



“Advancing Cooperative Security in Asia Pacific: Ingredients of a 21st Century Security Order”

Prepared by Paul Evans and Chen Dongxiao¹

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“Cooperative Security 2.0” to be held in Shanghai, 6-7 December 2014

I. Strategic Setting. We have entered a turbulent era in international affairs. Despite continuing economic growth and integration in much of Asia and deeper and wider cultural interactions, the current security situation in Asia Pacific is also viewed by most as increasingly uncertain, deteriorating, and dangerous. Where only a decade ago direct military conflict between major powers seemed a remote prospect, the risks of inadvertent conflict and escalation are rising, especially in Northeast Asia. No leader in the region is advocating war and it is unlikely. But the fact that war is irrational does not make it unthinkable.

The list of immediate security concerns remains long and troubling: domestic political instability in several countries; a growing set of non-traditional and human security vulnerabilities related to trans-national issues ranging from water resources and food through to energy and disease; geo-political rivalries; volatility in bilateral relations between several key countries; unresolved territorial disputes on land and especially at sea; unsettled legacies of history and historical memory; a spike in assertive nationalisms; the development and spread of weapons of mass destruction; and a still dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula among them.

In Asia Pacific, perhaps more than any other region, there is an extra factor at play. The structural shift in economic, military and diplomatic power produced by the rise of emerging powers including China and India is changing the security landscape. Japan is in the midst of a major shift in its defence and security policies. The current situation is not just a patch of turbulent weather centred on individual conflicts. Rather it is something akin to climate change produced by global warming. Power shifts, especially those centred on China’s rise, are having major repercussions more significant than individual storms. The region faces a new kind of strategic dilemma: how to support a continuing American role while facilitating China’s peaceful accommodation in a new regional order? What would a shared order look like? Are we looking at competitive cooperation or cooperative competition?

The region risks sliding towards a new kind of Cold War. Cold War 2.0 would not be an exact replica of the great confrontation in Europe and globally between 1948 and 1989. Unlike the

¹ Paul Evans is Professor of Asian and trans-Pacific international relations at the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia. Chen Dongxiao is the President of the Shanghai Institutes of International Studies.

great Soviet-Western rivalry, the economic systems of almost all of the countries in Asia Pacific are not just interdependent, they are integrated in production, finance and trade. There is little likelihood of the emergence of competing military alliances facing off against each other.

But Cold War 2.0 could feature a new form of rivalry already hinted at in thinking and action by several parties. This is sometimes framed as an inevitable battle for primacy between a China interested in expelling the United States from Asia and unravelling the American-centred alliance system and an America intent on containing, or at least countering, the China challenge. The result is a zero sum mindset in which the victory of one is a setback for the other, with the region functioning as a giant board game, defined alternatively as chess or *weiqi*, rather than an arena of cooperation and community building.

In this context we believe that there is an urgent need for fresh thinking and constructive action that goes beyond addressing individual conflicts and managing individual sets of bilateral relations. We also believe that the current discussion of regional security architecture that focuses on the membership, activities and leadership of multilateral institutions is necessary but not sufficient. What is needed is consideration of the objectives and principles of a regional order, an agreed regional destination.

Cooperative Security 2.0 is preferable to Cold War 2.0 but what would it look like and how can it be configured? What new norms, rules, practices and sense of regional order are needed to tame a changing balance of power in an era variously described as multi-polar, multiplex or multi-centric?

II. Cooperative Security 1.0. During an earlier period of transition at the end of the Cold War, Asia Pacific governments, supported and prodded by track-two processes, developed ideas and institutions that laid the foundation for a creative set of initiatives. Supplementing traditional international relations and bilateral arrangements, the twin ideas of comprehensive and cooperative security had three main pillars. The first was a security philosophy that focused on building security with other countries rather than against them. The second was an emphasis on creating multilateral processes for building dialogue, confidence and trust. And the third was inclusion of a range of non-traditional security issues (e.g. environmental degradation, illegal migration, natural disasters, infectious disease) into the regional security agenda as important in their own right and potential bridges to wider cooperation.

