The Asia Institute Seminar Series 2016

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The Asia Institute Seminar Series 2016

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Editor

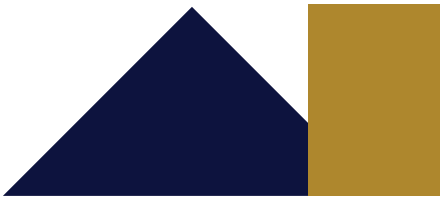
Asia-institute.org

The Asia Institute

The Asia Institute holds seminars and produces reports on Asia while engaging in a constant discussion with stakeholders at all levels across Asia about the critical issues of our time: the environment, the impact of technology on society, the future that our youth face and the changing nature of international relations.

The Asia Institute maintains a balanced perspective on contemporary issues, taking into account the concerns of the entire region and the interests of all the stakeholders. We work with everyone from technical experts, policy makers, to local and regional communities and high school students.

The Asia Institute is dedicated to increasing the in-depth discussion between the citizens of Asia in manner that parallels the prominence of trade and finance.



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2016

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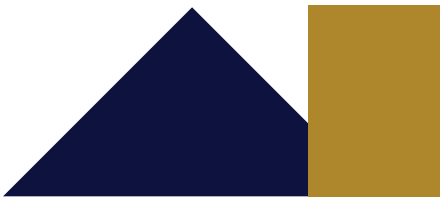

THE ASIA INSTITUTE

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Asia Institute Interviews

"A Broader Vision for Asia
A deeper understanding of today's challenges"

The Asia Institute Seminar Series

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Introduction to The Asia Institute

Our Goal

The Asia Institute goes beyond seminars and reports, to engage at a much more deeper level with stakeholders at all levels across Asia about the critical issues of our time: the environment, the impact of technology on society, the future that our youth face and the changing nature of international relations. The Asia Institute is by its very nature a pan-Asian think tank.

The Asia Institute takes the maintenance of a balanced perspective on contemporary issues as its highest priority while never losing sight of the concerns of the entire region, and the interests of all the stakeholders which spans across all cultural backgrounds and socio-economic positions. Our work engages technical experts, policy makers, local and regional communities and even high school students.

We provide an objective space wherein a significant discussion on current trends in technology, interational relations, the economy and the environment is carried out. This intellectual space we have created serves as an open platform that allows any and every one to participate.

The economic growth and integration in Asia is increasing at a remarkable pace in terms of trade, technology and finance. Asia is no longer simply a hub for manufacturing, but also has become a cultural, intellectual and a strategic center for the world. However, despite Asia's increasing role in on the geopolitical stage, a serious gap remains between the striking speed of integration in terms of logistics, energy and finance and the much retarded growth of intellectual communities and cultural exchange that address long-term common priorities.

The Asia Institute is dedicated to increasing the in-depth discussion between the citizens of Asia on the important issues of our age so that it parallels the level of prominence and attention of trade and finance. There is a desperate need for objective analysis and rigorous debate that goes beyond national borders and includes all stakeholders in Asia.

Our Activities

The Asia Institute has conducted a wide range of programs on culture, society, international relations and security over the last seven years, but our focus rests on the impact of technology on society, the environmental crisis and the shifting nature of international relations and its implications for education, communications and business.

The Asia Institute is committed to promoting meaningful cooperation across the whole of Asia, and we are constantly looking for new opportunities for discussion. We possess in-depth experience and knowledge regarding the Republic of Korea, Japan, the People's Republic of China and the United States. In addition, we have conducted programs involving the nations of South Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and South America.

We believe in promoting meaningful long-term cooperation to respond to the challenges of our times. We bring together individuals and communities to work as a team that can appraise new issue, come up with creative and viable solutions and implement them around the world through robust networks. We, at The Asia Institute are dedicated to creating a new discursive space in which we can come to a consensus on common themes and bring together shareholders from across the Asian region.

The Asia Institute always involves the youth at every stage in its programs, giving them a chance to set our priorities, convey their concerns directly to policymakers and experts through our events and our reports, and to engage in a meaningful advocacy. It is a sad truth that although the expert has much to learn from the experiences of youth as youth have to learn from him, the dialog is inevitably one way. Moreover, we are building bridges across Asia that link youth with decision makers and experts.

Asia Institute has prepared reports for the Korea Research Institute for Bioscience and Biotechnology (KRIBB), Korea Institute for Geoscience and Materials (KIGAM), Korea Institute for Nuclear Safety (KINS), Seoul National University and the Korea Research Institute for Standards and Science (KRISS). We have conducted seminars and prepared papers and held seminars for the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Unification Ministry (Korea) the University of Tsukuba, KAIST, ETRI (Electronic Telecommunication Research Institute), Yale University's West Campus and other

educational institutions, NGOs and government organizations.

The Asia Institute works with its senior researchers, senior associates and partner institutions to engage experts and stakeholders around the world as we examine critical current issues and suggest possible responses. Our research is aimed at producing accessible, objective evaluations and meaningful suggestions and proposals to policy makers and citizens. Our research takes the form of reports, presentations, articles, seminar and videos. Our research encompasses materials aimed at the specialist and explanations for generalists that assure that we can build a meaningful consensus about solutions. The position papers, white papers and short articles on contemporary issues produced by the Asia Institute are often translated into multiple languages to assure a wide readership in the decision-making process at the international and local level.

