India, Russia, Germany, ROK, Australia, and France. Premier Li Keqiang in May 2015 proposed 'Made in China 2025' plan. It is an industrial policy to develop China into the world best hi-tech powerhouse, erasing an old image of the cheap labor-intensive world factory. While engaging in a tit for tat in the trade war with the U.S., China developed and pursued its own economic initiatives to counter American strategy to keep China in check. President Xi put forward 'Dual Circulation' initiative. Dual circulation refers to two types of



market, domestic market (internal circulation) on one hand, and export markets (international circulation) on the other hand. China seeks to be transformed from an export-driven economy to a balanced economy with sufficient growth in domestic demand. By doing so, China desires to make its economy more resilient and achieve sustainable growth in the face of turbulent and challenging global surroundings. China also leading the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world largest FTA in terms of population and GDP of member states to counter American movement to boycott China.

### **< Impact on Economy: ROK's Perspective >**

The U.S.-China rivalry in economy negatively affects ROK's economy because basically it undermines a global free trade order that is most favorable to trading nations. At the core of the competition is denial of the rival country. Therefore, it is apt to lead to prioritizing national interests, leaning to protectionism in international trade, and pursuing a bloc economy rather than worldwide free trade spirit that has been backed up from a viewpoint of economic efficiency. (Jang, 2022) The economic warfare between Washington and Beijing then would make world trade less predictable and lower trade volumes across the globe, which will cast gloom over trading nations like ROK. If the U.S. bans Chinese imports, ROK's exports to the U.S. will also significantly decrease because China is the most importing country of ROK's intermediary goods, and companies of ROK in Chinese territory cannot export to the U.S. either. (Lee, 2021)

If ROK agrees with the U.S. to deny China, then it will unavoidably go through a very difficult situation where supply chain of crucial material and middle parts gets into serious trouble as already seen in the case of Urea solution and rare earth element. If ROK joins Chip 4, a U.S.-led semiconductor alliance targeting China, it would have to risk losing its biggest export market (60%) of the product, China.

Even if ROK cooperates closely with the U.S. in a way that is in favor of Washington in this economic warfare, worries will not disappear that Seoul is vulnerable to U.S. potential unilateralism as vividly shown by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). In spite of series of massive investment decisions in the U.S. by ROK's tech Giants including Samsung and SK Hynix, Biden administration ruled them out from the list of the U.S. government subsidy. (Clayton, 2021)

Of course, there are cases where ROK gains benefits by participating in a U.S.-led economic alliance if conditions below are met. First, ROK's export increases as the alliance counties rule out China and diversify their sources of imports. In this case, however, the portion of the increasing export to the other countries should be larger than that of the shrinking export to China. Second, Chip 4, for example, should give ROK a good chance to keep technological gaps away from China that is hot on the trail of ROK in industries of semiconductors, cars, and ships. But the second case also needs premises that national interests of the participating countries are well coordinated and that cooperation among them is guided in a way that a synergy effect will benefit all the members. Third, whether an alliance or an initiative, it needs considerable time to work as planned. Differences in industrial structure and technological levels of member nations should be also carefully



reviewed.

### **5. Impact of the Rivalry on Denuclearization of DPRK**

In 2017, when the U.S.-China rivalry was still at its initial stage and DPRK's nuclear provocations were at its highest, China agreed to impose U.N. sanctions on DPRK. The U.S. and China cooperated for the denuclearization of DPRK for a short period. But, soon, President Trump argued that China "may be exerting negative pressure on a deal because of our posture on Chinese trade." (Huang, 2018) The Biden Administration said DPRK's nuclear issue fell in the category of cooperation with China and expected Chinese support. Amid rising tensions on the issues relating to Taiwan between Washington and Beijing, it became more difficult to find common ground on DPRK's nuclear issue. The Biden administration has not offered any specific deal to DPRK although it said it would pursue a gradual and practical approach that was different from that of President Trump, which was a clearly positive message to DPRK. Since the imposition of the sanctions in 2017, China has sided with DPRK, emphasized America's responsibility to lead the negotiation, and called for Washington's active involvement with DPRK. Rather, China and Russia proposed a lift of the U.N. sanctions for humanitarian purposes. (Radio Free Asia, 2019) And the two countries vetoed any proposals of additional sanctions following DPRK's missile launches that were prohibited by earlier U.N. Security Council Resolutions. The U.S. and China seems to take DPRK's nuclear issue as subordinate under fierce rivalry between them, making use of it as a card against each other to secure superior strategic position. (Yu, 2018) From China's perspective, the more intense the rivalry becomes, the higher goes up DPRK's strategic value for them. The U.S. also focuses more on containment of China than on denuclearization of DPRK. DPRK's provocations, in part, have provided good excuses for deploying THHAD and holding military exercises among the U.S., Japan, and ROK at sea that is adjacent to China. In this regard, the U.S.-China competition, at least until now, is thought to negatively affect the denuclearization of DPRK.

### **6. Conclusion**

U.S.-China rivalry poses new challenges to every nation, but they are more complicated and problematic to ROK that is featured with a territorial division, and memory of sacrifice due to power politics, and a world leading trading country. It is in this regard that the ROK government has been prudent and hesitant to take an easy solution in an all-or-nothing approach. Rather, it sees U.S.-China confrontation from a conciliatory perspective; it sets high value on the alliance with the U.S. and regards its strategic partnership with China as important at the same time. ROK's experts in international studies are not on the same page. Some supports the government position saying it is realistic and pragmatic. (Kim, 2018) Others criticize the government arguing that the government position is nothing but a lack of strategy because it will result in only a makeshift in time of critical decision. (Hyun, 2021) Both views are worth careful listening to. But, there is a need to ask what the pertinent question is; "What are the relevant course of action for peace and

prosperity of the world?” rather than “On which side ROK should stand?” Many countries being pressed to make a choice between the U.S. and China should be encouraged to closely and unitedly cooperate not to let the rivalry of G2 make the world less secure, unequal, and unfair.

## References

- Brunnstrom, David and Daphne Psaledakis, 2020. "Pompeo urges more assertive approach to 'Frankenstein' China," Reuters, July 24.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-usa-china-pompeo-idUKKCN24O30Q>  
(2022/09/21)
- Byun, Chang-keun, 2016. "The U.S.-China Rivalry and ROK's Strategy," Strategy for Unification, Vol. 16, No. 3: 193-216. (Korean)
- Cho, Kyug-keun, 2020. "Change of Security Environment of East Asia and Security of ROK – focusing on Analysis of Military Expenditures and Strategies," Strategy for Unification, Vol. 20, No.3: 157-190. (Korean)
- Chun, Bong-Keun, 2019. "Search for ROK's Diplomatic Strategy as a country locked in U.S.-China Rivalry," Korea National Diplomatic Academy Policy Study Series 2019-3. (Korean)
- Clayton, James. 2021, "Samsung chooses Texas as site of new \$17bn chip plant," BBC News, November 24. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59342015>  
(2022/10/25)
- Gil, Yunhyung, 2021. "Next year's military budget to be 55.22 trillion won, 4.5% higher than last year," Hankyoreh newspaper. August 31. (Korean)  
<https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/defense/1009831.html> (2022/10/30)
- Herman, Steve, 2018. "Trump Signs China Trade Measure," VOA news, March 21.  
<https://www.voanews.com/a/trump-china-looming-trade-war/4309277.html>  
(2022/10/28)
- Hyun, In-taek, 2021, "War for Hegemony between U.S. and China and Survival Strategy of ROK," New Asia. Vol.28. No. 2: 57-69. (Korean)
- Jang, Incheol, 2022. "Economic Security is a Logic of U.S.-China rivalry...Efforts are needed for benefit- maximization," Hankook-ilbo, July 7. (Korean)  
<https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/A2022070716030000189>, (2022/09/24)
- Kim, Gang-nyung, 2018. "Developments of U.S.-China Relations: Pending Issues and Suggestions," Korea and International Society. Vol. 2. No. 2: 89-130. (Korean)
- Kim, Sarah, 2019. "Decision to leave GSOMIA is blasted in Washington," Korea JoongAng daily, August 27.  
<https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2019/08/27/politics/Decision-to-leave-Gsomia-is-blasted-in-Washington/3067278.html> (2022/10/26)
- Lee, Kwan-se, Park, Won-keun, Kim, Dong-yup, Lee, Wang-hi, Choi, Ji-hyun, Lee, Sang-man, Cho, Sung-ryul, Kim, Han-kwon, and Lee, Hye-jung. 2020. U.S.-China Strategic Competition: What are the problems and How to handle them? (Seoul, Korea: IFES, Kyungnam University) (Korean)
- Park, Jaehan and Yun, Sangyoung, 2016. "Korea and Japan's Military Information Agreement: A Final Touch for the Pivot? The long-pending General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) is finally signed, to Washington's relief," The Diplomat, November 24.  
<https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/korea-and-japans-military-information-agreement-a-final-touch-for-the-pivot/> (2022/10/26)

Park, Young-seok, 2021. “The 10 biggest customers for ROK’s exported goods,” Yonhap News, January 10. (Korean)  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/GYH20210119000100044> (2022/10/25)

Radio Free Asia, 2019. “China, Russia Propose Lifting Sanctions on North Korea for Humanitarian Purposes at U.N. Security Council,” December 17.  
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/korea/nk-china-russia-unsc-draft-resolution-sanctions-12172019172522.html> (2022/10/27)

U.S. Department of Treasury, 2019. “Treasury Designates China as a Currency Manipulator,” Press release, August 5.  
<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm751> (2022/11/03)

Vergun, David, 2022. “Allies Conduct Naval Defense Exercises Following DPRK Missile Launches,” DOD News, October 6.  
<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3182609/allies-conduct-naval-defense-exercises-following-north-korea-missile-launches/>  
 (2022/11/01)

The White House, 2022. “National Security Strategy,” October 12.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> (2022/11/02)

Yu, Hyun-jung. 2018. “The impact of U.S.-China Trade War on DPRK Nuclear Negotiation,” Institute for National Security Strategy Report, 2018-12: 1-11. (Korean)

Zhaokui, Feng, 2014. “What are China’s core interests?” Foreign Policy, October 21.  
<https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/what-are-chinas-core-interests-2> (2022/10/30)

# US-China Competition and Impact on East Asia: Perspective from Korea

## -Discussion Comments

Koide, Minoru (Soka University)

I would appreciate Professor Choi Young-jun's thoughtful and informative analysis of the impact of the Sino-US rivalry on South and North Korea. I would agree with Professor Choi's three points that characterize the position of South Korea in the context of the US-China competition. First, because of the division of the Korean peninsula between North and South, South Korea should take more security interests into account in its policy making toward the US and China. Second, the historical experience of successive foreign dominations over the Korean peninsula makes South Korea sensitive to the possibility of getting victimized by major power politics. Third, as China and the US are the largest and the second largest trade partners respectively for South Korea, the intensified Sino-US trade frictions put South Korea in an acute dilemma position. Overall, siding with either the US or China is not a good strategic choice for South Korea. Hedging with both powers, i.e. carefully avoiding a situation of making an exclusive choice between the US and China, would be a prudent policy for South Korea as well as most other countries in the world today.

Having agreed with most of Professor Choi's arguments, I would like to talk of three points that make South Korea's policy making toward the Sino-US rivalry particularly difficult. First, unlike Southeast Asian countries which can rely on a regional organization, ASEAN, as a collective buffer to deal with diplomatic pressures from China and the United States, South Korea often stands alone in its dealings with the two superpowers. The absence of a group of neighboring countries that share geopolitical interests with South Korea results in fewer hedging options toward China and the United States. Thanks to the ASEAN mechanism, for example, the four Southeast Asian countries (the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, and Malaysia) engage in territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea while avoiding the concentration of Chinese pressure on any particular one ASEAN member state. (And, of course, the absence of a regional group with similar geopolitical interests applies to Japan too)

Second, because of its geographical location, the South Korean security cooperation with the US makes China nervous even if South Korea demonstrates that the main target of its alliance with the US is the nuclearized North Korea. The Chinese blunt intervention into the South Korean decision of deploying US made

THAAD missile system was a clear example. From a viewpoint of a Japanese Korea-watcher who regularly follow South Korean news media, China's way to express its diplomatic requests to South Korea is sometimes overly direct compared with China's diplomatic communication with Japan, which is relatively remote from China with separating sea lanes.