Many of these ideas were firmly rooted in the practice and outlook of ASEAN, an association that in recent years has within its own region made moves in the direction of building a security community and that at the wider regional level has been central in building the institutional architecture that now includes the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit process, the ADMM+ meetings and a host of other meetings. These processes have been reinforced by a huge network of overlapping bilateral, trilateral and regional track 2 and track 1.5 processes for expert discussion and exchange.

Despite the successes of the first phase, cooperative security is proving inadequate in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, especially in Northeast Asia. Cooperative security was never envisioned to provide more than a fresh starting point for inculcating the

habits of dialogue nor anything beyond a supplement to existing national and bilateral arrangements, alliances key among them. The ideas hardwired into these dialogue and collaborative processes—confidence building, trust building, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution—have, by design, taken only partial hold and been less than transformative.

The more fundamental reason that Cooperative Security 1.0 is losing is its relevance is the climate change induced by a shifting distribution of power and the strategic uncertainty coming in its wake. In particular, China's rise as a multi-dimensional regional and global power and the reactions by its neighbours and especially the United States are reframing the strategic landscape. The United States may remain the dominant global military power, but it is no longer the dominant economic power in Asia and its regional dominance is no longer unchallenged. In 1990 US primacy was taken for granted; in 2014 it is open to question.

III. The Canada-China Project on Cooperative Security 2.0. There have been several efforts in the past twenty years to take cooperative and comprehensive security to a next phase, among them the series of ASEAN-ISIS sponsored meetings on the idea of a Pacific Concord in the 1990s. In the past year a CSCAP Study group has reviewed a new security setting that it views as increasingly threatening and less tranquil. Working on a consensus basis, it produced several concrete recommendations about how regional multilateral processes can be strengthened and made more robust in shaping state behaviour and responding to serious threats. Its specific recommendations are heavily ASEAN centred and focused on how to increase ASEAN's importance through means like strengthening the secretariat, the ARF, and defining a constructive road map for the East Asia Summit process.

Over the past eighteen months a small working group of Canadians and Chinese has been addressing the same general concerns but taking a different approach. Rather than focus directly on adjustments to the region's institutional architecture or managing individual issues, it has taken on the wider task of reconceiving the regional security order. Its aim is to take account of the realities of the region while at the same time looking at a set of rules, practices, norms, understandings and attitudes that build upon and go beyond those underpinning the current array of multilateral institutions.

The premise of the project is that the region urgently requires serious thinking about security concepts and principles that respond to new economic and strategic realities and that can be made attractive to major, middle and smaller powers alike. It builds upon a successful collaboration between Canadian and Chinese academics and officials over the period 1996 to 2000 on cooperative security and regional multilateralism.

Though officials from the Chinese and Canadian governments have participated in the discussion, the process has been academically driven, strictly unofficial, and free-wheeling. It has attempted to connect some of the best thinking in both countries on international theory to the material reality of contemporary Asia Pacific with an eye to contributing to policy development. It is very much at an open and exploratory phase.

At a first meeting in April 2013 the participants surveyed current problems and agreed on a set of ideas that needed further elaboration. These led to a series of commissioned papers that were

presented at a second meeting in November 2013. They included definitional notes on self-restraint, reassurance, trust, trust-building measures, community of human destiny, national core interests, opportunity engineering, and new model of great power relations. They also included longer essays on empathy and empathy building measures, the idea of a Consociational security order, and measures for managing maritime conflict. Unedited versions of the papers are available on request.

An echo meeting in Beijing a few days later concentrated on how key terms, including “consociational security order” could be understood and translated into the Chinese language.