The problems we face today, from the environmental crisis to the increasing divide between the rich and poor, can only be solved by initiating a profound contemplation within ourselves so that we can cooperate and build more novel and sustainable solutions. Only when we have addressed the spiritual hunger and psychological insecurities that lead to unrestrained consumption, or ruthless conflict, can we begin find meaningful long-term answers. As Albert Einstein once remarked, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Our research and our endeavors take into account the underlying contradictions within ourselves that have brought about the crisis of this day.

Our Fukushima Initiative, for example, built a global platform that brings together different forms of expertise from around the world so as to find a solution to the dangerous challenges posed by the Fukushima nuclear disaster. In the process we have created new approaches to collaboration in policy, technology, analysis and implementation.

Finally, the Asia Institute is engaged in a dialog with stakeholders from across Asia concerning the future of Asia itself. We debate how Asia can move beyond traditional geo-political rivalries and envision an Asia as a peaceful totality in which current integration provides new horizons, not new forms of exploitation. We have written concrete proposals for a security architecture built around the response to climate change; for a "constitution of information" to respond to the current crisis we faced as a result of the rapid change in the technology for communication and massive scale surveillance and for new systems to promote international collaboration; and P2P (peer to peer) cooperation throughout Asia and around the world that would encourage cooperation between stakeholders to jointly produce knowledge and other forms of goods/services primarily for its "use value" instead of its "market value."

Welcome from the Director

The Asia Institute is a think tank designed for a new age of open interaction and exchange between parties around the world who share their wisdom to address the challenges of our time in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. Everyone is invited to join the Asia Institute and make proposals regarding our direction and our focus. We are not in the business of dispensing wisdom from an "advanced" West to a "developing" Asia. We are leading a balanced and equal dialog about the future of humanity.

The Asia Institute actively seeks out the opinions and support of individuals and institutions across Asia and the world about issues like climate change, the rapid evolution of technology and the changing nature of international relations in an age of social networks and integrated manufacturing and logistics.

Over the last seven years the Asia Institute has created a new space for honest discussion and mutually beneficial research that has included projects with Tsukuba University and its 3E Forum, the Korea Science and Technology Policy Institute, the Japan National Institute of Environmental Studies, Georgia Tech, the Korea Research Institute for Biosciences and Biotechnology, the National Nanofabrication Center, KAIST, Seoul National University's Advanced Institutes of Convergence Technology, Ecocity Builders, the Korea Institute of Geosciences and Materials, Korea Research Institute for Standards and Science, Korea Federation of Women's Science and Technology Associations, Foreign Policy in Focus, the P2P Foundation and the International Centre for Earth Simulation. Our conferences, seminars, policy reports, research papers, articles have appeared in multiple languages.

We launched the Asia Institute in 2007 in response to the need for a space for stakeholders across Asia to come together and exchange opinions about the long-term implications of social and technological change in this age of unprecedented integration across Asia as a result of growing trade and rapidly and mutually dependent technological progress.

We felt that we desperately need sophisticated and robust fabric of personal relations and collaboration in research, governance and policy to complement this integration in terms of logistics and energy supplies.

The Asia Institute organized the Daejeon meeting (12th plenary) of the Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia (LNWFZ-NEA) in October, 2008, the culmination of a comprehensive

effort to create a secure East Asia through frank discussions between specialists and government officials about a nuclear free zone. The LNWFZ-NEA meeting brought together scholars, ambassadors and generals from around the world for a frank discussion of a concrete and practical proposal to limit nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia. Attendees included former US assistant secretary of state Robert Gallucci.

Addressing the environmental crisis has been a high priority at the Asia Institute. We launched the Daejeon Environment Forum in 2008 which brought together researchers from across Korea's Daedeok research cluster to discuss how their efforts can be combined to develop robust and sustainable technologies. Daejeon Metropolitan City officially endorsed the Daejeon Environment Forum and we successfully ran the program jointly for two years. A team from the Forum visited Washington D.C. and KAIST Vice President Yang Jiwon at CSIS about the forum's work. The forum also established relations with the cities of Tsukuba and Palo Alto and Tsukuba University and Stanford University for collaborations in environmental technologies.

The Asia Institute collaborated with Tsukuba University to establish the International 3E (Environment, Energy, Economy) Forum to hold forums in Daejeon (May, 2009) and Shenzhen (July, 2009) that brought together experts from China, Japan and Korea. We also invited youth to discuss climate change and the potential for global cooperation. Students from Japan, China, Korea and other nations visited research institutes such as KRIBB, KIER and KAIST to speak with experts and held their own seminars in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme.

The Asia Institute has undertaken a series of large-scale research projects with major Korean government research institutes. The major projects are as follows:

- A study of the global collaboration in biomedicine for Seoul National University and a study on Korea's leadership role with regards to women in science for WISET (Women in Science, Engineering and Technology) in 2012-2013.

- A study of paradigms for international collaboration between the United States and Korea for Seoul National University's AICT (Advanced Institutes of Convergence Technology) in 2012.