Third, South Korean policy making toward North Korea, Japan, and the United States are respectively influenced more by the struggle in its domestic politics than by the calculation of its international circumstances. The South Korean policy toward North Korea has an aspect of national unification process as well as that of security/defense policy. South Korea-Japan relations incur fierce domestic debates on issues and residues of the Japanese colonial rule. The security alliance with the US is a major source of domestic division in South Korea between those who regard it as indispensable for its national security from the North Korean threat and those who regard it as burdensome to its independent reunification policy toward the North. South Korean domestic divisions on North Korea, Japan, and the US make it difficult to predict the South Korean position in the future Sino-US rivalry specifically when we look at the fact the current South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was elected with a very narrow margin (although many other democracies in the world, including the United States, provide a similar difficulty in prediction).

# US-China Competition and Impact on East Asia: Perspective from Korea

## -Discussion Comments

Huang, Rong-Yang (Chinese Culture University)

The author, Dr. Choi, clearly introduces and explains the confrontation and competition of the US-China powers in Asia from the perspectives of historical evolution, trade relations and geopolitics. The paper goes from the post-Cold War period of normalization of relations, to the trade confrontation of the 1990s, the war on terrorism after 2000, to the recent rise of China, the launch of the Belt-Road Initiative, the US pivot to Asia manifesto and Indo-Pacific Strategy, and finally the two sides have recently discussed on issues as technology and supply chains, climate change, public health during Covid-19 pandemics. etc. It seems to me, the interaction between the two countries in recent years seems to have brought the world into a "New Cold War" era – in this case, the other nations in this stage are likely to be forced for a choice. However, there seems to be little room for pragmatic and ambiguous strategies in the two blocs, as Kenneth Waltz describes in the "structural realist" international environment, where it is difficult for small countries to make their own strategic choices, whether South Korea, Japan or Taiwan.

Dr. Choi illustrates the particular factors influencing South Korea's choice of role in the current East Asian situation from three perspectives: first, hostile relations and direct threats from North Korea; Second, the long history of sacrifice due to power politics, and third, the close trade relationship with China and the United States. This paper analyzes the predicament of South Korea from the security impact and economic impact of the Sino-US confrontation on South Korea, and the impact on North Korea's denuclearization, and seeks feasible national strategies.

From a security point of view, South Korea, as a long-term military ally of the United States, seems to be facing a dilemma to develop closer economic, trade and political relations with China, and defense spending has also increased due to the increasingly fierce confrontation between China and the United States, as U.S.-China rivalry becomes acute, it reduces strategic autonomy of both South and North Korea. What was originally a "small triangle" of South Korea-China-United States on the Korean Peninsula, then, became U.S.-Japan-South Korea alliance and the China-Russia-North Korea team, this, setting up harder group rivalry. Even a possible conflict between China and Taiwan would endanger South Korea, making it feel like South Korea is in the frontier of conflict.

Economically, South Korea is on the front line of the Sino-US trade war, and the impact is even greater! The confrontation between China and the United States in trade and chip technology has undermined the order of global trade, which is undoubtedly an unbearable dilemma for South Korea, a major export-dependent trading country: to join hands with the United States and lose 60% of the Chinese market's foreign exports? Or strengthen cooperation with China, which may also lead to a large number of South Korean products produced in China being banned from entering the United States. Ironically, the fair trade that the United States has emphasized for many years now seems become more barriers and obstacles! A new protectionism has emerged, and the economic globalization emphasized since the 1990s will become a phantom?!

Finally, the paper talks about the confrontational tensions between China and the US, which makes the United States pay more attention to blocking China's expansion, and ignores the progress of North Korea's denuclearization, and from this perspective, the Sino-US competition in East Asia makes North Korea more strategically valuable and regional security more insecure.

Instead of asking "on which side South Korea will stand?" the author ask "what are the relevant course of action for peace and prosperity of the world?" In conclusion, the paper suggests countries should be encouraged to closely cooperate not to let the rivalry of G2 make the world less secure, unequal, and unfair. According to a public policy scholar, public choice theory can solve the above problem of choosing policy options, but when it comes to the competition for national survival or global strategy, the answer does not seem so simple! Looking back at Taiwan's front edge of the confrontation between China and the United States, is it an opportunity? Or on the brink of a dangerous crisis? In fact, there are quite divergent views internally, and it is a pleasure to read Dr. Choi's article and analysis, and at the same time, in response to the suggestion of this study, it may be safer to pursue a more diverse multilateral relationship, after all, in peacetime, it depends on strategy, yet, it depends on wisdom in troubled times!



# Session II

## Perspective from Japan

Moderator:	Luckhurst, Jonathan (Soka University)
Presentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The positive consequences of superpower détente: The case of Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973</li></ul>
	Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)
Discussant 1	Kim, Dong-Yub (University of North Korean Studies)
Discussant 2	Wei, Chia-yin (Chinese Culture University)



# The positive consequences of superpower détente: The case of Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973

Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)

To the reviewer

Please let me apologize for submitting a paper of such a sloppy and incoherent nature. As you soon will discover, this paper is mainly about Sweden-North Korea relations and not really about US-China relations, which is the topic of the conference. I have nonetheless tried, with little success, to make the two topics compatible. This has sometimes felt as impossible as drawing a triangular circle. You will no doubt feel like you are reading two separate papers forcefully crammed together. I am sorry about that.

Please also understand that this is a very early draft of the paper and many of the sources I wish to use have not been read yet. Most of the sources employed here come from Swedish parliamentary debates about North Korea. I am mainly interested in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sweden and North Korea in 1973, but here I have tried to analyze this from a perspective of superpower conflict. I am painfully aware of the paper's shortcomings, but I would be deeply grateful for any feedback on its content. Thank you very much.

## Introduction

In light of the deteriorating US-China relations over the past decade, this article argues that a situation of superpower hostility is highly undesirable not just due to the obvious military dangers it presents, but also due to its adverse effect on the various bilateral relations of smaller states. In short, superpower hostility tends to divide regions into supporters of one or the other superpower, preventing friendly relations between states that do not necessarily have any cause for animosity other than their ties to different superpowers. A superpower can demand of its dependent states that they refrain from economic activity with states supporting the other superpower. The establishment of bloc economies not only rips apart regional relations of long-standing interdependence and causes numerous economic

difficulties, it can also lead to politically hostile relations between states that originally did not see each other as enemies.

Conversely, a sudden improvement in the relations between the superpowers can open up for regional cooperation between former enemies or enable the establishment of new bilateral relations that were impossible or unthinkable in the pre-détente period. Just like a deterioration of superpower relations can have a number of unforeseen *negative* consequences, superpower rapprochement can have a number of unforeseen *positive* consequences. The détente period in the 1970s is a good example of this. After more than two decades of extremely dangerous hostility, the 1970s saw an improvement in Washington's relations with Moscow as and Beijing which indirectly spurred improvements in the relations between a host of other states, such as Japan and China, North and South Korea, and, unexpectedly, North Korea and Sweden. This article will focus on the latter bilateral relationship, as North Korea-Sweden relations constitute an understudied case in the Cold War détente period. The greatest significance this case holds for the bigger analysis of superpower relations, is as an example of the fact that superpower détente often has positive consequences of an unexpected nature. This implies that such situations of détente between the world's most powerful states often have positive ramifications far beyond the obvious fact that the potential for military conflict decreases.

As relations between the US and China turn colder, we should remember that this deterioration, if left unchecked, will bring about negative effects we cannot foresee, but also that an improvement of these relations will bring about positive effects that are hard to spot from our current vantage point.

## **The Cold War**

After having been allies in World War 2, the US and the Soviet Union began seeing each other as enemies with incompatible ideologies as soon as the new postwar period began. The relationship was filled with distrust, slander, ridicule and spying, but, due to the deterrence effect of nuclear weapons, not direct violence. This state of affairs – hostility without military conflict – was labelled a 'Cold War'. This superpower animosity had wide-ranging consequences far beyond the borders of the US and the Soviet Union. The whole world was effectively forced to take a stand with one or the other superpower. Neutrality was an option in theory, and an especially attractive one for the former colonies in the global south, but it was extremely difficult to carry out in practice as the superpowers would put enormous political pressure on any state that had not yet picked a side.

The case of Sweden is informative in this regard. Despite belonging geographically, culturally and politically to the sphere of Western Europe – a sphere that developed a strong dependence on the US in the postwar period – Sweden had remained

neutral in international conflicts since the days of the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. After World War 2 in which Sweden had been neutral, the country did accept funds from the Marshall Plan and thus strengthened its footing in the US-led capitalist bloc, but on the other hand, it chose to maintain its formal policy of neutrality also in the Cold War, as evidenced by its decision to stand outside the newly established NATO framework.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Cold War, Sweden's neutrality policy would be flexible enough to allow for economic and political alignment with the capitalist bloc, but firm enough to keep Sweden outside of this bloc's military alliance. Sweden's neutrality policy did not always coincide with American interests, most notably evidenced by Sweden's controversial support for North Vietnam – America's enemy in the Vietnam War.<sup>3</sup> Sweden's decision to grant political asylum to Americans who resisted the war strongly irked the US Government. In 1969, the bilateral relations between Stockholm and Washington would reach a crisis point as Sweden took the highly controversial step of opening diplomatic relations with North Vietnam, becoming the first Western country to do so. Although Sweden rhetoric and action during the Vietnam War temporarily shook its relations with the US, the two countries have been aligned on most issues in the postwar period. Due to its ostensibly neutral foreign policy, Sweden might have been slightly more independent from American interests than most Western European states, but the pressures of the Cold War nonetheless ensured that Sweden could not alienate itself too much from the US. As such Sweden's foreign policy, like that of all other Western European states, was severely contingent on the ebbs and flows of superpower relations. Possibilities opened up when superpower relations were warm and closed when they were cold. This dynamic is particularly evident when analyzing Sweden's postwar relations to the Korean Peninsula.

### **Sweden's role in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNCS)**

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, Sweden predictably decided to remain neutral. However, this neutrality only meant that Sweden stayed out of the fighting. It did not preclude Sweden from condemning North Korea's full-scale attack or, perhaps more significantly, operating a field hospital in Busan. In line with the neutrality principle, Sweden's field hospital treated wounded soldiers from both North and South Korea. After hostilities were ended by an armistice in 1953, the UN set up the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) tasked with supervising both sides and reporting breaches of the Armistice Agreement (this mainly refers to the introduction of external personnel and weapons into both Koreas, as this is forbidden by the agreement). In accordance with the Armistice

---

<sup>2</sup> In response to Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022, Sweden applied jointly with Finland for NATO membership in May the same year. If accepted, this marks the end of Sweden's 200 year long policy of neutrality.

<sup>3</sup> Logevall, Fredrik (1993) 'The Swedish-American conflict over Vietnam', *Diplomatic History* 17(3): 421-445.

Agreement, the UN Command (UNC), which was led by the US and had fought on South Korea's side, and the Korean People's Army (KPA) and the Chinese People's Volunteers Army (CPVA), which had fought on North Korea's side, would each nominate two neutral nations (nations that had not participated in the fighting) to the NNSC. The UNC nominated Sweden and Switzerland while the KPA/CPVA nominated Czechoslovakia and Poland. While ostensibly neutral nations, these nominations very much reflected the Cold War divide between the capitalist and communist blocs. All four states accepted the nominations and thus Sweden's engagement on the Korean Peninsula was extended far beyond the expectations in 1950. However, given Sweden's strong national identity as a neutral power, this task was seen as appropriate and welcomed by most Swedes. The mission would, however, soon run into difficulties in the rapidly intensifying Cold War.

On paper, the NNSC had the authority to inspect ports, airports and railway stations on both sides. In reality, however, its mandate became severely limited due to the Cold War structure. The Czech and Polish delegates approached their mission in a highly ideological manner, blocking inspections in the North while insisting on thorough ones in the South. Furthermore, continuous armistice violations on both sides demonstrated the Commission's powerlessness. Both Koreas severely restricted the NNSC's movement. Internal disagreement and failure to ensure armistice observance quickly relegated the NNSC's role purely to a symbolic one. It symbolized the desire for peace, but it could not do much to bring it about.