The discussions were lively and imaginative in moving between conceptual and theoretical issues and practical policy concerns. Based on their results, the third meeting in the series will be held in Shanghai on December 6th and 7th 2014. Its principal focus will be a closer examination of two of the ideas that emerged as particularly compelling in the earlier discussions: (1) the value of the idea of a consociational (or multiplex) security order as a prescription for a new approach to understanding and shaping the regional security order in a time of power rebalancing; and (2) the connection between confidence, trust and empathy and particular measures that can be taken to advance all three.

The key ideas in play and some of the questions about them are outlined below.

IV. Exploring a Consociational Security Order

There are many ideas in play about what constitutes and what should constitute a regional security order for Asia Pacific. We take as a starting point that it is something more than a description of the existing balance of power. An order also involves norms, institutions, and agreed practices. Many different terms are used in academic, journalistic and policy discourse to characterize the existing or desired order, among them: Pax Americana, Pax Sinica, Pax Pacifica, and Pax Democratica. Likewise, America’s role has been described as supreme, primary, preponderant, preeminent, dominant, the anchor of a liberal hegemony, and the decisive balancer.

One aspirational model of a regional order was presented by then Indonesian foreign minister Marty Natalegawa who described something less adversarial than a balance of power: a “dynamic equilibrium” that seeks to involve all the major relevant powers within a more cooperative framework as a basis for the development of an inclusive regional architecture and “a new kind of international relations with an emphasis on common security, common prosperity and common stability.”²

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang outlined a vision of Asia’s future at the Boao Forum in April 2014, focusing on community building in Asia Pacific based on a community of shared interests and development, a community of common destiny, and a community of shared responsibility. He

² See for example his Statement at the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 26 September 2011, available at http://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/66/ID_en.pdf.

emphasized that no single country or group of countries should dominate the regional order and that it instead it would be built on inclusive participation by all states.

Peter Hayes in a recent essay has outlined several possibilities. These include: (1) continuation of the present order that mixes rule-based cooperation and quiet competition within a regional framework structured around existing alignments sustained by US leadership; (2) a balance-of-power order of unconstrained great power competition fueled by dynamic shifts in relative power and a reduced US role; (3) a consolidated regional order in which an East Asian community develops like the lines of Europe's democratic peace, with China's political liberalization a precondition for such a regional evolution; and (4) a Sino-centric order centred on Beijing that sustains a different kind of East Asian community on the basis of China's extension of a sphere of influence across the region.³

We also start from the understanding that while an American-led and dominated order has produced remarkable benefits for the region, it is not *the* world or regional order, only one of several possibilities. It has been contested and is difficult to sustain in its current form in an era of shifting power relations.

The concept of a Consociational Security Order (hereafter CSO) has been adapted from the comparative politics literature and first championed by Amitav Acharya, a core member of the project. It has been developed in materials presented at the workshops and in a seminal journal article published in 2013.⁴

In academic terms, a CSO is different from hegemonic, concert of power, or security community orders. In its most basic form it is “the political-security order of a culturally diverse region that rests on economic interconnectedness, balances of power, cooperative action by elites and leaders to avoid and manage conflicts for the sake of their common survival and well-being. In this order, highly interdependent states ensure systemic stability with the help of both balance of power mechanisms and cooperative institutions.”

Its central argument is that states cooperate not from altruism but because, first, cooperation is in their interest and, second, because of the high costs of non-cooperation. Conflict is avoided initially not because group members are bound by deeply-shared values and a collective identity, but because actors see conflict avoidance as a necessary precondition for material growth and development. Institutions play a critical role in engaging all actors and inducing restraint as the vehicles for conflict resolution. But these institutions operate through mutual restraint and accommodation, not through integration or supranational bureaucracies, European style. A CSO fits more closely with “cooperative security” (i.e. security *with* a potential adversary through

³ Peter Hayes, “Building a New Security Architecture in Northeast Asia,” *Nautilus Peace and Security Policy Forum*, 29 May 2014. Available at <http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=0de7e0e84dc3aff619f936a70&id=a310872784&e=9890554749>.