- Two research projects on technology convergence on a global scale for KRISS (Korea Research Institute for Standards and Science) in 2012.

- A study of nuclear power in Southeast Asia with KINS (Korea Institute for Nuclear Safety) in 2011.

- A study of carbon-capture technology and its potential for KIGAM (Korea Institute for Geoscience and Materials) in 2010.

- Two studies of international collaboration strategies for biotechnology for KRIBB (Korea Research Institute for Bioscience and Biotechnology) in 2008-2009.

The Asia Institute launched the Convergence Technology Program in July 2010 as a response to a request from the Korea Industry Convergence Association. I was also appointed an advisor to the Korea Industry Convergence Association in October 2010; as a result, the Asia Institute has been involved in discussions concerning international cooperation in convergence of nanotechnology, biotechnology & information technology. We launched the Global Convergence Forum together with the Korea Research Institute for Standards and Science in December, 2010 and have held numerous seminars and

published several major papers. We undertook a study of international collaboration in convergence technology together with Seoul National University's Advanced Institutes of Convergence Technology that included close collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale University and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. We have also worked with Business Korea Magazine and Google Korea to develop a continuing seminar series on ICT in Korea and its future potential.

The Asia Institute is currently conducting a series of seminars (many of which are held in Chinese) concerning China's new global role. These discussions have resulted in multiple articles and will be summarized in a forthcoming book in Chinese.

More recently we have had a series of seminars and research projects concerning Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) that have resulted in an Asia Institute white paper on the future of information and global governance that recommends a "Constitution of Information." The proposal was summarized in an article in the Huffington Post and also presented at a conference sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning that featured me and expert on Singularity, Ray Kurzweil.

Emanuel Pastreich
Director

Asia Institute Interviews

Seminar with Henry Rosovsky
January 8, 2016

"The Secret of excellence in the university and the prospects for Asia"

Harvard University had obtained a remarkable global role since the end of the Second World War. Of course it has been a strong institution for a long time, but if we think back, in 1900, or even in 1930, it was not considered to be on the same level as some universities in England, Germany or France. What exactly was it that allowed Harvard to reach the status that it enjoys today?

The task of building a great university is never simple.

Let me stress one point because it's so often misunderstood, and we see this in Asia today: To become a world-class university takes a lot of time. There are simply no shortcuts. People tend to assume, and I have encountered this sort of thinking all over the world, that if they just sink enough money into a university, it will emerge in a few years as a first-class institution. But such rapid growth never happens. It takes time; it takes generations.

That said, there are a few clear factors that determine the potential of a university to reach the highest levels of excellence. In the case of Harvard University, it was true that by the time of its tercentenary (300th anniversary of its founding) in 1936, Harvard had already achieved a reputation as a world-class institution. Harvard did not have the stature that it does today.

So what specifically happened between the nineteen-thirties and now? Well the United States became more economically powerful and attracted more resources and faculty from around the world after the Second World War. But one very important development were the innovations introduced by President James Bryant Conant who served as president from 1933 to1953.

What were the specific steps that President Conant took as president to transform Harvard?

Conant became the President of Harvard University in 1933 with a reformist agenda that removed such archaisms as requiring Latin classes. He promoted a more diverse, and a less elite, student body. Harvard admitted women to graduate school for the first time early in his term.

But his biggest contribution was the so-called "up or out" policy implemented in the late 1930s and early 1940s under which professors who did not meet increasingly rigorous demands for research had their contracts terminated after a probationary period lasting eight years.

Up until that time, Harvard had a lot of faculty who were nice people but who could just stay for a lifetime without any particular demands made on them to be intellectually active or productive. Of course some of them were excellent teachers, but there was no meaningful pressure on them to advance.

But "up-or-out" was not capricious. Harvard introduced the now famous ad hoc system whereby a group of experts in the field of the faculty member to be promoted are consulted concerning the stature of that scholar. This move made the opinion within the field, rather than the clubby relationship within the department, the determining factor in the promotion of professors.

Now, you may notice that in my answer I focus on faculty, as opposed to facilities, budgets, endowments or students. I do so because I believe, based on many decades of work as a teacher, a scholar and an administrator, that the quality of the faculty determines the quality of the university. Everything else flows from the quality of the faculty. If the faculty are good, you will attract good students and you will have alumni who will raise funds for you.

There is another innovation at Harvard which I think made a tremendous difference and that is the decision to try to recruit the very best person in the field for an available faculty position. In the period after World War II Harvard literally engaged in world-wide searches for the very best and created a culture in which it was simply unacceptable to hire friends and associates, to make decisions based on personal affections or inclinations.

I remember that culture vividly from my time as a dean. If we had an opening, we did everything we could to convince the absolutely best person in the world to come to Harvard.

Does Harvard University stand out from other major American universities in terms of what it was able to achieve?-

I would not say that Harvard possesses any sort of absolute dominance. And I personally do not take the rankings of schools all that seriously. However, I think that Harvard's global visibility increased significantly in the 1930s and 1940s and that the new commitment to excellence at Harvard spread to other institutions.

At the same time, public image is extremely important in American society and I observed personally that the Presidency of John F. Kennedy did much in the public mind for Harvard. Harvard was an excellent school before Kennedy, but Kennedy embodied a new vision for the United States: a leader

who caught the world's imagination and that reflected on his alma mater, Harvard.