By 1954, the South Korean Government had had enough of Czech and Polish obstructionism in the NNSC. It regarded the delegates from these countries as North Korean spies and wanted to dissolve the NNSC and well as abolish the armistice agreement due to numerous unchecked North Korean violations. The US was sympathetic to both these positions at the time. The South Korean Government began instigating massive and violent anti-NNSC protests in all the country's major cities. In protests between August and December 1954, nine million people reportedly participated.<sup>4</sup> While most of the anger and violence, which included both gunshots and explosions, were directed at the Czech and Polish delegations, the situation became increasingly dangerous also for the Swedes and the Swiss delegations. For security reasons, NNSC members began using helicopters when moving around in South Korea. In May 1956, the UNC, following South Korean requests, declared that it no longer would acknowledge paragraph 13(c) of the armistice agreement and in June 1957 it made a similar declaration about paragraph 13(d). These two articles stipulated a prohibition on the entry of reinforcing troops (13(c)) and reinforcing arms (13(d)), so the UNC's unilateral abolishment of the paragraphs effectively eliminated the NNSC's *raison d'être*. The NNSC was formally kept intact as an institution, but without a responsibility nor authority to

---

<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Jonsson (2009) *Peace-Keeping in the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Commissions*, KINU Research Monograph 09-15, Korea Institute for National Unification, Seoul, p. 79.

monitor the movement of troops and arms, its role was relegated to a purely administrative one. The failure of the NNSC's original monitoring task is most manifestly demonstrated by the fact that the US introduced nuclear weapons in South Korea in 1958.

The Korean War had given Sweden an unexpected role to play on the Korean Peninsula, but the deterioration of superpower relations quickly emasculated this role. Both the Soviet Union and the US violated the armistice agreement by transferring large amounts of weapons to their respective client states. Military alliances between South Korea and the US in 1954 and between North Korea and the Soviet Union and China in 1961 ensured that the two Koreas became even further embedded into the Cold War divide. The 1950s and 1960s saw frequent and deadly skirmishes between North and South Korea so it is impossible to speak of a true armistice despite the existence of an agreement to that effect.

Although the deteriorating security situation on the Korean Peninsula and the NNSC's unpopularity in South Korea gave Swedish policy makers some political headaches, the impotence of the Supervisory Commission was not seen as a major problem in Stockholm. In fact, serving a role as neutral supervisor, its toothless nature notwithstanding, was a boon for the Swedish Government as such a role seemed to embody Sweden's longstanding national identity as neutral and was therefore generally welcomed by the Swedish people. Despite its many failures on the ground, the NNSC became politically important for the Swedish Government due to its usefulness in constructing and reinforcing the neutral identity of Sweden. With some cynicism, one could say that Sweden's engagement in the NNSC was more important for national identity (re)construction than for actually creating peace on the ground.

For Sweden's Foreign Minister at the time, Östen Undén, Sweden's nomination as an NNSC party seemed to legitimize the country's oft-criticized choice of neutrality: "For Sweden, the Armistice Agreement means that we receive a couple of special tasks, delegated to us in our capacity as a neutral country. So neutral countries can in certain situations be useful for the world, to the contrary of what some people think".<sup>5</sup>

### **The left-wing push for Swedish recognition of North Korea**

Despite the neutral rhetoric, Sweden chose to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1959 while refraining from doing so with North Korea. The reaction among the Swedish people to this diplomatic discrimination was, however, mostly

---

<sup>5</sup> Radio speech by Östen Undén on June 9, 1953. Quoted by C.-H. Hermansson (Left Party Communists), Swedish Parliament, December 2, 1969: 39. All translations from Swedish are my own.

one of indifference. There were few notable reactions apart from the establishment of a small Sweden-DPRK Friendship Association which, at any rate, quickly fell into inactivity. However, this indifference would begin to change as the Swedish public opinion turned against America's intensified warfare in Indochina. As mentioned earlier, Sweden-US relations soured over Vietnam. Not only was the Swedish public overwhelmingly opposed to America's actions, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SDP) Government – arguably the most left-leaning in all Western Europe – also outspokenly denounced the American war and even gave asylum to American war resisters. Bilateral relations would reach a nadir when Sweden recognized communist North Vietnam – America's enemy – in 1969, becoming the first Western European state to do so. While the SDP Government's anti-American stance was popular, albeit controversial, it also gave hope to forces on the far left that Swedish recognition of North Korea might be within the bounds of political possibility. If diplomatic relations with North Vietnam were acceptable, why not recognize North Korea? It is during the Sweden-US diplomatic fallout over Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s that we begin to see leftwing pressure on the government to recognize North Korea.

In a 1967 parliamentary debate, the Left Party Communists (LPC) asked the government why Sweden, as a neutral state, could recognize South Korea but not North Korea. The government representative replied that Sweden's universal principle for state recognition was the existence of a reasonable degree of independence and a reasonable degree of stability.<sup>6</sup> However, this justification was deeply problematic because by 1967, it could be argued that North Korea fulfilled these conditions better than South Korea which was both highly dependent on the US and ridden by social unrest. In 1960, large-scale riots had forced President Syngman Rhee to resign and flee to the US and in 1961 General Park Chung-hee took power in a military coup. Anti-government protests occurred frequently and were often violently subdued by the military. North Korea, in contrast, was pursuing an independent policy based on the principles of *Juche* (self-reliance) and was virtually free of social unrest as President Kim Il-sung had completely monopolized power in his own hands. If independence and stability were the criteria for diplomatic recognition, Pyongyang appeared to have a better case than Seoul. This was not lost on radical LPC parliamentarians who began pointing out the hypocrisy of the SPD Government's stance and demanded diplomatic recognition of North Korea. In 1969, the Sweden-DPRK Friendship Association was re-established after many years of inactivity. It became an active proponent of normalized relations with North Korea. Soon after its reopening, the association received an official visit by a North Korean cultural delegation whose members met with Swedish politicians, labor unions and youth organizations.<sup>7</sup> In 1970, North Korea even managed to

---

<sup>6</sup> Torsten Nilsson (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, December 7, 1967:50.

<sup>7</sup> *Korea Information* no. 3, 2019, p. 3. (Magazine published by the Sweden-DPRK Friendship Association)



establish an information office in Stockholm, primarily aimed at establishing diplomatic ties, and eventually ties to the Swedish business community. This further contributed to raising the interest in normalization on the public level. From 1969 to 1973, the LPC issued motions each year calling for recognition of North Korea. These motions put the government in an awkward position because they pointed out glaring inconsistencies in the position of the Swedish government. Not only were the independence and stability criteria fulfilled more convincingly by North Korea than South Korea, but it was also hypocritical for a government that prided itself on principled neutrality to recognize only one side of a divided Korean nation.

In 1971, the LPC's Gustav Lorentzon, who would some years later become the secretary of the Sweden-DPRK Friendship Association, argued in the Swedish Parliament that:

“According to the Government's declarations on the principles for the establishment of diplomatic relations, two requirements are placed on the states in question: that the state in question has a reasonable degree of independence externally, and that it also displays reasonable stability internally. Both these criteria are met by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which the Government has refused to recognize. On the contrary, these criteria are not met by South Korea, a state which the Government has established diplomatic relations”.

When backing up this observation, Lorentzon gave examples that were characteristic of the communists' Manichean worldview: “In South Korea you will find the most brutal poverty, a mass poverty that only can exist with the help of comprehensive police terror, under whose protection the US imperialist monopoly corporations are allowed to exploit the area as well as the great masses of people”.<sup>8</sup> North Korea, on the other hand, was an independent, orderly and modern state which even “Sweden could learn a lot from”, Lorentzon argued.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the LPC's strong ideological bias, its argument that diplomatic discrimination between North and South Korea was not becoming of an allegedly neutral state probably resonated beyond far-left circles.

### **The Swedish Government's opposition to normalized relations with Pyongyang**

Why did the Swedish Government for a long time refrain to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea despite a growing interest for such relations on the public level? And why did it finally change its stance and recognize North Korea in

---

<sup>8</sup> Gustav Lorentzon (The Left Party Communists), Swedish Parliament, May 6, 1971: 79.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

1973? The answer to this question can be found in the changing nature of superpower relations of the time.

When pressed on the North Korea question, the Swedish Government would consistently say that recognizing North Korea could jeopardize Sweden's NNSC mission. Given the national importance of this mission, a normalization with Pyongyang was not seen as worth the risk. The Government was often vague about why normalization with Pyongyang would jeopardize Sweden's NNSC mission, but government representatives sometimes said that a recognition of North Korea would change Sweden's neutral status which was the precondition for Sweden's nomination to the NNSC in 1953. The SDP's Stig Alemyr put it bluntly in a 1969 interpellation: "It is an expression of our neutrality to not change the status we had when the United Nations gave us the mission to participate in the supervisory commission in Korea".<sup>10</sup> This was clearly a flawed position because Sweden had already changed its neutral status when it recognized South Korea in 1959. If anything, a normalization with North Korea would restore Sweden's neutral status on the Korean Peninsula. The LPC had a field day in picking apart this argument:

"It is absurd to claim that we would change our status if we were to recognize North Korea today, considering that we actually recognized South Korea many years after having obtained the UN mission to participate in the supervisory commission".<sup>11</sup>

And:

"When a country is divided, it isn't an expression of neutrality policy to recognize the southern part with a capitalist regime, but refuse to recognize the northern part which has a socialist regime. Why on earth have we made that choice? Why are we recognizing the southern part but not the northern? Why do we recognize the capitalist state but not the socialist one? What does this have to do with neutrality policy?"<sup>12</sup>

It is impossible that the unreasonableness of the Swedish position was lost on the government. In all likelihood, government representatives knew very well that its one-sided recognition of the South was incompatible with neutrality politics. It therefore seems likely that its refusal to recognize North Korea was a result of stern warnings from Washington and Seoul that such a recognition would mean the end of Sweden's role in the NNSC. Although the SDP insisted that its non-recognition of North Korea was not due to "any consideration or fear of reactions somewhere

---

<sup>10</sup> Stig Alemyr (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, December 2, 1969: 39.

<sup>11</sup> Gunvor Ryding (The Left Party Communists), Swedish Parliament, 3-6 March, 1970: 9.

<sup>12</sup> C.-H. (The Left Party Communists) Hermansson Swedish Parliament, December 2, 1969: 39.

abroad”,<sup>13</sup> other statements seem to indicate that the decision had much to do with such fears of foreign reactions. Most tellingly, Sweden’s Foreign Minister, Torsten Nilsson, stated in 1967 that: “If we were to recognize North Korea, I am convinced that the task we have in the supervisory commission for North and South Korea would be complicated to a considerable degree. There is actually direct information to this effect”.<sup>14</sup> The Swedish Foreign Minister thus claimed to have “direct information” to the effect that recognition of North Korea would complicate Sweden’s role in the NNSC. Although Foreign Minister Nilsson did not specify where this direct information came from, it is very likely that it came from Washington and/or Seoul. The US represented the UN Command that had fought in the Korean War and was a signatory to the 1953 Armistice Agreement which stipulated the establishment of the NNSC. Since it was the US that had nominated Sweden and Switzerland as NNSC members, it was presumably also the US that could terminate their engagements. Although South Korea was not a party to the Armistice Agreement and therefore did not have the formal right to kick Sweden out of the NNSC, it was a sovereign state, so if it decided to ban NNSC members from its sovereign territory, something it strongly contemplated in the mid-1950s, it would be virtually impossible for the NNSC to function in a meaningful capacity. Given that the US and South Korea are the only veto players on Sweden and Switzerland’s NNSC participation, it appears very likely that Foreign Minister Nilsson’s “direct information” was a threat from Washington and/or Seoul that a normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea would lead to a Swedish expulsion from the NNSC.

