



**Report on the First Meeting of the CSCAP Study
Group on Multilateral Security Framework
in Northeast Asia/North Pacific
Tokyo, Japan
29-30 April 2005**

The First Meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on Multilateral Security Framework in Northeast Asia/North Pacific was hosted by the Japan Institute of International Affairs (CSCAP-Japan), in Tokyo, from 29-30 April 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives from eight CSCAP member committees, including Australia, China, Europe, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and USA. Other participants included two officials from the Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, the Director of the Taiwan Security Research Center, two observers from the Japan Institute of International Affairs, and Katsunari Suzuki, former Japanese chief negotiator for the Japan-DPRK normalization talks. All together, there were 22 participants, including the Co-Chairs: Professor Yoshinobu Yamamoto (CSCAP-Japan), Mr Zhou Xingbao (CSCAP-China), Professor T. J. Pempel (US-CSCAP), and Professor In-Taek Hyun (CSCAP-Korea). CSCAP-New Zealand was represented by Dr Tanya Ogilvie-White from the University of Canterbury.

What follows is a short report on the two-day meeting: the first part records the key points raised during the five discussion sessions; the second part describes the tone and character of those discussions.

Part One: The Discussions

Session 1: Directions of the Study Group

The first session was chaired by Professor Yoshinobu Yamamoto of Aoyomagakuin University, Japan. He explained that the group's mandate, which had been approved by the Steering Committee, was to investigate possibilities for creating a multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia and to produce research output on that subject within two years. Given the time pressure, Professor Yamamoto stressed the need for the group to discuss the content of the final research product in some detail at the first meeting, and the importance of reaching agreement on a timetable setting out the specific contributions of each participant. He then presented a sole authored paper entitled: "Multilateral Security Framework – A theoretical Essay", which provided a comprehensive list of different forms of multilateral cooperation. During the discussions that followed, it became clear that the Japanese participants felt that this paper would provide a useful conceptual framework for the Study Group's work, which could be divided into four issue-based parts: the Six Party Talks; Economic Cooperation; Non-proliferation; and Military Confidence Building Measures. However, support for this approach was not widely shared by other participants, who felt that a more logical approach would be to (a) examine security challenges in the region, followed by (b) an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of existing multilateral mechanisms in the region, followed by (c) an analysis of potential future multilateral security frameworks. By the end of the session, no consensus was reached on this point, with some arguing that the second approach was too cumbersome and

unrealistic given the time constraints and available expertise and others arguing that a broader approach was essential, particularly in the current political climate, which might require more creative solutions.

The first session was immediately followed by lunch, after which Ambassador Katsunari Suzuki gave a speech on Japan-DPRK normalization talks and the difficult problem of the abduction issue, which inflames Japanese nationalist and anti-DPRK sentiment.

Session 2: Situation and Problems in Northeast Asia

The second session, on the situation and problems in Northeast Asia, was also chaired by Professor Yamamoto. Professor James Cotton (Aus-CSCAP) presented a paper during this session, explaining the current status of the troubled and stalled Six Party Talks. The subsequent discussion centred on the need for a much broader security dialogue in the region, and the opportunities for a neo-functionalist approach, whereby technical and economic cooperation could eventually lead to greater trust and confidence amongst regional actors, thus eventually facilitating cooperation on more difficult strategic matters. The Chinese participants were particularly enthusiastic about this approach, directing their questions and comments at the American participants rather than the Chair or the paper presenter, and arguing that neo-functional cooperation would gradually erode the negative effects of “Cold War mentalities.” Following prolonged - and often uneasy - discussion of these ideas, a general consensus appeared to have been reached on the scope of the project, which could include: an analysis of the Korean issue, including – but also extending beyond - the nuclear crisis; cooperation on non-military security challenges, such as energy security; and a focus on human security and the capacity for states in the region to cooperate over issues such as trans-national crime, terrorism, human trafficking etc.