Of course all of these changes took place in an era of increased self-confidence within the United States after the Second World War. The United States went from being a major country to being a super power and Harvard, and other American universities, found themselves also in a very favorable position to hire the best faculty, and recruit the best students, from around the world.

In the public mind, across the world, today, when you think of an outstanding university, you will almost certainly include Harvard.

In China, Korea, and Japan There's been a major increase in the level of research done at notable universities and efforts to improve education in English in China, Korea and Japan. And yet, despite the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been invested, these universities still do not seem to have reached the level of Harvard. What are your thoughts on what has been done by universities in East Asia to reach that stature?

There are many reasons that universities in East Asia have not reached the positions that they had hoped for. After all, we must remember that modern East Asia did not begin with Confucius. In fact the experience of modern education in East Asia is relatively short and granted that time scale, many universities are doing fine. There are, however, many challenges to Asian universities which I do not need to reiterate. But let me note two factors that are sometimes overlooked. First, academic freedom, in all senses, is much more critical to the success of a university than how much money is spent on infrastructure or on hiring big names. Faculty need to have the space to pursue the research that they are passionate about and the also need to have the freedom to express their opinions in the university, and in the society as a whole.

Equally important for the promotion of excellence in the university is an emphasis on shared governance. The faculty needs to be involved directly in the process of running the university and in the setting of priorities. Shared governance is often the critical element that is missing in Asian universities, no matter how talented the faculty may be. Either it is ministries of education that are trying to run things, or in private institutions—those who control the funds. Neither group knows much about teaching and research.

I chaired a review committee of Seoul National University about fifteen years ago and I identified many problems concerning shared governance, problems that I have observed in Japan as well. Ministries need to step back and give faculties some breathing room.

Korean universities pass down demands from the office of the president that are based on directives from the Ministry of Education. The new rules declare that in order to be promoted, you have to fulfill certain requirements that can be evaluated by someone who knows nothing about your field. For example, the number of articles in SSCI journals. Few of the people making these policies have ever been a professor.

I see more and more of these "objective evaluation criteria" being used by universities and the problem extends far beyond East Asia.

If we want to identify the great success of American research universities, and that success goes far

beyond Harvard, we have to come back to the question of governance. Excellence requires a firewall between trusteeship, or government ministries, and the academic decision-making process. This American concept of shared governance wherein the faculty are engaged in running the university as part of a collaboration with the other stakeholders. I draw a contrast between American shared governance with "the dictatorship of ministries" wherein policy and direction for the university is ordered by bureaucrats who have never taught a class.

It is equally unreasonable to run a university as a "participatory democracy," the approach to governance that once existed in Europe. That approach in European institutions of higher learning was appealing to professors because it was democratic. But those institutions also suffered because they lacked an executive decision-making process; making changes became virtually impossible.

I think the strong point of American research universities is the manner in which trustees, presidents and other senior executives retain a considerable amount of decision-making authority while at the same time maintaining a culture of open exchange and participatory debate. The president can act as the CEO and make a firm decision about the long-term development of the institution, but he or she does so in constant consultation with the faculty. It may not always work this way, but the greatest advances occur when governance is truly shared.

Let's talk for a moment about the rankings "racket." Many universities in China, Japan, and Korea have tremendous potential. But their presidents are obsessed with where their rankings stand. And then there is the ministry of education bureaucrats who do not know anything about teaching but follow the college rankings like the Dow Jones index. I have seen a lot of damage done by rather short-term thinking. What are your thoughts?

The rank of a university is similar to an index number say like the NASDAQ index. I don't understand how you can take an institution like Harvard, Stanford, or Michigan, and represent it by an index number. The concept makes no sense. That doesn't mean that the top fifteen institutions in the ranking somehow don't belong there at all. But what is the difference between number two and number eight in any meaningful sense? As an administrator who worked to build a complex university, I find the assumption slightly offensive. We need to be committed to excellence, not to lists. As academics we have pretty good judgment about the quality of institutions that cannot simply be measured by counting the number of papers published or patents received. Outsiders who swoop in to count beans and make up lists based on statistics have little sense of what excellence is.

I've been told that in some places a president is dismissed, even driven to suicide, because the ranking of the university went from #176 to #201. To me that is an absurdity.

In some respects increasing the overall concern for education in a society is much more critical than raising the budgets for the universities. And certainly raising the amount paid to faculty, and the number of courses offered is much more important than building athletic facilities or administrative offices made of marble.

The faculty know what they need to develop and they need to work with an administrator with the authority do get it done. To define everything in terms of these index numbers is ridiculous.

English is not the primary language for universities in China, Korea, and Japan, but they are being evaluated on the basis of publications in English and courses taught in English. For example, KAIST in Korea recently forced through an entirely English-language curriculum and made all its teachers conduct courses in English. The impact for students and teachers was not entirely positive. And many universities have started assessing professors on the basis of publications in English language publications—that includes professors of Korean literature and language! I do not think these regulations have increased the quality of scholarship.