In the late 1960s Washington and Seoul would have had every reason to oppose a Swedish normalization with North Korea as tensions on the Korean Peninsula were so high that the period is sometimes characterized as “the second Korean War”. Border violations and skirmishes were virtually everyday occurrences. The period also includes some of the most dramatic incidents of the Cold War such as the January 1968 Blue House Raid in which 31 North Korean commandos infiltrated South Korea in a failed assassination attempt against South Korean President Park Chung-hee. In the same month the American navy ship USS *Pueblo* and its 83 crewmembers were captured by the North Korean navy causing a major diplomatic crisis between the US and North Korea. Both these incidents had the potential to elicit military responses that could have spiraled into a new Korean War. Luckily that did not happen, but North Korea’s increased aggression made both Washington and Seoul extremely skeptical of any positive overtures towards Pyongyang at this time.

Given the importance that the Swedish Government attributed to its participation in

---

<sup>13</sup> Stig Alemyr (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, December 2, 1969: 39.

<sup>14</sup> Torsten Nilsson (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, December 7, 1967: 50.

the NNSC as a marker of neutrality, the threat of being expelled from this institution probably deterred the Swedish Government from pursuing closer relations with North Korea. It is true that Sweden had acted in an almost imprudent manner vis-à-vis the US over the Vietnam War, but in that case opposing the US actually consolidated the Swedish neutrality identity. This is because it demonstrated to people in Sweden and abroad that Sweden dared to criticize both the Soviet Union (which it frequently did) and the US. However, if Sweden was kicked out of the NNSC, it would lose one of the most concrete manifestations of its national identity of neutrality. The benefits of North Korean relations did not outweigh the costs of losing a precious identity marker.

### **Détente in the 1970s opens new possibilities for Swedish-North Korean relations**

Due to the extreme Cold War tensions of the 1960s any kind of rapprochement between states on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain was next to impossible. However, in the early 1970s signs of détente began to appear across the divided world. West German Chancellor Willy Brandt initiated his Ostpolitik towards East Germany in 1970, the US and the Soviet Union agreed to the historic Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in 1972, and in the same year, US President Richard Nixon travelled to Beijing to meet Chairman Mao Zedong for normalization talks, something which in turn enabled a restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and China. This positive development of Cold War détente also affected inter-Korean relations. In 1972 Red Cross delegations from both North and South Korea held several rounds of meetings in what constituted the first official talks between the two Koreas. The official goal of the talks were reunions by divided families. These talks paved the way for the July 4 North-South Joint Communiqué of 1972 which stipulated basic points of agreement on the reunification issue. This positive development, only four years removed from the Blue House Raid, spurred hope on the Korean Peninsula and beyond that a new era of inter-Korean rapprochement was in the offing.

As a result of the North-South talks, the US Government began to relax its tough line on third party engagement with North Korea. In a conversation with South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong-shik in February 1973, US Secretary of State William P. Rodgers stated that “it has become more difficult in the past year as North Korea has moderated its hostility to continue to tell other countries to desist from contacts with North Korea”.<sup>15</sup> In a subsequent conversation between Foreign Minister Kim and US Assistant Secretary of State Marshall Green, the latter told

---

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum From John Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, March 1, 1973, Office of the Historian, accessible at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve12/d233>.

the former that although the US did not encourage other countries, such as Sweden, from going as far as recognizing Pyongyang, South Korea should “reconsider whether it should continue to spend so much political capital trying to dissuade other governments from opening contacts with North Korea”.<sup>16</sup> In their conversations with Foreign Minister Kim, both US representatives argued that third country contact could have a moderating effect on North Korean behavior. State Secretary Rodgers even went so far as to say that “we now believe that the more exchange and trade [with North Korea] the better”.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly a shift in North Korea policy had taken place in the US after the North-South talks in 1972. These talks occurred in a wider context of détente which the US hoped to advance after humiliating setbacks in Indochina. From the above, it seems clear that the US stopped or at least softened its policy of dissuading other countries to engage with North Korea. This made it possible for Sweden and others to pursue normalized relations with Pyongyang without fear of diplomatic retaliation from the US. It is unlikely that South Korea changed its position considerably on the diplomatic normalization issue because President Park Chung-hee would frequently state that it was “naive” to believe that détente had come to the Korean Peninsula despite such tendencies elsewhere.<sup>18</sup> But declassified documents from 1973 by the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) stated that South Korea “may be resigned to the fact of impeding Swedish recognition”.<sup>19</sup> Despite disliking the development, South Korea probably no longer saw Swedish recognition of North Korea as sufficient grounds for expelling the country from the NNSC. Sweden apparently judged that the new and more positive American position and the begrudgingly accepting South Korean position were sufficient to guarantee Sweden’s continued role in the NNSC even after a normalization with Pyongyang.

As late as 1969, the Swedish Foreign Minister had stated bluntly that diplomatic recognition of North Korea was “out of the question”.<sup>20</sup> But the first hint of a change in position came after the North-South talks in 1972. As mentioned earlier, the LPC issued motions calling for recognition of North Korea every year between 1969 and 1973. The Government typically tasked the multipartisan Foreign Affairs Committee with drafting a response to the LPC motions. In 1969 and 1970, the committee advised against recognition based on concerns that it might jeopardize Sweden’s role in the NNSC. Based on this advice, the Government rejected the LPC

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Park Chung Hee (1979) *Korea Reborn: A Model for Development*, Prentice-Hall Inc.: New Jersey, pp. 48-49.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from UNCURK Principal Secretary Ahmet H. Ozbudun, March 23, 1973, *Wilson Center Digital Archive*, accessible at <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117584>.

<sup>20</sup> Torsten Nilsson (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, March 26, 1969: 13.

motions. In 1971, it rejected the motion without asking the Foreign Affairs Committee's advice. However, in 1972, the Foreign Affairs Committee's response struck a remarkably different tone than before. Citing "positive developments" in Korea, the committee stated that:

"When the tensions in Korea decrease, the neutral commission's work can be seen in a new perspective. In a situation of reduced tension, the argument that hitherto has existed against Swedish recognition of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would become void. [...] The Government should pay close attention to these developments and take initiative to a Swedish recognition of the Democratic People's republic of Korea when the time to do so is considered suitable."<sup>21</sup>

After this U-turn by the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Swedish Government changed its position on the normalization question. Its new argument was that, due to Korean détente, the need for the NNSC as a peacemaking institution was not as great as it had been during more tense times, so there was no need to attribute as much importance to it as before. In other words, even if Sweden were kicked out of the NNSC, this was no longer not such a big deal due to the mood of détente in Korea. This argument was made explicit by the SDP's Kai Björk just before the normalization:

"It is true that our membership in the neutral supervisory commission in past years has been a substantial argument for caution and reservation in terms of relations with North Korea. But that argument has carried weight only in the context of a period of extreme tension between North Korea and South Korea in which the parties have not been able to talk with each other, and in which the neutral supervisory commission [...] has had a more interesting and meaningful function than it can reasonably be expected to have in a situation where the parties have decided to sit down and discuss mutual problems with each other. Since such a situation has occurred, the old argument about the supervisory commission has been weakened".<sup>22</sup>

This analysis was shared by Foreign Minister Krister Wickman:

"The Government has determined that a reevaluation of Sweden's relations to this state [North Korea] is justified. Sweden's participation in the neutral supervisory commission in Korea can no longer be given the same importance in this context as before".<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Utrikesutskottets betänkande [The Foreign Affairs Committee's considerations] no. 17, Swedish Parliament, November 30, 1972:17.

<sup>22</sup> Kai Björk (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, March 21, 1973: 49.

<sup>23</sup> Krister Wickman (The Swedish Social Democratic Party), Swedish Parliament, March 21, 1973: 48.



With decreasing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and a diminished threat of NNSC expulsion, normalization became possible. Sweden established diplomatic relations with North Korea on April 7, 1973, becoming the first Western country to do so. The other Scandinavian countries followed in quick succession. By 1975, Sweden had opened an embassy in Pyongyang and Swedish industrialists had formed extensive trade relations with North Korea, hoping to capitalize on an untapped market in a country that was desperate for Western technology and machinery. Unfortunately for the Swedish industrialists, their investments in North Korea began exactly at the time when the North Korean economy started stagnating. Lack of payments and accumulated debts on a massive scale unfortunately caused Sweden's business venture into North Korea to end in disaster. North Korea's debts to Sweden currently stand at 3.17 billion Swedish kronor (303 million euro), thus comprising almost half of Sweden's total amount of outstanding international claims.<sup>24</sup> Unsurprisingly, economic ties have been negligible since the business debacle of the 1970s.

But regardless of how poorly relations have developed after normalization, the point of this article has been to show that superpower détente can have many unexpected consequences of a positive nature. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Sweden and North Korea was a positive outcome as it created possibilities for cooperation and peace that did not exist before détente. That these possibilities ultimately did not fully materialize is beside the point.

## Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate how superpower détente can have positive outcomes far beyond its immediate security benefits. New partnerships and forms of cooperation become possible once states are released from Cold War dynamics that tie them to differing blocs. For Sweden, normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea was nearly impossible during the tense 1950s and 1960s. Even if Sweden was less tied to American interests than most other Western European states, superpowers almost always have leverage at their disposal that ensures that bloc members do not get too independent. In Sweden's case, this leverage was the NNSC which the US knew was important for Sweden as a marker of neutral identity. The threat of expulsion, explicit or implicit, kept Sweden compliant with American interests on the Korean Peninsula. Conversely, when the US position shifted to one more supportive of engagement with North Korea after the historic North-South talks in 1972, it became possible for Sweden to approach North Korea and eventually establish normalized relations. These relations were of course not an

---

<sup>24</sup> EKN Annual Report 2019, accessible at <https://www.ekn.se/globalassets/dokument/rapporter/arsredovisningar/en/ekn-annual-report-2019.pdf/>.

explicit objective of America's détente policy, but they were an indirect consequence of it.

This should serve as a reminder that the current deterioration of US-China relations will bring with it many of the same negative consequences that the worsening of US-Soviet relations did in the 1950s and 1960s. But this history also implies that an improvement of US-China relations has the potential to bring about a number of positive consequences of both a foreseen and an unforeseen nature. It is therefore incumbent upon us to reverse the dangerous spiral of hostility between Washington and Beijing.



# The positive consequences of superpower détente: The case of Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973 - Discussion Comments

Kim, Dong-Yub (University of North Korean Studies)

Sweden maintains the oldest diplomatic relationship between North Korea and the West. The study of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden must be a very meaningful topic in understanding and solving the past, present and future of the Korean Peninsula problem. Nevertheless, there are not many prior studies on the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden in 1973. Through this article, it was an opportunity to learn and think more about this interesting and meaningful topic.

The thesis of this article is very clear. The presenter argues that the normalization of Sweden-North Korea relations in 1973 was one of the positive outcomes of the superpower detente. Of course it's not wrong. But detente between superpowers is not the whole thing that makes relations between mutually hostile small and medium-sized countries work positively and lead to diplomatic relations. I would just like to add my personal thoughts on another factor in establishing diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden.

Diplomatic relations between countries are affected by the surrounding security environment and the structure of international relations. When changes such as establishing diplomatic relations or breaking up are considered results, there are countless factors that determine this and the process of progress is diverse. The analysis that normalization of Swedish-North Korean relations is the result of a detente between superpowers is an approach based on structure in international relations. These arguments are simple, clear and irrefutable. Despite the advantages of an explanation that devours everything, the structural approach is highly fateful. The external security environment surrounding the relevant countries can be viewed as an independent variable, but it is necessary to specify the independent variable as another determinant of the two countries that have established actual diplomatic relations. Regarding the drivers and processes of establishing diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden, it is necessary to combine consideration of the internal situation and intention of North Korea and Sweden.

In order to look at the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden in 1973, it is worth noting that diversification emerged in North Korea's

self-reliance diplomacy at the time. This is the diplomatic background of North Korea's pursuit of Western diplomacy. Since the beginning of the establishment of the regime, North Korea has relied on camp diplomacy between communist countries such as the Soviet Union and China, but since the mid-1950s, it has gradually moved away from existing foreign policies due to small- and medium-sized disputes. The change in foreign policy caused by the Sino-Soviet conflict led to North Korea's establishment of diplomatic relations with Sweden, which was carrying out anti-imperialist and neutral foreign policy at the time despite the Cold War.

