

2004 Asia Pacific Round Table

Keynote Speech by Prof. Ito Kenichi, President of JFIR

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“Korean Peninsular and Regional Security”

Dr. Ming-min Peng, Ambassador Fu-Chen Lo, other distinguished participants of the Round Table, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to be here today with you and to report to you about my humble view on the Korean Peninsular and the regional security developments in the recent years. It is widely admitted that the end of the Cold War changed the landscape of the world fundamentally. Particularly in the field of security the change was dramatic. The threat of the Soviet Union suddenly disappeared. But it did not promise us that we could live in the Garden of Eden. As demonstrated by the September 11 incident in New York and Washington in 2001, we are now exposed to the new untraditional kind of threats. Terrorism combined with Weapons of Mass Destruction is now our nightmare. It is said that the traditional threats of wars between states have been replaced by the untraditional threats of terrorism, drug-trafficking, etc. However, there is one region in the world where both traditional and untraditional threats co-exist. That is Northeast Asia, where we have no other choice but to live. Our sense of insecurity comes from the source of a country that remains unchanged, or at least indifferent to the changes taking place all over the world. That is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea.

It has become the common concern of all the countries in the region how to convince North Korea to give up its course of confrontation with the rest of the world. That explains why and how the Six-way Consultation Mechanism was instituted. North Korea's insistence to the development and possession of nuclear arms and its refusal of resolution and redemption of the kidnapping of Japanese citizens are the two main sources of our concern. Judging from the style of Kim Jong-il, I am doubtful if he will be persuaded by diplomatic negotiations alone. In this regard, let me briefly touch upon the newly emerging trend of multi-layered security arrangement in the region.

While institutions of international security have undergone fundamental changes in Europe after the end of the Cold War, it is said that comparable changes have not taken place in East Asia. It is true that NATO has expanded its membership and redefined its functions in Europe and that bilateral “hub and spokes” alliance networks remains essentially intact in East Asia. However, if we look at what happened more closely, we recognize important steps taken in response to the common security challenges of the post-Cold War days in the region. On the basis of bilateral alliance networks multilateral security arrangements are emerging. It was first advocated by Admiral Dennis Blair, former commander of the CINCPAC. In order to enhance the regional

readiness for combined operations of the so-called Coalition of the Willing, "Team Challenge" was organized and implemented in April-May 2001. Military forces from US, Thailand, Australia, Philippines and Singapore participated in, and 22 other countries sent observers to, this umbrella exercise. It is said that "Team Challenge" sets an ambitious plan for creating a Combined Joint Task Force and its focus is shifting more on anti-terrorism operation especially after September 11 incident.

What seems to be more important for the future of the security arrangement in the region is the emerging Proliferation Security Initiative(PSI). The PSI was originally proposed by US in December 2002 and its principles were embodied in the Agreement reached in Paris in September 2003. The membership of the PSI currently comprises eleven nations: Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The PSI is aimed at attaining pre-emptive interdiction, including detaining and searching ships and aircrafts as soon as they enter any of the PSI member's territorial waters or national airspace. In September 2003 a multinational naval exercise, "Pacific Protector" took place in the Coral Sea on the interdiction of WMD. Japan also provided Coast Guard and other law enforcement capabilities. Personally I think there should be a room for some kind of Taiwan's role in the PSI.

To add finally, an interesting change is taking place in the attitude of China towards security frameworks in the region. China's "New Security Concept" first advocated in 1997 emphasizes multilateral efforts referring to examples of the CBMs between China and Russia on border issues and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization(SCO) initiatives. Even more importantly China sent its observers to the US-Thailand joint exercise, "Cobra-Gold," in May 2002, indicating that China would no longer oppose the military exercises even led by US if the purpose of the exercises are non-traditional missions such as peace keeping and disaster relief. These episodes imply how the Coaliton of the Willing could work with China in future in the region.

Before concluding my remarks, I have to add that, in the wake of the emerging structure of East Asian security arrangements, Japan is in a position to share more responsibility and to play more active role in the maintenance of peace and order in the region. However, in order to do so, Japan must set her house in order first. Japan will have to correct its one-country pacifism.

Thank you very much.

Reference: Ken Jimbo, "Emerging Feature of Multilateral Security in Asia-Pacific: from 'Double-Track' to 'Multi-Layered' Mechanism" printed in "Global Economic Review" of Vol. 32, No.3, 2003