The question of how much English should be used in international research universities is one with which I am extremely familiar. I would even say I am deeply puzzled by this trend. I am not certain what the correct answer should be. On the one hand, there is no question that English – frequently bad English – has become the universal language of scholarship. It is clearly a tremendous handicap for people outside of the United States, Britain, and Australia and a few other countries because few of them are native speakers, but we demand that they present and publish in English. I suppose the situation varies from field to field. If you're a mathematician, your proficiency in English may not be such a problem. If you're in the humanities or social sciences, there is no doubt that it is a handicap for you.

But there seems also to be a tremendous risk to indigenous cultures if we insist that all scholarship be conducted in English. We are, for example, dealing with ancient and very highly-developed cultures in Korea, Japan, China and the Middle East. What is the impact on cultural and scholarly vitality forcing everyone to do their work in English? I do not have an answer, but this issue has been very much on my mind.

Any final points you would like to make about how Asian universities should go about creating world class scholarly traditions?

I have not been able to give a concrete answer to the question of how the nations of Asia can create their own unique liberal arts traditions that are not simply the importation of a Western model. The question is a critical one and the answer must come from Asian universities themselves.

Simple imitation of what goes on in the United States, or somewhere else, is ultimately not a solution to the challenges that China, Japan or Korea face. An educated Korean, Chinese, or Japanese should have a strong knowledge of the culture, history and literature of his or her own country. Just knowing about Western learning is not sufficient to maintain a vital intellectual environment.

Finally, it is important to think about the admissions process. There are many in East Asia who simply judge students on the basis of national tests. The top universities in the United States do not do that, and for good reason. We need a careful process for admissions that take all sorts of factors into account: different intellectual strengths, artistic expression, economic standing, social background, ethnicity, regional representation and designs a class as a balanced whole. Asian colleges would do well to use a broad range of criteria in selecting students and move beyond the unproductive "examination hell. "

But, before we in America critique East Asia, we must also recognize that we are—unfortunately—taking on some of the same characteristics. Getting in the top institutions has become far more difficult and the value placed on one school over another in terms of education and careers has been much

exaggerated.

I have a granddaughter who is preparing to go to college. I say to her: "It really doesn't matter that much which school you go to. It does not determine your whole life." And she looks at me, smiles, and says: "Yes, I understand, grandpa."

But I can tell that she doesn't believe me for a moment. I hate to see this obsession with "top schools" become a self-fulfilling phenomenon. I fear that the university mania is slowly making its way to the United States.

Henry Rosovsky is an economic historian, specializing in East Asia, and Harvard University administrator. From 1973 to 1984 and 1990 to 1991, Rosovsky served as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, where he was previously a Professor of Economics and chair of its Department of Economics. He also served as Acting President of Harvard in 1984 and again in 1987. After stepping down from the dean's position served on the the Harvard Corporation, until 1997, the first Harvard faculty member to do so in a century.

Rosovsky is widely known as one of the most effective administrators at Harvard who has played a central role in determining Harvard's direction for decades. He shared his perspectives on university administration in a highly readable book entitled, The University: An Owner's Manual.

His research books include: Capital Formation in Japan (1961), Quantitative Japanese Economic History (1961) and Japanese Economic Growth (with K. Ohkawa, 1973).

Asia Institute Seminar with Daniel Bell
December 17, 2015

China as a society, a government, an economy and a culture is quite difficult for us to comprehend today. The changes are so rapid in cities like Beijing and Shanghai and the culture remarkably fluid. What do you see as the defining characteristics of China's culture today and what do you anticipate in terms of China's future role in the international community?

The most striking cultural shifts in China over the last two decades or so has been the revival, both orchestrated and spontaneous, of tradition. The main trope for culture in the twentieth century, especially since 1949, has been anti-traditionalism. As far back as the May 4th movement in 1919, and before, whether it was the financial elite, the liberals, the Marxists, or anarchists they all agreed that China was poor and that one of the causes of that state of affairs was the backward traditional culture.

We have witnessed a dramatic reevaluation of tradition in China, and also in other East Asian countries with a Confucian heritage such as Korea. This part of the world has witnessed rapid growth over the last three decades that has sharply reduced poverty and the region has remained at peace. So when people look around and ask what do all these countries have in common, one answer is their Confucian heritage. So whereas the previous narrative was that Confucianism undermined modernization and economic growth, now many argue that it actually helps.

We are witnessing the return of a more historical and humanistic perspective on the world, an emphasis on education, a concern for family across several generations, and a new assessment of the value of China's tradition of political meritocracy. Chinese have long held that the key to a political system is the selection and promotion of leaders with superior abilities, ethical qualities and social and cultural skills who can best lead the nation forward. The perspective has Confucian roots, but it has been modernized and has been the core of the strategy for economic development in China and other East Asian countries such as Korea and Japan. Although Confucian ideology was denounced during

the Cultural Revolution, it is taking on a new centrality today. And the promotion of core Confucian values is not limited to the government. We see similar efforts in business and in the non-profit sector.

The promotion of meritocracy is also linked to the negative impact of monetization on society. The search for wealth has made people individualistic and moved them away from higher ideals. So the Chinese government, as well as many intellectuals, wants to promote social responsibility and reviving Confucianism serves that purpose. In this age, Marxism offers little concerning such questions.