⁴ Amitav Acharya, “Power Shift or Paradigm Shift? China's Rise and Asia's Emerging Security Order,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 2013.

dialogues and confidence-building mechanisms), rather than collective security or collective defence (NATO).

A CSO is different from a security community. A community requires a deep social bond, convergence of basic values and a collective identity underpinned by substantial economic integration and strong institutions. Security communities require a long-term habit of war-avoidance, deep levels of trust, and mutual identification leading to the development of a “we feeling.” A CSO does not require any of them nor does it make war “unthinkable”. It will always manifest cultural and political balancing as much as interdependence and identification. State sovereignty remains important. Cultural values and norms may matter, but they are redefined and made and remade through politics of balancing and accommodation.

CSOs are different from hegemonic security orders. In a hegemonic order, only one power dominates and balancing disappears or is rendered inconsequential. Security management mechanisms, such as multilateral institutions may exist, but they are created, maintained and thoroughly dominated by the hegemon. Moreover, hegemonic orders seek to exclude other great powers by establishing and enforcing a sphere of influence, as was the case with the US Monroe Doctrine in the Western hemisphere.

CSOs are different from concert systems like the 19th-century European Concert of Powers in which the most powerful actors monopolized the management of order and marginalized weaker ones. The European Concert did succeed in ensuring a degree of self-restraint among the great powers towards each other. But the price was the exclusion of the weaker states of Europe, which were exploited and marginalised.

Three key mechanisms of a CSO generate stability. The first in a multipolar structure is equilibrium in the balance of power. Unlike in a security community, security competition among actors does not disappear in a consociation. Moreover, because consociations are comprised of strong and weak actors, to be stable a consociation must create a “balanced disparity” in which different groups engage in coalitional politics that denies hegemony or dominance to any particular group.

The second mechanism is institutions that facilitate problem solving and engender cooperation. Under a consociational framework, actors cooperate not because they share a collective identity, but because they consider the price of non-cooperation to be too high under prevailing conditions of high security and economic interdependence. Actor sovereignty and autonomy remain important.

The third mechanism is elite restraint. While the distribution of power in a consociation is asymmetrical, and hierarchy exists as an objective fact, more powerful actors do not marginalise less powerful ones, but respect the rights and interests of the weaker segments. Decisions are not made unilaterally nor imposed by the powerful actors on the weak, but are made and implemented through consultations and consensus. A system of mutual or minority veto, or “negative minority rule”, prevails, meaning the less powerful actors retain a say over collective decisions.

Framed in this way, a CSO has obvious resonance with material conditions and many of the existing arrangements in contemporary East Asia.

1. The common interest in deepening and advancing integrated trade, production, finance and infrastructure is enormous. No country, save for North Korea, is outside the regional system and all realize that its disruption would have enormous domestic implications.
2. The distribution of power is multipolar. As discussed above, while the US maintains its military primacy, China has rapidly emerged as the main regional market and a country with significant financial clout. Japan retains considerable economic influence and India is rapidly emerging as a regional and global player. Against this backdrop, it is doubtful if the US with its military power alone can guarantee regional order strictly on its own terms, a key requirement for strategic primacy. At the same time, it becomes more plausible to argue that the US military power will act as a stabilizing force *in conjunction with* other drivers, such as interdependence and institutions.

In addressing US-China strategic competition, the relationship is consistent with defensive realism, rather than an offensive realism that implies aggressive expansionism and power maximization by China and pre-emptive containment by the US. The US strategic concepts of “hedging” and “pivot” (renamed as “rebalancing”) support this. The aim of rebalancing is to maintain a nuanced balance against China while avoiding a slide towards confrontation.

