



Gist of Comments on the Chen and Evans Concept Paper

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Received from track-two practitioners in Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States

1.

- new and important conceptual suggestions.
- need to take into account not just a power shift or power transition but the changing nature of power.
- the big challenge is how not to emphasize competition, confrontation and conflict but how to deepen cooperation in a situation of deepening economic interdependence.
- a CSO with a clear set of common rules, practices and norms is desirable. But how exactly is it to be built? Why can it succeed when other efforts have fallen short? Who will be the leaders?
- what about its role in promoting non-traditional or human security?
- empathy is intriguing but how can it be built?
- how are Chinese scholars using the term “new security concept”? How do word and deed line up in the context of the East and South China Seas? Do they believe the US-Japan alliance is outdated? Alliances are shifting from hub and spoke to a network basis and their comparative weight declining, but they remain important and valuable.

2.

- the paper asks the question of the hour and offers some profound thinking on how to think about an answer.
- particularly impressed with the level-headed acknowledgement towards the end that the mission is not to spread love and goodwill around the region but to find ways to improve the odds that as states wrestle with contradictory pressures and impulses they will see merit in proceeding down the cooperative and collegial path.
- may connect in interesting ways to an Australian CSCAP meeting in December on what a ‘rules-based international order’ might look like, where to find the rules, norms and conventions. Do they in fact have a Western bias?
- isn’t transparency a key part of the CTE linkage?
- we need a more friendly term than “Consociational.”

3.

- fresh and thought provoking.
- concept of CSO needs to be defined more precisely. Hard to envision it in concrete terms. What is its institutional configuration?
- realist ideas of collective defence and liberal ideas of collective security are analytically

incompatible. Is consocial theory really just a mosaic model?
 -ASEAN method of consultation and consensus will take the CSO nowhere.
 -CTE are important concepts but very hard to develop in NEA because of geopolitical calculus, parochial nationalism, and messy domestic politics.

4.

-isn't the real issue the possibility of China-US condominium as overlords of the region, a G-2, rather than US-China competition? If so the question becomes -- what are their respective zones of dominance?
 -why is that Kevin Rudd's proposal for an Asia-Pacific community (that later morphed into the East Asia Summit) led by a concert of great and middle powers *opposed* by small states in the region?
 -Cold War 2.0 is the wrong analogy because of the presence of deep economic connections between China and countries in the West and Asia.
 -cooperative security processes have stalled at building confidence and trust, with little progress on preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. Maybe the concept of cooperative security was wooden and wrong from the outset.
 -there is a problem of language even if we accept the premise of the argument in the paper – the language of the paper is that of scholars of IR. It is not framed in language immediately accessible to practitioners of diplomacy who are increasingly trained in disciplines other than political science and law. There is a need for serious re-writing of the draft intended to reach out to those who will have to grapple with implementing policy. The authors should use Sir Ernest Gowers, *The Complete Plain Words* as a guideline and avoid the language of IR theorists.
 -CSO is difficult for policy makers to understand even in the English language. The same can be said of “multiplex”.
 -CSO is too airy-fairy, not able to come to grips with hard realities and unlikely to make much of an impact on policy making. Looks nice to read, good to listen to, original and imaginative but will not be taken seriously at the policy making level. Everyone will agree but none will act in the direction proposed by the initiators. In this sense it is like the idea of the Non-Aligned Movement.
 -re empathy, this is really just Negotiations 101. Every exercise in policy gaming attempts to create such an understanding of alternative views and adversaries' perspectives.

5.

-excellent justification and summary
 -translate later into a language congenial for diplomats and policy makers
 -tie things together with an overarching questions: “Is there a particular kind of regional order that all could buy into, and what are its minimal features?” If the answer “No, there is not,” then we are out of business. So on the assumption that the answer is yes, we need to identify the requisite set of minimal features.
 -CSO is the most plausible of the many possibilities identified on p. 4. Among its virtues is its fidelity to, and ability to accommodate, the realities of the region's power dynamics and its heterogeneous security architecture.
 -we already have a CSO, in effect, but it could work more smoothly and open up more opportunities for cooperative engagement if people recognized this, made some effort to appreciate its virtues, and stopped resisting it in favour of some other model of regional order

that has no chance of broad acceptance.