What questions did Marxism originally address?

Marxism concerns economic systems and the emergence of classes based on economic interests and the resulting ideologies. It does address the problem of materialism and individualistic tendencies in modern societies; that part is true. However, when it comes to promoting a sense of responsibility, and reducing the likelihood that leaders will become corrupt, when it comes to creating a bureaucracy which is committed to serving the public, Marxism has almost nothing to offer. Marxism, especially under Mao Zedong, was about a struggle against a certain class of landlords and capitalists, and not about personal ethics. Confucianism, however, is precisely about ethics and personal responsibility. So whether it's the educational system or the training of leaders, Confucianism is serving as an inspiring moral backbone.

But the terminology used in the West regarding politics can be very misleading when we try to address China. There is a tendency to divide the world between good democracies and bad authoritarian regimes. More often than not, China is lumped together with the latter regimes. But that latter category is just so broad that it's not helpful. It could include anything from cruel, family-based tyrannies like North Korea, to military dictatorships like Egypt. But China is something quite different. Of course you find some authoritarian tendencies, but there are also strong democratic characteristics. In the past thirty years, we have seen unprecedented openness in China, and a willingness to discuss China's problems. In my book The China Model, I use the term "vertical democratic meritocracy" to refer to what we find in China. Chinese see the value of democracy at the local level. But the further you move up the chain of political command, the more meritocratic the process of promotion for leadership becomes.

There's still a big gap between the ideal and the reality in China. But this standard of meritocracy has served to inspire significant political reform over the past thirty years. I think Chinese-style meritocracy is a good model to use as a standard in judging political progress and regress. In fact, meritocracy is a better standard for judging long-term progress than Western-style liberal democracy in a Chinese context. As you can imagine, this suggestion has generated a certain degree of controversy outside of China. But within China, the emphasis on political meritocracy is quite mainstream among reformist intellectuals and political leaders.

Some might say that American government has increasingly authoritarian trends as well. The question of democracy is perhaps a slightly more complex issue. What standards do we use to judge?

At the end of the day, my view that there is no one standard for evaluating political progress or regress that is universally applicable. There's different reasonable ways approaching the question of what is a

good political society. From Plato on we have seen competing models for society, and for utopia. The American standard for measuring political progress and reform in accordance with the democratic ideals embedded in its Constitution and advocated by its founding fathers have had great impact on many political movements in American history. Of course, there is always a huge gap between the ideal and the reality.

But at the end of the day, the standard for evaluating reality should draw on the leading political ideas embedded in American civil culture.

The same holds for China which has its own complex history of political philosophy and its own ideals. We can trace those ideals back to debates carried out throughout Chinese history, from Confucius and Mencius, over political meritocracy. Chinese thinkers gave much thought to how to select able and virtuous political leaders, which abilities matter and which virtues matter? Chinese pondered about, and experimented with, mechanisms for selecting leaders. And that tradition continues on today. Over the last thirty years in China, the political leadership has been selected first and foremost through examinations, followed by evaluations of performance at lower levels of government. No one rises to the top without extensive experience at all levels. And that approach is quite similar in form to what we have seen throughout much of Chinese imperial history.

I do think that the central political ideas articulated in Chinese culture ought to serve as the standard for evaluating political progress or regress in China. And I do think those values are different from the liberal ideas embraced in the United States. There is a huge gap between the ideal and the reality-that is always the case. But the more fundamental question is what should serve as the standard?

Yet Chinese models for civil service were not totally alien in the West, right? There was a debate in the eighteenth century about good governance in the West that was based upon the ideas of civil service taken from China. The British civil service adopted that system from China in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Certainly. Reforms in Europe that moved governance away from the selection of the aristocrats for public office to rigorous exam-based civil service in England and France was a critical development. And that was specifically influenced by examinations.

But there remained a critical difference. In the United Kingdom, and also in most Western, liberal democratic societies, there has remained a very strong division (at least in theory) between the civil servant who is supposed to be chosen by meritocratic systems, such as exams, and the political leaders, who are supposed to be chosen by elections. And in principle, the civil servants are supposed to implement the decisions of elected leaders in the West.

By contrast, In China that division was not clear and was not even an ideal. Even today, Chinese feel strongly that the leader should be qualified and should be virtuous. But there is no strong feeling that he must be selected in an open election. Traditionally, there has not been a clear division between the implementers and the decision-makers in Chinese political philosophy. The meritocratic mechanisms were intended to be used to select leaders, especially at higher levels of government, and also bureaucrats.

Clearly the Chinese examination system had great influence in the West, but it was implemented only at the level of the implementers. That is of course in theory. In practice civil servants exercised a lot of political power in both the East and the West.

China is increasingly influential in the world and more and more people have hopes that China will be a leader. How are Chinese people responding to the expectations that are placed upon their country?

China has been thrust into this global role very quickly, perhaps far more quickly than anybody imagined, including the Chinese. The relative political and economic weight of China has increased so dramatically as to be disorienting to Chinese.

When people talk about the achievements of China over the past thirty years the most commonly cited one is poverty reduction. About half a billion people were lifted out of poverty, in part due to energizing the people through market reforms. But that process was only possible because there were public officials overseeing the work and they were promoted based on their performance. Political Meritocracy itself is a key to reducing poverty.