Practical diplomatic relations between North Korea and the West began in the 1970s, but the approach to the West has already progressed a long time ago. In the 1950s, North Korea opened the door to relations with Western European countries by signing trade agreements at the private level, but there were many restrictions right after the Korean War. Meanwhile, in 1958, a private trade agreement was signed with Sweden. At the Fourth Party Congress held in September 1961, Kim Il-sung stated that he would develop economic and cultural exchanges with capitalist countries that wanted to establish friendly relations with North Korea, and as a result, in the 1960s, he first established diplomatic relations with third-world countries centered on non-aligned countries in the Middle East and Africa.

Through the 5th 3rd Party Congress held in 1971, North Korea embodied its globalized diplomatic logic to establish diplomatic relations with all countries in the world. In December 1972, when these foreign policies were formalized at the first meeting of the 5th Supreme People's Assembly, they were reflected in the socialist constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Kim Il-sung said, "We will also strive to establish national, political, economic, and cultural relations with capitalist countries that implement equal policies on the South and North of the Korean Peninsula."

The reason why North Korea turned to Western diplomacy in the 1970s can be found in the change in the internal and external environment of North Korea at that time. Externally, China's accession to the United Nations in 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, and the U.S.-China reconciliation mood are largely affected. However, there were various drivers as well as external security environments. One of the reasons is that there is an increasing need to strengthen diplomatic power to gain an upper hand in competition with South Korea in international organizations such as the United Nations at the time. Internally, the need to cooperate with Western capitalist countries to realize a new six-year economic development plan (1971-1976) is also mentioned. Meanwhile, the estrangement of relations with Eastern European countries after the Sino-Soviet conflict can also be seen as a factor that North Korea turned to Western diplomacy.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden was

officially established on April 6, 1973, when the Swedish government first requested the North Korean government to establish diplomatic relations and the North accepted it the next day. In fact, however, North Korea approached more actively. North Korea has long approached Sweden through progressive camps and companies in Swedish society to ask for diplomatic relations first. This was possible due to Sweden's social atmosphere and neutral diplomatic identity. From Sweden's point of view, establishing relations with North Korea is a gauge of Swedish society's perception of neutrality at the time. Sweden's neutral foreign policy was further strengthened in 1969 when Olof Palme of the Social Democratic Party took office as prime minister. Even before taking office, Palme participated in anti-imperialist and anti-war protests related to the Vietnam War and criticized the U.S. participation. Later, when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, it also participated in protests and advocated anti-imperialist neutral diplomacy enough to criticize the Soviet Union. This diplomatic color would have been a very important factor in enabling diplomatic relations with North Korea.

In addition, similar industrial structures in North Korea and Sweden may also have served as a meaningful incentive to establish diplomatic relations. Both North Korea and Sweden are countries where many underground resources are buried. Sweden has been developing its economy through primary industries using underground resources, but despite the fact that North Korea has many resources, its development was limited due to lack of technology. It is also a variable worth looking at that Sweden was a model country that could be of great help to North Korea.

The global security situation is rapidly changing as competition and confrontation between the U.S. and China intensified amid rapid changes since the end of the Cold War. For a peaceful future in Northeast Asia, U.S.-China relations should focus on cooperation, but the reality is not hopeful. Conflicts and worsening relations between the U.S. and China can lead to uncertainty in the future of Northeast Asia and can be an important factor that hinders peace and prosperity in the region. Amid the accelerating competition for hegemony between the U.S. and China, Northeast Asia needs a major shift in thinking toward peace. Korea needs more flexible strategic autonomy in the current Korea-U.S. alliance structure, given that both clear choices and ambiguous attitudes between the U.S. and China can create unnecessary misunderstandings.

In the unpredictable strategic competition between the U.S. and China, friendly cooperation between the two Koreas, the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia, and the establishment of a regional cooperation and security system in Northeast Asia will be the solution to solve the Korean Peninsula and regional problems. It is hoped that lessons can be derived from studies on the experience of establishing diplomatic relations between North Korea and Sweden during the past detente period.

# The positive consequences of superpower détente: The case of Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973 - Discussion Comments

Wei, Chia-yin (Chinese Culture University)

Professor Hanssen's paper centers on the Swedish-North Korean normalization in 1973 as a case study for the positive consequences of superpower détente. First of all, I applaud Professor Hanssen's effort to explore the Swedish-North Korean normalization in the Cold War détente which has seldom been analyzed. The positive aftermath of Swedish-North Korean normalization in post-Cold War era implies that superpower détente such as US-China may have positive outcomes. Moreover, the paper also demonstrates that the Cold War détente facilitated inter-Korean relations. These two points are quite significant. I have a couple of comments and suggestions for this paper as follows.

First, I suggest Professor Hanssen can substantiate the superpower (i.e. US-China) détente contributes to positive outcomes as is evident in Swedish-North Korean normalization. This paper delineates that the post-Cold War détente have influences on Swedish-North Korean normalization. However, the analysis of post-Cold War détente is kind of little and thus makes the argument a little weak. Is there a causal relationship between post-Cold War détente and Swedish-North Korean normalization? Does the Swedish-North Korean normalization have any implication for contemporary superpower relations such as US-China?

Second, it argues that the Cold War détente promotes North and South Korea relations. Here I raised one question. Is it possible that the superpower détente today (if any) facilitates cross-strait relationships? Cross-strait relationship has experienced extreme tension recently. How does the superpower hostility hinder cross-strait relationships? These questions deserve further exploration.

# Session III

## Perspective from Taiwan

Moderator:	Yang, Philip (Chinese Culture University)
Presentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· US-China competition and implications on East Asia: Leader's narrative analysis</li></ul>
	Wang, Shun-Wen (Chinese Culture University)
Discussant 1	Shin, Bong-kil (University of North Korean Studies)
Discussant 2	Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)



# US-China competition and implications on East Asia: Leader's narrative analysis

Wang, Shun-Wen (Chinese Culture University)

## 1. Introduction

US-China competition is a continuous variable to regional security in East Asia and Taiwan, especially after the invasion of Russia into Ukraine. Hong(2022) claimed that if the US maintains détente relations with China, no matter whether China has intentions on Taiwan or the South China Sea, it would be read by East Asian countries as “quasi-abandonment on this region. As President Joe Biden has emphasized to end “forever wars” for many times before(Alzawawy 2021, 25), will the regional security in East Asia become more unstable? However, with the outbreak of the Russian invasion, western countries seem to unite as in the Cold War, and the competition between democracies and autocracies is more apparent. Or, will a new Cold War in the world and East Asia? Therefore, it is vital to examine how the leaders from the US and China think of the recent and future world order.

Examining what the leaders want in their decision-making process is always challenging because of the lack of first-hand materials. Thus, analyzing their official talks and document as narrative analyzers do is a way for us to deduce their priorities. President Biden and Xi Jinping met virtually three times in 2021 and 2022 before and after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. These talks are good objectives for us to distinguish whether they have different discourses through context analysis. This paper will check narratives in the meetings. After analyzing leaders' narratives, it will analyze the implication to East Asian countries and Taiwan, and finally, with some suggestions.

## 2. Role theory and Narrative/discourse<sup>25</sup> analysis

### 2.1 Role theory

An actor in the social environment would be aware of his position and situation and behave "properly" to respond to others. Constructed by language and actions,

---

<sup>25</sup> To avoid confusing readers, we must explain the differences here. This paper combines “narrative”(text) and discourse(oral) because it examines the “talks” of leaders and documents at the same time.

the agent learns how to perform his role through many given role conceptions (Holsti 1970, 238-9; Bengtsson et al. 2012, 94). Also, the state has its role based on its social position in the international system and expectations from other states and citizens. As decision-makers in foreign policy, they have to interact with different domestic and international actors (Harnisch et al. 2016, 10). They do not only fulfill their "self" through "other's eyes" but also establish their confidence or even construct the "imaging self" with the outsider's expectation to persuade those domestic actors. In sum, there are two factors affecting role performance: role expectation from outsiders and the role conception of the state, or the leader's "self-image" presenting to the world (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm 2019, 685). The latter might not agree with their policy. Under contradiction to stability, the new state role might become a new domestic expectation (Klose 2020, 855-7).

Once the role or self-image has formed, it is not so easy to change, except the recent role meets different expectations and conflicts. Most of these situations come from international negotiations. Through a new expectation of role from other states, the decision-makers need to adjust their original standpoint, which might contradict their role conception of how the state should act in the bilateral or multilateral aspect. Then, the decision-makers must decide whether to follow their traditional behavior or change it according to others' expectations. As Harnisch (2012) called the "role learning process." However, he did not have a clear-cut theory of role learning which needs more case studies. (Harnish 2012, 65).

Therefore, relations among national role conception, role expectation, role performance, role conflict, and role maker are important (Ovalı 2013, 2). National role conception also derives from the strategic culture or tradition. Role expectation is the conglomeration of behavior in himself/herself, and others' expectations. Leaders always need to conduct coping behavior under certain pressure and circumstances. Unless the leader is very decisive, he/she will generally follow others' expectations or traditions. However, if behavior decides to adjust its role, it will sometimes even affect the entire international system (Campbell 2018).

Every state wants to enhance its material power; however, it is different for each of them how to do it. Decision makers' subjective recognition and ability to mobilize will impact whether foreign policies will continue or change (Rose 1998, 167; Schweller 2004, 169). Hence, analyzing leaders' characteristics and beliefs is the most important among domestic factors like institutions, norms, strategic culture, and leaders (Tziarras 2019, 56). How does a leader interpret the world order? Did he/she learn something from different events? Is he/she motivated by belief, emotion, or need when making a decision? (Kaarbo 2018, 4; Ziemer 2009, 32). Emphasis on leaders not only because they represent the public opinion but also compete/compromise with each other in the decision-making process, which might lead to a new national role (Melo 2019, 227). As such, there are two questions for the role theorists: the reason driving elites' behavior (outsiders' expectation and leader's response) and the products or process of forming the policy (leading style, decision mode) (Campbell 2018). This paper focuses on the first issue, factors affecting the leaders' behavior, especially on the discourses or speeches leaders use to respond to outsiders' expectations. Neo-classical Realism has a similar analysis



of leaders' image, domestic institutions, and state-society relations. However, it emphasizes the international system factor more and considers internal factors in the decision-making process as intervening variables.

## 2.2 Narratives and discourses analysis

Discourse analysis is used in many disciplines, including sociology, political science, philosophy, and international relations, and it is often linked with the constructivist and critical approaches to international relations. Although international relations scholars started to adopt the discourse analysis method in the 1980s, it became more mainstream in the next two decades (Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili 2019).

Discourse analysis is an engagement with meaning and the linguistic and communicative processes through which social reality is constructed. Discourse can therefore be defined as, basically, the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed, and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality (Hölzscheiter 2013). This paper uses discourse analysis to discover the changing positions of President Biden and Xi.

## 3. Comparison with Biden and Xi's narratives before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine

### 3.1 Before the Russian invasion

#### 3.1.1 Biden-Xi's 2021 Meeting: Groping period

##### (1) Narrative from Biden

In Biden's narratives, this period is better described as "competition and cooperation simultaneously." During his career, Biden has always stressed the importance of the alliance, democracy, and human rights. This meeting also shows that Biden wanted to continue talks with China but reiterated fair trade and a free and open Indo-Pacific region. He did not want to escalate the conflict with China because of Taiwan. Therefore, he committed again to the "One-China policy" and tried establishing some "guardrails."

During the meeting, Biden hoped to dialogue with Xi candidly and straightforwardly. He underscored the importance of "value," which is "together with our allies and partners, ensure the rules of the road for the 21st century advance an international system that is free, open, and fair". Biden also raised concerns about the "PRC's practices in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong". He stressed, "the need to protect American workers and industries from the PRC's unfair trade and economic practices.". He also discussed "the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific." As for the Taiwan issue, he underscored that the "US remains committed to the "one China" policy, guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances and that the United States strongly opposes unilateral efforts to change the status quo or undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" (White House 2021a).