-the US-China relationship is central. CSO provides a framework for a new type of major power relationship

-the smooth operation of a CSO involves two quite different elements: rules specifying how things should work; and norms of etiquette and protocol. Both are important, but thus far discussion and debate has been confined to the former. Good manners matter.

-there is no fundamental contradiction between the system of bilateral alliances embedded and the CSOs, though there are tensions that need to be investigated and clarified.

-we need to define the primary and minimally, mutually acceptable secondary rules of order. These secondary rules govern behaviour in specific domains such as maritime rights, airspace, diplomacy/politics/military rules of the road in disputed areas.

-regarding empathy building measures, the region is not yet ready for a Critical Oral History project.

6.

-must take into account the simultaneously analytic and empirical difficulty of transposing an *intranational* idea like CSO onto an *international* and *transnational* space.

-CSO thinking grew out of domestic politics and essentially in democratic regimes like Holland.

-notions of mutual trust, including Xi Jinping's, are too abstract. We need concrete examples of cooperation. Costs of non-cooperation can be low.

7.

-CS1.0 was developed before the new challenge of strategic transition was in play.

-key questions arising: (1) What is the role of ASEAN and the future of an ASEAN-centred institutional architecture?; (2) what are the roles of multilateralism, minilateralism and bilateralism; (3) how to manage competing domestic agendas in which perceived security interests and nationalism are more important than the advantages of economic interdependence. (4) towards an Asian *or* Asia Pacific security order; (5) what contributions can CS2.0 make to human or non-traditional security issues?

-to get to CSO/CS2.0 are we willing to give up American primacy? ASEAN leadership?

8.

- thoughtful and brilliant paper, A collaboration of this sort between some of the best and brightest in Canada and China is itself to be congratulated and welcome. We often under-appreciate things like this, assuming they are easier than they actually are.

-The CSO idea is extremely interesting...much to commend it, partly because it is pragmatic and quite a bit of it is already in practise without the elaborate academic/theoretical underpinnings.

-key to moving the idea forward is answering the questions on pp. 7-8.

-agree with Welch that the threat on the Korean peninsula is exaggerated. The question is why, by whom and for what purpose. The vested interests of a military-congressional-industrial complex are awesomely powerful.

9.

-earnest and thoughtful effort, intellectually stimulating, question is how applicable is it to the real situation.

-CSO is close to cooperative security but trust and empathy are a little too idealistic given the

tensions and conflicts in the region. Who will start them and from where?

-there is a contradiction in Chinese thinking between Premier Li's Baoao Forum speech that emphasized "a community of shared interests and development, a community of common destiny, and a community of shared responsibility," and President Ji's remarks at Sunnyland that stated that "The Pacific Ocean is vast enough to accommodate the two major powers" and his speech at Shanghai that "Asian security should be discussed among Asians."

-China's basic strategy is to drive the US out of Asia and establish a China-led regional order. China wishes to transform the current balance-of-power or unconstrained great power competition to a Sino centric order based in Beijing.

-skeptical about CSO but there is not a good alternative. Until it is clear that China will not try to change the present regional order by force, it is best to hedge against China. Dialogues are important and both China and the US should aim to reduce their militaries through dialogue and negotiation .

-the Welch argument about overestimation of threat is NEA but those inside the region don't agree. It is difficult for the two parties to reach an objective perception of threat. Only the outsider can offer such view. In this sense, it is important for the region to provide a room for third parties to assess the level of threat. Perhaps the paper can stress the role of third parties in reducing tensions in the region.

10.

-valiant effort to come to terms with the shifting balance in Asia and China's role in it.

-searching for a new equilibrium is the right quest.

-how do you translate CSO *into English*? The idea might appeal to academics but not to political leaders. Use a more common term.

-skeptical that the US alone with its military power ever could guarantee regional order strictly on its own terms.

-US rebalance is about returning a US focus to Asia and away from the Middle East and to maintain a relationship with China, not balance against it. US is not trying to contain China.

-Would the aim of a CSO be conflict avoidance/tension reduction or would there be response mechanisms aimed at keeping or restoring the peace if it is broken? Would there be consequences to violating CSO Principles (whatever they may be)?

-A Statement of CSO Principles and Objectives would be a useful measure to help better define the type of cooperative mechanism you are developing.

11.

-how to come up with concrete policy implications?

-policy makers in SEA are genuinely interested in academic and theoretical matters as seen in their adoption and development of ideas like cooperative and comprehensive security.