But the other achievement of China is that it has not fought a war since 1979. Just compare that record with that of the U.S. So although there are those in Washington D.C. who worry about China emerging as a threatening military power, there is not much basis for that speculation in China's recent historical record.

But the sense of insecurity in China, however, is real. China thinks it is literally surrounded by American military bases, and there are some grounds for that concern. In the long term that sort of a build up, considering China's desire to engage the world in trade and finance, is simply not sustainable for the long term.

It is hard to imagine that the United States will remain the dominant military power in the region in thirty, forty, fifty years' time. From the perspective of history, such anticipation simply does not make sense. It is natural that China will want to exercise more weight in this part of the world, meaning East Asia.

Granted China's increasing economic power, and the fact that United States power is declining in relative terms, regardless of the so called "pivot," such a shift is inevitable. Better for the United States to embrace it and work with China.

Regardless, the U.S. is just going to have to get used to China playing a bigger role.

The long term problem is that the U.S. is not willing to recognize the shifting geopolitical realities and make room for China's increased role in the East Asian region. If in the future North Korea implodes, the regime changes its position relative to its neighbors and integration with South Korea begins, at that point we need to ask why do we need American military bases in South Korea? Well, the honest answer is that we will not.

So why can't the Americans make a commitment to withdraw from South Korea if Korea is unified?

The United States could even increase its presence in Korea after unification or a peace treaty. The issue is rather that the presence needs to shift away from a military one. Or you might even say that granted the threat of climate change, which the conventional

military is not equipped to respond to, we had better start shifting America's role in Korea right now.

On all this points I just do not see any indication at all that the U.S. is willing to accept a change in the balance of power in the East Asian region in China's favor.

This change will have to happen, but it will cause tremendous disruption if the United States does not have the vision and the imagination to embrace it.

However, I fear that the ultimate result of this massive external expansion by the United States, the practice of radical interventionism, over the last fifteen years, may be the exact opposite. Disaster could cause the United States to collapse into a more isolationist viewpoint – and there is precedent in American history.

It's certainly possible that in twenty years the U.S. will have no overseas bases. Washington will essentially pull out of the world, not for strategic reasons, but because the emotional response domestically to the catastrophic effects of endless war were so tremendous.

In any case, although there will be significant tensions and conflicts between the United States and China because of differing strategic goals, I don't think that the U.S. and China are likely to be enemies. Compared with fundamentalist Islamic groups, for example, Chinese basically buy into the current system for global governance. They just want to have more say. Fundamentalist Islamic groups, by contrast, imagine a culture that is incompatible with a secular cosmopolitan world. As fundamentalists put it, "You guys value life over death. We value death over life."

It shouldn't be, in principle, that hard for Beijing and Washington to craft a grand bargain wherein stability is maintained but China plays an increasingly large role in the East Asian region.

Sadly, the United States is committed, through budgets and institutions, to very outdated concepts of national security. Politicians and businessmen want to maintain large, theoretical threats to justify factories making Abram tanks even when the military says they don't want them. Ultimately it is tragic and also somewhat comic. Granted the amount of money we are going to have to commit to the mitigation of, and adaption to climate change, this situation is also grossly irresponsible.

Yes, the environmental issue is getting more attention in China these days. Over the past three decades the emphasis was on poverty reduction and economic growth was perceived as the best way to achieve that goal. Everything else took a back seat, including the environment.

But recently there's been this rapid shift in the level of consciousness, not just in government, but in the population at large. Chinese are clearly gearing up for large-scale change. Because the Chinese political system is not democratic at the highest levels, it can make unpopular decisions in the interest of nonvoters or of future generations. And they're doing it now.

Let us consider the recent accord on climate change between the United States and China which has set deadlines up to 2030. Who's more likely to act on those accords? Well, unless the whole political

system collapses, we can expect that China will stick to what they have said. But in the U.S., if the Republicans win, then the entire agreement could come apart. In China there is an emphasis on environmental sustainability these days that is important for promotion of public officials and there are big innovations in local government. It is hard to imagine something like that happening in the United States.

In Shanghai, they don't even look at GDP growth anymore. Parts of China are explicitly using environmental sustainability as a criterion for development. And the thinking of average Chinese is changing too. They're so frustrated by the pollution in cities like Beijing that they demand change. So now, every major city in China publicly monitors and makes available the levels of PM-2.5, which puts lots of pressure on the government to take very strong measures to control pollution, although admittedly the United States Embassy's public monitoring of PM 2.5 levels helped to bring about this change. This year in Beijing, has been much better than last year. The levels of PM-2.5 are down 20 percent, apparently. The government is much more serious about dealing with the environment, and that is just the beginning. So there's been a rapid shift over the past few years, which is enough to make one a bit more optimistic.

China has ended up playing a critical role in geopolitics more quickly than anybody had anticipated. Is China able to meet these demands? Do we see China rising to the occasion?

In many fields China is playing a very constructive role. I must confess that I think the United States is miscalculating by trying to undermine China's efforts. China wants to be a team player and most countries in the world accept China as a team player.