However, it is vital to manage strategic risks. Biden noted, "the need for common-sense guardrails to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict and

to keep lines of communication open." Also, he proposed several issues that US and China can cooperate on, including climate change, energy, and regional security(White House 2021a).

According to the White House's news release, it is much clearer in several aspects: First, it seems that there was no significant difference from past dialogues. However, the US wanted to "make clear our intentions and priority to avoid misunderstanding." That is why the guardrail is essential. Second, it is not related to Taiwan: "our policy has been consistent and remains consistent" (White House 2021b). That is to say, what the US is concerned about is issues such as international rules, human rights, and avoiding conflicts.

## (2) Narrative analysis of Xi Jinping

### A. Narratives during COVID-19

In their book, T. Colley and C. van Noort's (2022) review of strategic narratives of China and other countries. According to their works, China's strategic narratives during the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 have endured three phases: "China Defends Itself," "China Emphasizes Solidarity," and "China Asserts Its International Leadership" (Colley et al. 2022, 213-214). Among these phases, there is an interesting perspective. When China meets some critics and obstacles, leaders tend to defend first and then offer their kindness and willingness to cooperate with other countries in a multilateral framework. However, after the ongoing crisis calms down, they might insist on multilateralism orally but bilateral in practice.

For example, their responses were as follows when they met strong criticism from other countries, including the US, the UK, and even Germany. "China has always acted in an open, transparent, and responsible manner," "The virus is a common enemy to all mankind," and "China is also a victim." Besides, they advocated that criticism of mistreating black Africans in Guangzhou is a US plot to undermine China and African countries' friendship(Colley et al. 2022, 215-219). On the contrary, it is clear that under Trump's administration, China was labeled with malevolent intentions toward changing and dominating the international system and world order. Some European countries even suggested reconsidering the "kow-tow" relationship with China to win trade deals(2022, 221).

However, with efficient lock-down and recovery of the economy, China's narrative leads to Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) again. Those keywords in the BRI have reappeared, like "solidarity," "international assistance program," "connectivity," "promote international peace and prosperity," and so on. In order to persuade others under the coming Biden administration, they continue to position US foreign policy as the past and China's as more enlightened in the future(2022, 240). That is: it is a stereotype of US foreign policy behavior, not just Trump. Thus, China is pursuing a "win-win" strategy; on the contrary, the US is leading the zero-sum neoliberal economic order.

Nevertheless, evidence shows that propaganda objectives and not just altruism drove the leading role in global vaccination. As Chinese state media lauded its generosity in donating vaccines, 98% of China's vaccines were sold, in some cases, at higher prices than Western vaccines(Colley et al. 2022, 243-244). It shows the

long-lasting Chinese diplomatic strategic culture, bilateral in practice and multilateral in oral. It shows similarities in the process of Biden-Xi's meeting before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as this paper will discuss below.

#### B. Xi's narratives in the meeting

Xi's Narratives are mainly divided into three parts: dialogue itself, main concerns, and aspects that could be adjusted. First, for the dialogue itself, Xi called Biden an "old friend," showing that he emphasized his relationship with Biden. The Chinese side also admitted that this talk is "candid, in-depth and extensive strategic communication and exchanges on China-US relations and relevant issues of mutual interest" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2021).

Secondly, for the major concerns, Xi stressed "Great Powers Relation," "multilateralism," and "exceptionalism." He said, "China and the United States are respectively the biggest developing country and the biggest developed country. Whether they can handle their relationship well bears on the future of the world" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2021). According to the Chinese version, Xi is also concerned United Nations' role and a world order based on international law. Xi also showed his principle concerns about the Taiwan issue and disagreed with other countries intervening in China's interior affairs in the name of human rights(中華人民共和國外交部 2021a).

Finally, as for many common challenges, including climate change, the pandemic, and economic recovery, China and the US have great responsibilities to deal with. Xi Jinping asserted that the developing road and strategic intention of China are to "build a better life," and Chinese people love peace and with no intention to become a hegemon. China is on the track of economic globalization, and Xi hopes that the US should not suppress Chinese enterprises in the name of national security(中華人民共和國外交部 2021a). Such narratives follow the same idea after the outbreak of COVID-19, the doubt about Belt and Road Initiatives(BRI)(Wang 2018). China still wants to position itself as a protector of global security and aims to compete with the US in a "competition without catastrophe"(鬥而不破)manner, but with some preparation for some kinds of conflict.

In order not to be intervened by the US and to assert its exceptionalism in human rights and economic development modes, China also held good relations with Russia. Interestingly, after meeting with Biden, Xi talked with Russian president Putin. He emphasized that both sides should start more joint activities because some countries intervene in Chinese and Russian interior affairs in the name of democracy and human rights. Both sides opposed "cold-war mentality" and hegemonic behaviors with multilateralism and rules(中華人民共和國外交部 2021b). Therefore, as mentioned above, China wanted to cooperate with the US at this stage but still insists on "bottom-line thinking" (底線思維).

### 3.2 After the Russian invasion

Xi faced whether to stand with Putin after the outbreak of the Russian invasion. Xi Jinping claimed that China would decide its position according to what is right and wrong. He urged to respect each state's reasonable security concern, as Russia claimed that Western countries' eastward expansion challenged Russia's bottom line. Xi also slams on "Cold-War mentality," an international system based on respecting the sovereignty and territorial unity centering on UN and international order underpinned by international law(中華人民共和國外交部 2022a). Actually, China avoided supporting any side at the beginning of the invasion, which can be seen again in Premier Li-Keqiang's talk(中華人民共和國外交部 2022b).

#### 3.2.1 Biden-Xi's 2022 meeting in march

##### (1) Narrative from Biden: Realizing and understanding

Biden urged Xi not to stand with Russia in this meeting and warned of "implications and consequences if China provides material support to Russia." Both leaders agreed on "maintaining open lines of communication to manage the competition." Biden reiterated that "US policy on Taiwan has not changed, and emphasized that the United States continues to oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo" (White House 2022a).

Also, senior administration officials have more information in the press call. First, it stressed that this conversation was "direct," "substantive," and "detailed," which were "respect" and "open" in the past. In that meaning, what should be the "bargaining chips" on the table? Taiwan issue seems clear to be the exchange chips offered by China. Because in the press call, we found these words: "President Xi raised Taiwan. President Biden reiterated that the United States remains committed to 'our' one-China policy" (White House 2022b). The word "our" did not appear in the last meeting, and we can imagine that both sides do not seem to have a common ground on this issue. Besides, the senior administration official also said, "President Biden himself voted for the Taiwan Relations Act...demonstrated rock-solid support for Taiwan and will continue to do so" (White House 2022b). Answering whether to send wrong signals to Taiwan's independent forces, the official responded with "very longstanding policy," which means that the US is more concerned about whether China would take advantage of the Russian invasion.

However, to save China's face, the US side stressed that "they are not making specific requests of China," instead "laying out an assessment of the situation" and the consequences when China supports Russia. Jake Sullivan showed the same narratives in the Alaska talks. He said, "We do not seek conflict, but we welcome stiff competition and will always stand up for our principles, for our people, and for our friends" (Reuters 2021).

##### (2) Narratives from Xi Jinping: Playing Taiwan card

Asked for a clear standpoint on supporting Russia or not by the US, Xi Jinping apparently played the Taiwan card in the meeting. He said,

"...some people in the US have sent a wrong signal to "Taiwan independence"

forces. This is very dangerous. Mishandling of the Taiwan question will have a disruptive impact on bilateral ties. China hopes that the US will give due attention to this issue. The direct cause for the current situation in the China-US relationship is that some people on the US side have not followed through on the important common understanding reached by the two Presidents and have not acted on President Biden's positive statements. The US has misperceived and miscalculated China's strategic intention." (Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China 2022a)

After stating the standpoints on Taiwan, Xi continued with the Ukraine war. Xi reiterated the importance of the UN charter, international law, and peace. He hoped to solve Ukraine's problem with negotiation. However, it looks much more like nothing has been said. Xi claims, "It is up to the doers to undo the knot" (解鈴還須繫鈴人), "mutual respect among great powers," "Giving up Cold-War mentality, confrontation in groups" and "construct balance, effective, sustainable global and regional security architecture" (中華人民共和國外交部 2022c).

### 3.2.2 Biden-Xi's 2022 meeting in July

#### (1) Narratives from Biden: Losing patience

After Xi proposed "Global Security Initiatives" at Boao Forum in May 2022, US' strategic response toward China became clear and without ambiguity. First, Speakperson Ned Price insisted that the US maintain a "rule-based international system" with partners who respect human rights, sovereignty, and self-determination after Boao Forum. Wendy Sherman criticized Chinese official media for spreading disinformation and conspiracy theory from Russia (Leslie et al. 2022). These responses show that the US lost its patience with the Chinese attitude toward Russia.

President Biden released a talk between him and Xi to show the differences between both and from democracy to the authoritarian regime. We can read the different sights and impressions from both leaders. Xi is more concerned about the "relationship network." For example, Xi stressed that he remembered everything Biden had said to him. On the contrary, Biden shows his Emphasis on democracy. When Xi asked Biden not to criticize China's human rights issues in terms of the US way, Biden reiterated the democratic value and that what he was doing was reestablishing an alliance that the US had before (White House 2022c). Biden added, "He(Xi Jinping) does not have a 'democratic bone in his body....He thinks that democracy requires consensus. They cannot operate quickly enough in this rapidly changing world" (White House 2022c). Biden thought that democracy is "born that way." Many leaders in the world have the same question "how long can 'America is back' persist? Answering his own question, Biden believes that coordination and standing together among democratic states is what authoritarian regimes are afraid of (White House 2022c). Therefore, for Biden, the alliance's support can strengthen US's effort to counter authoritarian groups. Also, the US has to stand for democratic partners. When asked by media in Japan whether the US would support Taiwan

when Beijing invaded, Biden gave a clear "yes" and said, "that is the commitment we made(White House 2022e), which was seen as turning back on "strategic ambiguity(Wong 2022).

The resolution in the G7 summit focused on China much more obviously. "Committing to a unified approach to confront China's unfair economic practices: The G7 will release collective, unprecedented language acknowledging the harms caused by the People's Republic of China's (PRC) non-transparent, market-distorting industrial directives" (White House 2022d). The G7 committed to cooperating on cyber, quantum technology, trade, multilateral framework, human rights, and resilience of democracy.

In July's meeting, both sides returned to the standpoints from the first meeting. However, the Taiwan issue is still a bargaining chip for China. According to the administrative official, Biden and Xi discussed Taiwan in-depth. While Biden reaffirmed the US commitment to its One-China policy and opposed unilateral changes to the status quo by either side and commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, he also emphasized keeping an open line of communication.

(2) Narratives from Xi: Supporting Russia, insisting bottom line, and pursuing alliances

Xi proposed "Global Security Initiatives" in 2022's Boao Forum, he said,

"that is, to stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and work together to maintain world peace and security; stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, uphold non-interference in internal affairs, and respect the independent choices of development paths and social systems made by people in different countries; stay committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, reject the Cold War mentality, oppose unilateralism, and say no to group politics and bloc confrontation; stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously, uphold the principle of indivisible security, build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture, and oppose the pursuit of one's own security at the cost of others' security; stay committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation, support all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of crises, reject double standards, and oppose the wanton use of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction; stay committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains, and work together on regional disputes and global challenges such as terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity and biosecurity(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2022a)

Xi's narrative returns to the discourse in the third stage during COVID-19 and shows the revival of BRI again. He stressed fairness and the bottom line. Facing the discourse of Democracies vs. Authoritarian regimes, China needs to find more friends. Thus, those narratives used in the BRI revived again, such as "we do not mean to ideological confrontation," "weaponizing, politicalizing and instrumentalizing world economy and using sanction will not benefit for people in



the world," "ensuring equal rights, rules and opportunities of every country" (中華人民共和國外交部 2022d; 2022e).

In the phone talk with Biden in July, Xi emphasized the responsibility of China and the US for world peace and security and for promoting global development and prosperity. He claimed to uphold the international system centering on the UN and the international order underpinned by international law. Xi urged to maintain communication at all levels and make good use of existing channels to promote bilateral cooperation, especially in macroeconomic policies, energy, and food security.