Session 3: Effectiveness and Problems of Six Party Talks

The third session, on the effectiveness and problems of the Six Party Talks was chaired by Mr Zhou Xingbao, Secretary General of CSCAP-China and Senior Research Fellow at the China Institute of International Affairs. Professor Hideya Kurata (CSCAP-Japan) and Professor T. J. Pempel (US-CSCAP) presented short papers during this session, explaining shared US and Japanese optimism that, if the Six Party process resumes, it could be expanded to form the basis of a multilateral security framework for Northeast Asia. It was pointed out during the discussion, however, that the Six Party process is at a critical and uncertain stage and that it might not be wise to hold out too much hope that the process can be expanded. There was also some disagreement between participants over whether the US and other countries have really understood China’s position on the DPRK nuclear issue. It was argued that China’s position is actually much closer to that of the US than is often portrayed: China accepts US intelligence that the DPRK has an enrichment programme, supports US proposals on CVID, rejects the DPRK’s request to acknowledge it as a nuclear weapon state, and opposes DPRK calls to transform the Six Party Talks into a regional disarmament forum. It was pointed out, however, that these areas of common ground have been undermined by the lack of mutual trust between China and the US and between the US and DPRK, which has scuppered chances of resuming the process. Furthermore, unrealistic expectations regarding China’s leverage over

Pyongyang was considered to be counter-productive. In response to these remarks, other participants argued that there are some significant differences in the way the US and China think about the DPRK nuclear issue: whereas China is primarily concerned about nuclear breakout by regional adversaries, the US is also concerned about the possibility that the DPRK could export fissile materials to non-state actors. A worst-case scenario from China's perspective would be a decision by Japan to 'go nuclear' in response a nuclear test by the DPRK – particularly if such a decision received US support.

Session 4: Toward a Multilateral Framework in Northeast Asia: Issues, Actors and Time-Frame

The fourth session was chaired by T.J. Pempel (US-CSCAP, Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies). Two papers were presented during this session, the first by James Cotton on the 'Proliferation Security Initiative and Multilateralism.' He pointed out the legal problems associated with the PSI and argued that it would not be an appropriate basis for regional multilateralism due to China's deep-seated opposition to the PSI arrangement, South Korea's scepticism towards it, and the lack of consensus within Japan over that country's actual (as opposed to official) commitment to the initiative. In the discussions that followed, the point was made that China does not oppose the PSI in principle, but is concerned over its potential contravention of the Law of the Sea Convention during interdiction. Rizal Sukma (CSCAP-Indonesia) then presented the second paper entitled: 'Multilateral Security Framework in Northeast Asia: A View from Southeast Asia.' In his paper Dr Sukma drew on Southeast Asian experiences of multilateralism, particularly through ASEAN, ARF and CSCAP, and used these to help elucidate some of the problems and opportunities for multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia. This paper was followed by another general discussion during which it was argued that developments in one region cannot shed light on the other, partly because Southeast Asia does not have to contend with "China's Rise" in the same way as Northeast Asian states. According to another participant, Japan's desire to maintain regional dominance and leadership during China's rise further complicates regional dynamics. These comment sparked some debate over the wisdom of using the term "China's Rise", which at least one participant felt had negative connotations and should be replaced with "China's Development".

Part Two: The Tone of the Meeting

Session 5: Wrap-Up – How to Proceed with the Future Activities of the SG/expert meeting (see below)

The meeting was reasonably good-humoured much of the time, but there were occasions when strong differences of opinion led to a tense atmosphere. The co-chairs made every effort to minimise these tensions, but unfortunately it proved impossible to reach agreement on a clear and coherent research agenda for the Study Group. These problems became increasingly evident as the meeting progressed, and created serious difficulties during the final session. In the end it was unclear what had been agreed, and the only plan of action that came out of the meeting (to produce an edited volume and perhaps a consensus report) was incomplete and confused. As the final

session began to wrap up ahead of schedule, there was some discussion of sending a Co-Chairs' meeting report to all participants following the meeting. The expectation is that this will be a working document and that comments will be invited from participants in the hope that it can be transformed into a clear work plan for the group well before the next meeting, which will be held in Seoul in late October 2005.

Dr Tanya Ogilvie-White
University of Canterbury

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