3. Leadership is shared rather than hegemonic and Asian institutions already to some extent fit into a consociational model. In the absence of regional collective security and collective defence, ASEAN is in the driver’s seat of Asian institutions. It has been ASEAN that largely overcame Beijing’s initial suspicion of multilateralism as well as America’s initial impulse to containment. Arguably, Asia’s regional institutions did a better job of dealing with China than Europe’s did in dealing with Russia. The principles of *consensus* decision-making have been an established and unexceptional feature of Asian regional institutions and key to their tradition of shared leadership. While Southeast Asia has a much more consensus-oriented regionalism than other parts of the region, the politics of accommodation developed by ASEAN has diffused to form new and wider regional institutions in Asia. ASEAN’s continued leadership survives by default because no great power – US, China, Japan or India -- is in a position to develop a multilateral security institution under its own imprint either due to historical baggage or the level of mistrust among them.

Intriguing as it might be, the logic and ingredients of applying a CSO to regional realities needs further elaboration.

- Even if a CSO model is aligned with material conditions in East Asia, how would states act differently if they acknowledged it as the appropriate security order for the region? What would they be expected to do differently? Are there hidden premises of economic rationality and a harmony of interest that evaporate in the face of disputes about sovereignty, territoriality, history and national identities?
- Is the US likely willing to give up or share strategic primacy? What would shared primacy look like?

- Is China capable of self-restraint of the kind and degree that will assuage anxieties among its neighbours about its rising power? In difficult areas like the South China Sea, can it forego national advantage to act according to rules, norms and legal agreements negotiated with its neighbours? What would it gain by deeper self-restraint and more robust reassurance measures? What would be the concrete evidence that self-restraint was being reciprocated?
- What is the relationship between a CSO and the continuance of bilateral alliances? In what ways do they complement and in what ways do they conflict?
- What is the role of international law? How will it need to evolve to incorporate a shifting balance of power? Must it be understood as operating within the preferences and interests of the great powers?

V. Revisiting Confidence and Trust and Introducing Empathy

No terms are used more frequently in regional cooperative security discussions than confidence, trust and the corresponding confidence and trust building measures. Both are intended to reduce tension and the dangers of accidental or inadvertent conflict resulting from misperception. In general terms, confidence relates to a sense of safety; trust to respect and mutual concern. From there things get murky with multiple definitions in use.

In the past two years there has been an outpouring of academic writings and policy thinking focused on the idea of “trust” including President Park’s “*trustpolitik*” proposals and reports and speeches from around the region using the related concepts of “strategic trust,” and “mutual trust.” Even while it is repeatedly mentioned as an objective, the material reality on the ground is something much closer to what the Indonesian foreign minister refers to as an increasing “trust deficit.” “Trust-reducing measures” seem more in play than their opposites.

David Welch, a core participant in the Canada-China project, is trying to make sense of what these terms mean and how they can be operationalized. He is particularly interested in how they are connected to what he sees as exaggerated perceptions of threat in Northeast Asia and how to reduce them.⁵

The extra dimension he brings into the discussion is the proposition that even the most robust confidence building measures cannot on their own generate trust. The missing ingredient is empathy, the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes or see the world through another’s eyes. This does not mean agreeing with the other’s point of view, something he calls sympathy, but instead having a deep understanding of it. He argues that without understanding how others see a problem—what they believe, what they fear, what they want, what they need, how they feel—one can neither sensibly identify outcomes they would consider acceptable, nor give sustained attention to exploring possible ways of reaching them. Empathy can be useful in defeating an enemy; it is also a necessary but not sufficient condition for trust. At the same time, empathy is neither necessary nor sufficient for building confidence.

⁵ This draws on lexicon entries he prepared for the November 2013 project meeting as well as his recent positing, “Scary Neighbours” <http://www.cigionline.org/blogs/asia-pacific-security/scary-neighbours>.

If Welch is correct that there is a systematic overestimation of threat in Northeast Asia, the need for empathy could not be more pressing. Historical and territorial disputes, divided countries, and competing national identities both threaten to generate conflict and represent obstacles to building trust. Indeed, some characterize Northeast Asia not as a region but as an anti-region. Multiple diplomatic and academic efforts to build trust and empathy in Northeast Asia have failed. Welch proposes a new approach starting with small groups in individual countries, then going regional, an approach used to good effect in cultivating empathy between former adversaries in various Critical Oral History projects that looked at the Cuban missile crisis, the Bay of Pigs, the Vietnam War and the Carter–Brezhnev era.