However, the Taiwan question is the bottom line for Xi, and his narrative is even stronger. He opposed separatist moves and interference by external forces and would never allow any room for "Taiwan independence" forces in whatever form. "Those who play with fire will perish by it" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2022b).

## **4. Implications for East Asia**

### **4.1 Implications of the narratives**

Comparing narratives differences between the two leaders in different stages(as below sheet), it is evident that both leaders wanted to mitigate tension in the two countries before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Even Xi Jinping showed good will to the US with some bottom line. However, once the Russian invasion began, China leveraged the US with Taiwan question. Xi wished to get some compromise and promise from the US on Taiwan in exchange for China's position on Ukraine. Though we can not see detailed discussions on this issue through official documents, we can refer that no consensus on this issue existed. Thus, the US changed its narratives and added "our" One China Policy. It is clear to China that we are different on this issue. China responded with "US misperceived and miscalculated China's strategic intention."

At last, because there is no further progress on China's cooperative attitude toward Western sanctions on Russia, US-China relations seemed on the same track as with the Trump administration. That is: China is the major competitor with the US. However, the most significant difference between Biden and Trump is that Biden cares about alliances, democracy, human rights, and Taiwan. In contrast, Trump seems more "tradeable," and Taiwan is one of the bargaining chips for interest exchange(Liu 2022). Syrian Kurds and Afghanistan were evidence under the Trump administration. Under the Biden administration, with the prolonged and continuing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US started to adjust its attitude if it could not get enough support from the alliances, especially the energy crisis of European countries in the coming winter. Thus, the US admitted that competition with China and Russia is a decade-long period, and some cooperation, such as climate change and pandemic, is needed. This paper will discuss the 2022 US National Security Strategy in the next part, but Biden-Xi's talk in July 2022 has shown that trend.

### Leaders' narratives in different stages

Time	Narratives from Biden	Narratives from Xi Jinping	Major concern
Before Russian Invasion	<p>Central discourse: competition but cooperation in several areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shared interests and value with alliances: free, open, and fair international system: oppose China's efforts to change existing world order.</li> <li>2. Human rights and democracy.</li> <li>3. Strategic risks exist: communication and guardrail.</li> </ol>	<p>Central discourse: stable and healthy China-US relations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sovereignty: principled position on Taiwan question.</li> <li>2. National security.</li> <li>3. Benefits from development.</li> <li>4. International system centering on UN and international order underpinned by international law.</li> </ol>	Great Powers relations and avoiding strategic risks.
	<p>Secondary discourses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "One China Policy," but the Taiwan question is not this talk's point.</li> <li>2. How to manage the competition.</li> </ol>	<p>Secondary discourses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No fixed democracy.</li> <li>2. Creating a better life is not equal to being a hegemon.</li> <li>3. Objection to the "New Cold War" and ideological confrontation.</li> </ol>	
After Russian Invasion	<p>Central discourse: Respect China's decision on reaction toward Russia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consequences to support Russia.</li> <li>2. Solidarity of alliance.</li> <li>3. "our" One China Policy.</li> </ol>	<p>Central discourse: China's position on Ukraine depends on facts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taiwan question: US misperceived and miscalculated China's strategic intention.</li> <li>2. Not targeting China: objections to the "New Cold War" and trying to change the Chinese domestic system.</li> </ol>	Ukraine and Taiwan questions
	<p>Secondary discourses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. US is not pursuing conflicts but welcoming competition.</li> </ol>	<p>Secondary discourses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Solve the Ukraine question through negotiation.</li> <li>2. Peace, international law, UN Charter.</li> </ol>	



	2. Communication to manage competition in both.		
Recent developments	Central discourse: Democracy vs. Authoritarian 1. Rebuild US Soul and dignity. 2. Recovering the economy. 3. Integration with democracy. 4. Unfair trade by China	Central discourse: justice, global development. 1. Global Security Initiative. 2. Multilateralism with the UN. 3. RCEP, BRI, South-South cooperation. 4. Taiwan question.	Competition with alliance G7 vs. South-South cooperation
	Secondary discourses: 1. international system based on rules. 2. disinformation and conspiracy from Chinese official media. 3. Interwinning use of strategic ambiguity and clearness on Taiwan question.	Secondary discourses: Solemn stand on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Tibet, South China Sea, human rights, and religion.	

The author makes this Sheet.

#### 4.2 Toward a multi-polar international system? US National Security Strategy

Biden administration published its National Security Strategy on October 12, 2022. In this report, there are several points need to be addressed:

First, the US admits that major powers' competition will last for a decade. As it is shown, “we are now in the early years of a decisive decade for America and the world”(White House 2022g, 6). Under such competition, the coming international structure is much more like a multi-polar system rather than US-China competition. “post-Cold War era is definitively over, and a competition is underway between the major powers to shape what comes next”(White House 2022g, 6).

Because of the long-lasting competition and the coming multi-polar system, the US needs alliances to continue to compete with China and Russia. However, it still needs to cooperate with competitors on “shared challenges that cross borders” at the same time. It explained why the US returned to the original standpoint, as shown in the Biden-Xi talk before the Russian invasion.

Secondly, the traditional balance of power policy is vital under a multi-polar system. Therefore, it stressed, "Democracies and autocracies are engaged in a contest to show which system of governance can best deliver for their people and the world." “Russia poses an immediate threat...The PRC, by contrast, is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to advance that objective”(White House 2022g, 7-8). Therefore, the US needs to use diplomacy to

build the strongest possible coalitions, including NATO, EU, AUKUS, Quad, G7, and even ASEAN and African countries, to counter the threats from autocracies(White House 2022g, 17-18). The Indo-Pacific region is still the main theater in the US-China competition. Competition exists in investment, network of allies, and vision for the future, and different areas, such as technological, economic, political, military, intelligence, and global governance domains(White House 2022g, 24). Next, I will discuss the implication for East Asian countries.

#### 4.3 Implication for East Asia: “Hedging” still works?

The implication for East Asian countries seems clear that the competition among major powers will continue for an extended period. Thus, choices between “democracies and autocracies,” “deterrence and diplomacy,” and “rule-based and mutual benefit” will be continuing options for East Asian countries. For example, Taiwan question will still be one of the priorities from Xi Jinping, significantly when he consolidates his power again at the 20<sup>th</sup> Communist party congress. In this paper, we have seen that Taiwan is always the bargaining chip on the negotiation table. The choices for the government in Taiwan are pretty straightforward, which is, “depend on the US, period.” However, it was workable when there was a “New Cold War” or confrontation between two groups, as mentioned above. Then, Taiwan can only choose the democratic group to deter China, even losing some economic benefits to gain security assurance and survive. But under a multi-polar system? Is the choice still the same as the two major powers' confrontation? We have seen different “role expectations” from Trump and Biden administrations. Under Tsai Ing-Wen’s administration and the ruling party's ideology, DPP, “role perception” is rigid and continuous. Nevertheless, with different leaders in democracies, there might be diversified role expectations and conflicts in the future after every election.

For East Asian countries, hedging was the option many countries adopted for years. Like Taiwan, many countries meet obstacles in choices under US-China competition. As discussed above, both US and China are pursuing allies and partners in the coming decades. While China's BRI revived, the IPEF offers as the other choice, which the US labels as “rule-based” and not risky because of China's “debt trap.” This paper stands that hedging will still be priorities for many East Asian countries. However, future competition between the US and China relies heavily upon allies' support. Since the US cannot afford to compete with China and Russia itself without solid support from the alliance, it might alter its priorities when it meets some obstacles. Taiwan Strait, for example, might be safer if Japan and Korea stand together with the US on whether to protect the status quo of Taiwan. It could add some difficulties for China to use force because of the risk it loses. However, if regional alliances do not want to stand with the US, the US might be much more hesitant to support Taiwan and prefer diplomatic ways to solve the disputes. Ukraine war will be a vivid example for us when winter comes. With the support and solidarity from the Western countries, deterrence from Russia has worked well till now. Nevertheless, how long can this support last? Different administrations in each country might have their role perception, and examining this intervening variable is somehow important in the academy and decision-making process.

## 5 Conclusion

Here is the crucial problem: democracies confront autocracies. This paper suggests that we use neo-classical Realism, role theory, and narrative analysis to deal with leaders' image, role-play of leaders, role expectations from other countries, and role perception of his/her own. Moreover, this paper suggests that starting with the changing international structure is better. However, political leaders and scholars often predict the international systems with hindsight; we must analyze intervening variables that neo-classical realists and role theorists propose: leaders' image, domestic institutions, and state-society relations. It is challenging to know the decision-making process in authoritarian regimes. For example, we will never know what happened to Hu Jintao in the 20<sup>th</sup> Communist Party Congress.

For Taiwan, since it is put on the negotiation table by China, it is much more like a question of survival and how to maintain its status quo. Alliance support is crucial for the US and Taiwan's attitude. However, it is much easier to choose between two confronting groups but riskier for Taiwan to have some military conflicts as is happening in Ukraine. The ongoing multi-polar system is much more complicated for leaders in East Asian countries to decide from many options like hedging, alliance, not involved, etc. It still needs some patience to discover the recovery of the economic situation after the pandemic. Whether the BRI will revive in East Asia, Central Asia, and even the Middle East, or how the western countries can consolidate their partners will lead to a different road map of the world.

## Reference

- Alzawawy, Muhammad Soliman ( 2021 ) . "What Biden May Bring to the Eastern Mediterranean Region," *Insight Turkey* 23(1):23–34.
- Aydın-Düzgit, Senem and Bahar Rumelili(2019).”Discourse Analysis: Strengths and Shortcomings,” *All Azimuth*, 8(2):285-305.
- Bengtsson, Rikard and Ole Elgström(2012). “Conflicting Role Conceptions? The European Union in Global Politics”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 8:93-108.
- Campbell, Steven(2018).”Role Theory, Foreign Policy Advisers, and US Foreign Policymaking,” *International. Journal of Social Sciences*, 59(1):43–55.
- Colley, T. and C. Van Noort(2022). *Strategic Narratives, Ontological Security and Global Policy*. Switzerland: Palgrave Studies in International Relations.
- Harnisch Sebastian. Sebastian Bersick and Carsten Gottwald (eds)(2016). *China’s International Roles*, London: Routledge.
- Harnisch, Sebastian. 2012. " Conceptualizing in the Minefield: Role Theory and Foreign Policy Learning," *Foreign. Policy Analysis*,8:47-69.
- Holsti, Kalevi J.(1970). “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.” *International Studies Quarterly*,14:233-309.
- Hölscheiter, Anna(2013).” Between Communicative Interaction and Structures of Signification: Discourse Theory and Analysis in International Relations,” *International Studies Perspectives*, 2014(15): 142-162.
- Hong, Taehwa(2022). “U.S.-China détente would pose its own danger. Beijing’s neighbors are ready to take steps to protect themselves”, *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/23/u-s-china-detente-would-pose-its-own-dangers/>.
- Kaarbo, Juliet(2018).”A foreign policy analysis perspective on After Victory,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2018:1-11.
- Klose, Stephan(2020). "Interactionist role theory meets ontological security studies: an exploration of synergies between socio-psychological approaches to the study of international relations," *European Journal of International Relations*, 26(3):851-874.
- Leslie, Raquel and Brian Liu(2022).” Amid Ukraine War, China Announces 'Global Security Initiative'," *Lawfare*, May 2, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/amid-ukraine-war-china-announces-global-security-initiative>(accessed June 29, 2022).
- Liu, Melinda (2022).“ How Beijing sees Biden," *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/14/china-us-relations-biden-strategy/>(accessed June 29, 2022).
- Melo, Daniela F(2019). "Outmaneuvering Kissinger: Role Theory, US Intra-elite Conflict, and the Portuguese Revolution," *Foreign Policy Analysis*,15:224-243.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China(2021). Chinese President Xi Jinping Speaks with US President Joseph Biden on the Phone. [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/gjhdq\\_665435/3376\\_665447/3432\\_664920/3435\\_664926/202109/t20210910\\_10408626.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/gjhdq_665435/3376_665447/3432_664920/3435_664926/202109/t20210910_10408626.html).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China(2022a). President Xi Jinping Has a Video Call with US President Joe Biden. [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/202203/t20220319\\_10653207.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202203/t20220319_10653207.html).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China(2022b). President Xi Jinping Speaks with US President Joe Biden on the