-equilibrium can be built through military build ups including both conventional and nuclear weapons. But this is consistent with defensive realism: a kind of balancing that gives China a capacity for denial without dominance, while the US has a capacity for deterrence without containment.

-no great power will allow another to project power (whether surveillance or carrier battle groups) to its door step. US and China will sooner or later develop rules of the game and the US will have no choice but to change its aggressive surveillance.

-cooperative security was defined in such a way as to juxtapose it against balance of

power/deterrence approach. The CSO idea subsumes balancing. Hence balancing/equilibrium (defensive realist kind) is a necessary ingredient of a CSO.

-CSO argues that balance of power is not destiny, it cannot produce stability on its own. Other elements: interdependence, institutions and elite restraint are equally important. No country can create stability on its own, but together, they can go a long way.

-neither the Chinese nor the Americans will easily accept a CSO approach. Americans will never think of Chinese denial as a positive thing and the Chinese will express righteous indignation against balancing as Cold War mentality. They will never think of their claims in South China Sea as offensive or a threat to the sealanes. These differing perspectives need to be managed. "Equilibrium" is a better characterization of the goal than "balance of power."

-possible initiatives under a CSO banner: (a) a joint meeting of economic and security ministers to

highlight that nexus and weigh the costs and benefits of conflict and cooperation in the region; (b) devise new Indo-Pacific Treaty of Amity and Cooperation; (c) change the ARF roadmap with its 3 stages of cooperation and instead formulate a list of consolidated and concurrent measures; and (d) develop a new track-two mentality that pushes beyond the immediate comfort level of states and has independent leadership.

12.

-paper is succinct yet comprehensive.

-term "CSO" doesn't work. It is most commonly used as the acronym for Civil Society Organization. Do we need a term at all? Once we have a term it is analysed to death and amended by every commentator. Rather than the name, we should be promoting and emphasising the characteristics of the desired regional order, as in the three 'mechanisms' on page 6. I know a name is easier and shorter, but not everyone takes the same things from the name alone.

-a fourth mechanism is needed, something like "a national and collective mindset that attempts to understand other actors' points of view and assumes positive motives from state action rather than malign'. This picks up on the discussion of empathy on pages 8 and 9.

-concerning turbulence and uncertainty, not entirely persuasive as every Defence White Paper in the past 50 years has used words like it.

-re US primacy, hard to know what this means. Even if the US has the most military power this doesn't now, nor ever has, translate into unilateral influence.

13.

-to be viable as a proposal for track-one or track-one-point-five purposes, the paper will have to be presented in a very different form.

-the idea of accommodation as presented on pp. 1 and 7 is unduly negative.

-a key issue going forward is how multilateral institutions relate to China and the bilateral alliances.

-US-China interactions are fundamental, especially how they avoid the Thucydides trap in a power transition and how they can achieve greater trust and empathy. The Chinese idea of a new type of major country relationships is useful in this regard.

-more is needed on specific policy actions that the US and China should take to adjust their policies.

-re empathy, there are regional differences. It is needed in the context of the Korean nuclear

issue but is hard to see in application in the South China Sea.

14.

-idea of a CSO is attractive but at this point pretty theoretical. What matters most now is a list of concrete policy recommendations.

-international law matters. It is undeniably influenced by politics but rules and norms remain important.

-empathy is important and starts with humility and will need to start at the track three level.

15.

-excellent starting point, the challenge is to translate the ideas into policy recommendations and operational activities.

-it is novel to suggest that a security order can be built that is attractive to major, middle and smaller powers. Historically speaking, major powers only think about smaller ones in alliance formation and dynamics.

-why is Canada relevant to the discussion now that it no longer sees itself in a Middle Power role? Is it because the Chinese partners believe that Canadians still have some special pull or access in Washington?

16.

-CSI an innovative idea but needs to be elaborated its relation and connection with established international norms, rules and regimes, including the UN and international law.

-risks of inadvertent conflict and escalation in the region are alarmist and exaggerated. US-Russian confrontation in Asia is an important dimension that the paper overlooks.

-take note of the key ideas that came out of the meeting of Defence Ministers in Beijing on November 21-22. These included the concepts of sustainable conflict management based on negotiations and respect for history and international law, new military exchanges to build trust, with a new global security architecture characterized by inclusivity, transparency and avoidance of Cold War rhetoric and mentality.