In Asia Pacific and Northeast Asia, the low level of empathy is not a function of a lack familiarity or interaction. It is instead a function of lingering suspicion, unresolved grievances, a lack of transparency, and “dialogue” that often takes the form primarily of megaphone diplomacy. This makes it easy—almost inevitable—for each to assume the worst. Recent tensions over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands provide a number of revealing examples. When Japan nationalized the islands in 2012, China interpreted the move as a deliberate provocation and escalation, whereas Japan did it precisely so as to prevent further provocation and deliberate escalation. The target of the nationalization was not China, but Shintaro Ishihara, the arch-nationalist governor of Tokyo. And when Japan first publicly revealed that a Chinese frigate had locked weapons-control radar on a Japanese ship in January 2013, the working assumption in Tokyo (and also in Washington, once the United States confirmed the Japanese evidence) was that this had been a deliberate escalatory act on the part of the Chinese. Mil-mil contacts quickly established, however, that it was nothing more than an artifact of unclear rules of engagement on the part of a Chinese military experiencing growing pains. Neither of these two events was hostile, yet both were interpreted as such.

In a region where historical issues are still very much alive and very explosive, it is difficult to use Critical Oral History as a vehicle for cultivating the kind of dialogue that could help participants identify and understand their mutual misperceptions, their precise fears, their main concerns, and the areas in which they might most fruitfully cooperate to begin the long process of building trust. However, there is reason to believe that small-group, closed-door discussions on precisely these issues may improve levels of empathy and illuminate a path toward greater trust. The key is to bring together people who are aware that there is an empathy gap, who are willing to interrogate their own beliefs about others, and who are willing to speak frankly about their own countries’ interests, wants, needs, fears, perceptions, and understandings of an acceptable regional order. While discussion of current disputes is not at the moment likely to be productive, it may prove possible for people with the right attitude toward an empathy-building exercise to have a fruitful conversation about related second-order issues, such as the appropriate ways of handling disagreements about the bases of entitlements in a modern, globalized, yet still essentially Westphalian international system.

Conceivably, of the various possible conceptions of regional order, CSO may be the one with the largest contract zone—in which case a discussion of CSO could itself serve as a vehicle for building empathy and trust.

Again, specific questions need to be raised and addressed.

- Philosophically, is trust based on rational self-interest, social capital, or identity? Is it based primarily on words or deeds, intentions or a pattern of behaviour? What is the widest ideological or political gap that trust and empathy can bridge? Can they exist between different types of political regimes? Is it based on establishing commonalities of value and interest or acceptance and management of differences? Can the trust produced in economic interactions spillover into the political and security realms?
- Historically, are trust and empathy the bi-product of practical cooperation or their precondition? Are there examples of successful trust and empathy building measures in Asia Pacific in the last 25 years? Is it possible now? For example, is cooperation on managing the South China Sea and its resources possible even as political disagreements and sovereignty disputes are unresolved? Would a Code of Conduct be the foundation for building trust or instead dependent upon it already existing?
- Operationally, what groups should be the targets of empathy building measures? What exactly is the starting point and what mechanisms need to be created? In what practical ways can powerful domestic narratives of distrust and nationalism be countered?

VI. Design of the December Workshop

The participants will again come from Canada and China and this time from selected Southeast Asian countries. Some who will not be able to attend in person will be present through written comments and tele-conference.

While it is expected that some officials from both the Chinese and Canadian governments will attend, they will be doing so in their private capacities.

The outcome of the meeting will be a report on the state of the discussion and a recommendation on whether the ideas are of sufficient value and weight to be advanced in a larger regional meeting in early 2015.