- Phone.[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/202207/t20220729\\_10729593.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202207/t20220729_10729593.html).
- Ovalı, Şevket(2013). "Decoding Turkey's Lust for Regional Clout in the Middle East: A Role Theory Perspective," *Journal of International and Area Studies*,20(1):1–21.
- Reuters (2021).“ US tells China it does not seek conflict; but will stand up for principles, friends," Reuters, March 18, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-tells-china-it-does-not-seek-conflict-will-stand-up-principles-friends-2021-03-18/>(accessed July 2, 2022).
- Rose, Gideon(1998).”Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy.” *World Politics*, 51(1):144–172.
- Schweller, Randall L.(2004).”Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security*, 29(2):159-201.
- Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm, Rahime(2019). "Role theory, the European Union and Turkish regional foreign policy," *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*,18(35):681-700.
- Tziarras, Zenonas (ed.)(2019).*The New Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean: Trilateral Partnerships and Regional Security*, Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo.
- Wang, Shunwen(2018).“The Strategic Thinking of China’s "Belt and Road" Initiative, Middle Corridor and the BRI," *Avrasya Dünyası*(Eurasian World). No.366-72.
- White House (2022c). "Remarks by President Biden at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser", <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/04/21/remarks-by-president-biden-at-a-democratic-national-committee-fundraiser-3/>(accessed June 30,2022).
- White House(2022g). National Security Strategy. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>.(accessed October 20, 2022).
- White House(2021a). "Readout of President Biden's Virtual Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/16/readout-of-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>(accessed June 29, 2022).
- White House(2021b). "Background Press Call by Senior Administration Officials on President Biden's Virtual Meeting with President Xi of the People's Republic of China," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/11/15/background-press-call-by-senior-administration-officials-on-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-with-president-xi-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>(accessed June 29, 2022).
- White House(2022a). "Readout of President Joseph R. Biden Jr. Call with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/18/readout-of-president-joseph-r-biden-jr-call-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2/>(accessed June 29, 2022).
- White House(2022b). "Background Press Call by a Senior Administration Official on President Biden's Call with President Xi Jinping of China," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/03/18/background-press-call-by-a-senior-administration->

- official-on-president-bidens-call-with-president-xi-jinping-of-china/(accessed July 2, 2022).
- White House,(2022d)."FACT SHEET: The United States Continues to Strengthen Cooperation with G7 on 21st Century Challenges, including those Posed by the People's Republic of China ( PRC )", <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/28/fact-sheet-the-united-states-continues-to-strengthen-cooperation-with-g7-on-21st-century-challenges-including-those-posed-by-the-peoples-republic-of-china-prc/>(accessed July 1,2022).
- White House,(2022e)." Remarks by President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan in Joint Press Conference," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/05/23/remarks-by-president-biden-and-prime-minister-fumio-kishida-of-japan-in-joint-press-conference/>(accessed July 1, 2022).
- White House,(2022f)." Background Press Call on President Biden's Call with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/07/28/background-press-call-on-president-bidens-call-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>(accessed July 29, 2022).
- Wong, Tessa(2022)."Biden vows to defend Taiwan in apparent US policy shift," BBC News, May 23. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-61548531>(accessed July 2, 2022).
- Ziemer, Veronica(2009). Zwischen Europa und Amerika. Polens Außenß und Sicherheitspolitik nach 1989, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2021a )。〈習近平同美國總統拜登舉行視頻會晤〉。  
[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202111/t20211116\\_10448827.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202111/t20211116_10448827.shtml)。  
2021/11/16。
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2021b )。〈習近平同俄羅斯總統普京舉行視頻會晤〉。  
[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202112/t20211215\\_10470131.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202112/t20211215_10470131.shtml)。  
2021/12/15。
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2022a )。〈習近平同俄羅斯普京總統通電話〉。  
[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220225\\_10645684.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220225_10645684.shtml)。  
2022/02/25。
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2022b )。〈李克強總理出席記者會並回答中外記者提問〉。[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202203/t20220311\\_10651145.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202203/t20220311_10651145.shtml)  
。 2022/03/11。
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2022c )。〈習近平同美國總統拜登視頻通話〉。  
[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202203/t20220319\\_10653187.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202203/t20220319_10653187.shtml)。  
2022/03/19。
- 中華人民共和國外交部 ( 2022d )。〈習近平在博鰲亞洲論壇2022年年會開幕式上的主旨演講〉。

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202204/t20220421\\_10671052.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202204/t20220421_10671052.shtml)。

2022/04/21。

中華人民共和國外交部（2022e）。〈習近平在金磚國家工商論壇開幕式上的主旨演講〉。

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202206/t20220622\\_10707994.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202206/t20220622_10707994.shtml)。

2022/06/22。



# US-China competition and implications on East Asia: Leader's narrative analysis

## - Discussion Comments

Shin, Bong-kil (University of North Korean Studies)

Prof. Wang notes in his article that examining how the top leaders of U.S. and China think of the recent and future world order is vital in analyzing 'U.S.-China competition and implications on East Asia'.

He tries to examine what the leaders want in their decision-making process by analyzing their official talks and writings.

- He analyzes President Biden and Xi Jinping's three virtual meetings in 2021 and 2022 before and after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war.

He introduces Role Theory and Narrative/Discourse analysis.

- Role Theory believes that analyzing a leader's characteristics and beliefs is the most important among domestic factors like institutions, norms, strategic culture, etc.

He also uses discourse analysis, which is engaging with the meaning and the linguistic and communicative processes, to analyze the changing dynamics of U.S.-China competition.

### **Comparison between Biden and Xi's narratives**

(Before the Russian invasion)

Biden: competition and cooperation simultaneously

Xi: 'Great powers relation', 'multilateralism', and 'exceptionalism'...

(After the Russian invasion)

Biden: 'we do not seek conflict, but we welcome stiff competition and will always stand up for our principles, for our people and for our friends'

U.S. maintains a rule-based international system with partners who respect human rights, sovereignty and self-determination.

Xi: slams Cold War mentality, 'some people in the U.S. have sent a wrong signal to Taiwan independence forces ... This is very dangerous.'

Xi proposed 'Global Security initiatives' which opposes unilateralism and rejects



group politics and bloc confrontation. Xi emphasized the responsibility of China and the U.S. for world peace and security and for promoting global development and prosperity.

### **Implications for East Asia**

(Implications of the narratives)

After comparing the differences in narratives between the two leaders in different stages, Prof. Wang's paper notes that both leaders sought to mitigate tension between the two countries before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, it notes, once the Russian invasion began, China raised the Taiwan questions as a leverage with the U.S. Xi wished to get some compromise and promise from the U.S. on Taiwan in exchange for China's support of Ukraine.

Q: How are the Russian invasion to Ukraine and China's leveraging of Taiwan issue related? Is there a direct link between the two? What actually did Xi want to get from the U.S.?

(Toward a multi-polar international system? U.S. national Security Strategy)

- U.S. needs to build strong coalitions, including NATO, EU, AUKUS, Quad, G7 and even ASEAN and African countries, to counter the threats from autocracies. The Indo-Pacific is still the main theater in the U.S.-China competition.

Q: Is it possible to limit China's expansion through these kinds of coalitions?

Q: What will be India's role in this competition?

(Implications for East Asia: 'Hedging' still works?)

Competition among major powers will continue, so choices between 'democracies and autocracies' will continue.

This paper stands for the proposition that hedging will be important for many East Asian countries. However, future competition between U.S. and China relies heavily upon allies' support. If regional alliances do not want to stand with the U.S., would the U.S. be more hesitant to support Taiwan?

Q: If a serious conflict arises in Taiwan straits, can countries other than the U.S. participate militarily to defend Taiwan?

# US-China competition and implications on East Asia: Leader's narrative analysis - Discussion Comments

Hanssen, Ulv (Soka University)

This paper seeks to investigate whether and how Russia's aggressive war in Ukraine has impacted Joe Biden's narratives on China and Xi Jinping's narratives on the US. It thus takes as its precondition something that many researchers, myself included, feel; namely that the War in Ukraine constitutes a watershed moment in international relations. We feel certain that the war will have a major impact for years to come, but we do not yet know exactly what that impact will be. This article attempts to give us some early implications of the war on the US-China relationship and could thus make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the future of international politics.

I understand that this is a very early draft of the paper, so I will not point out minor details, such as word choice and grammar – that can easily be fixed later – rather, in my feedback, I will try to focus on the structure, argument and theory of the article.

Firstly, the article takes it for granted that a change in narrative took place both in Washington and Beijing after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I think the assumption should be problematized. It could definitely be the case that the assumption is true, but from the empirics given in the article, I was not entirely convinced that there was a significant narrative change before and after the invasion. Much of the language in Washington and Beijing seems to be characterized more by continuity than change. If the author feels that a significant narrative change did take place, I think it would be helpful to be more specific and emphatic about what this change was. I also think it is possible that a more significant narrative change could take place in the future as the Ukraine War drags on. It would therefore be advisable to wait a bit longer with writing the article because the war situation and the narratives about it change so quickly at this stage. In other words, the war might still be too fresh and moving too rapidly to analyze discursively.

Secondly, I thought the article was missing theoretical or empirical takeaways in the conclusion. The author writes that we can expect hedging to continue, but is it

possible to find a more original takeaway? This might be somewhat of an unreasonable demand to make of a paper that is only in the beginning stages, but it is worth thinking about the “so what” question already now. So what if narratives are changing in Washington and Beijing? In other words, what are the deeper implications of such a narrative for international politics? Here I think the article could benefit from pinpointing a couple of specific consequences of this narrative change.

Thirdly, the theoretical section could benefit from a bit more clarity as well as justification for the theoretical choice (discourse analysis). I am sure this is something that the author is already aware of, but I would still make a couple of points about the theory section. The first thing to note is that the theory section, as it stands now, is relatively detached from the empirical sections. We learn about the theory and then we rarely return to it in the analysis of Biden and Xi’s speeches. When developing the paper, I think it will be important to show that the theory is actually used meaningfully in the text and speech analysis. Furthermore, since there are many types of discourse analysis, it is necessary to specify which type of discourse analysis is used in the paper. I am only familiar with poststructuralist discourse theory (PDT), but I think PDT’s framework could be applicable in this article (insofar we acknowledge that a narrative change actually took place). PDT assumes that at any time there will be competing discourses within a specific field (in this case foreign policy). Eventually one discourse will become hegemonic, but it is always contested by minor discourses. The hegemonic discourse will retain its hegemony until it is confronted with an unexpected external event (PDT calls these “dislocations”) that reveals flaws, inconsistencies or contradictions in the hegemonic discourse. It is in such times of dislocation that other discourses can challenge the hegemonic one and even replace it as a new hegemonic discourse. In other words, the discursive terrain tends to be stable until it is upset by an external event (dislocation) which opens the possibility for discursive change. If applied to this article, we could frame it as follows: Biden followed the hegemonic China discourse on peaceful competition (“We can compete peacefully with China”). Then the dislocation of the Ukraine War took place and revealed the problems with this discourse (“How can peaceful competition be possible with a country that isn’t even willing to condemn aggressive warfare?”). The dislocation made the hegemonic discourse vulnerable to attacks from a competing China discourse (“We cannot compete peacefully with China”). As this challenger discourse became hegemonic, Biden adopted it and changed his rhetoric vis-à-vis China. This is of course a simplification of the analysis, but I do think it is possible to carry out the article’s analysis within the framework of PDT. This is of course just a suggestion. There are many other ways to approach the analysis.

Fourthly, this is just a clarification question, but what is meant by the repeated claim that China used Taiwan as a bargaining chip? I did not fully understand this since it

is my understanding that China always insists that the Taiwan issue is non-negotiable. A bit more clarification on this point would be helpful.

Those would be my main comments. In conclusion, I would like to add that I enjoyed reading the paper and I think it holds a lot of potential. I am looking forward to following the development of the paper. Best of luck!