The U.S. says to China, "Oh, you guys need to be a responsible stakeholder." But when China tried to do that and play a bigger role in the Bretton Woods system, they were undermined. We see the predictable result in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Ultimately even the British chose to ignore U.S. foreign policy and join as founding members.

So I do see a certain professionalism in China's actions.

But I am uncomfortable by domestic efforts in China to whip up anti-Japanese feelings. That response is unhealthy. The situation is improving over the past year or two, because so many Chinese tourists now travel to Japan and they often find out that they like the place when they get there. There's still a hangover in China from the post-1989 period when the educational system emphasized its so-called "patriotic education." Patriotic education was not just about pride in Chinese history, but also creating a negative impression of Japan. Now there is a lot on social media in China that is more favorable towards Japan.

When I visited Nanjing recently, and I saw a sign on a restaurant that said: "We will not serve Japanese, who are imperialists."

Sometimes taxi drivers in Beijing will say: "I will never pick up Japanese customers." I think it is quite dangerous for the government to encourage that sort of behavior.

Do Chinese spend a lot of time thinking about China's global role?

It's an issue for the Chinese government and intellectuals. Whether they like it or not, what China does "shakes the world" and China must take a more active role in shaping the world. The question is whether it can play this role in way that promotes international peace while allowing for difference. Most Chinese recognize that the world's powers will have different forms of government and we should refrain from pushing any one form of governance. I worry more about the United States side in this respect. Not only does the United States claim that their democratic model is best for them, but it's that it is best for the rest of the world. Some Americans assume that alternative systems are fundamentally illegitimate. Naturally this attitude upsets many Chinese who are committed to good government. They think, who are you to lecture us about political systems, with only a few hundred years of history? You are bound by a constitution that is not fully appropriate for dealing with contemporary challenges.

To my mind, both sides should work on areas of common concern while allowing that there may be justifiable differences regarding forms of government in different political contexts.

Is the new global posture, including the "One Belt One Road" policy of opening up a new "silk road" accompanied by a new sense of idealism and commitment to serving the global community?

Well, maybe not idealism, but it points to a more active effort to build win-win scenarios with neighboring countries in ways that are not determined by the Western powers. The "one belt one road" was partly inspired by the traditional links along the Silk Road, but it has been updated to include powers such as Russia.

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Asia Institute Seminar with Benjamin Elman
December 10, 2015

When people talk about the future of East Asia, and the potential for integration, they say, "Well, Europe has been integrated from Roman times but East Asia has no such precedent. In fact Japan has never really been part of a unified architecture in Asia." Is there something in the way East Asia has evolved in the 2,000 years that limits future integration, or is that not an assumption we should make?

In order to understand global issues, one needs to understand the regional issues that undergird them. China, Japan, Korea, and to some degree Vietnam and other portions of South Asia have become a very viable regional group. China is increasingly influenced by the nations around it in economics and politics. To understand the region's potential, we need to consider the historical development of the Chinese empire, the economic impact of the Tokugawa government (17th-19th centuries), and, ultimately, how Korea was a part of economic and scientific change influencing both sides.

Korea often served as a conduit for medical knowledge, for Buddhist and Confucian metaphysics, and for technological innovations. Korea has been caught in the middle historically as China continued to surpass Korea in terms of its military and economic power and influence in East Asia during the Ming and Qing dynasties. I think that when Japan's Toyotomi Hideyoshi led invasions (1592 and 1597) of Korea that fundamentally altered the geopolitical landscape and reduced Korea's role in the economic and political order of the region.

We tend to underestimate just how big Japan was in the global economy in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Tokugawa reunification of Japan after the battle of Sekigahara (1600) brought together a population of 25-27 million under a highly disciplined military. That meant that Japan was not just an island, but a powerful state capable not only of invading Korea and marching all the way to the Yalu River, but also capable of challenging the Ming Dynasty. Innovations in naval warfare and the

decision of the Ming to throw their full weight into the campaign against Japan meant that Hideyoshi was forced to give up the campaign against the Ming, but the consequences of that campaign were that Korea was devastated and is only now starting to recover its self-confidence. The Gyeongbok Palace remained in ruins until the middle of the 19th century. Japan took advantage of Korea's decline.

Hideyoshi dragged tens of thousands of people from Korea back with him, experts in printing and publishing, scholars, naturalists, mathematicians, and doctors. Japan ungraded its technological capacity and Korea was set back in spite of the failure of Japan to occupy the country. Korea no longer played the same role as a medieval conduit for culture and an innovator in science and technology.

It had been true before that China and Japan had many indirect relationships in terms of the silver trade, but Japan after the Tokugawa unification refused to be part of the tributary system that the Ming had carried on with the Ashikaga regime (1336–1573) for a period of time. Korea was caught in the middle, playing the role of a tributary state in the Chinese centered economy, and still trading with the Japanese outside of the tributary regime.

There existed complex economic exchanges in the seventeenth century in terms of trade and commerce long before the Europeans become an important power as marauding pirates, and later in legalized trade, through the Dutch, the English, the Portuguese, and the Spanish.

The Ming efforts to quell the threat of Sino-Japanese wakou pirates who operated in the seas between the two countries from the 16th century were successful, opening up a peaceful realm for trade. As a result trade increased dramatically in East Asia and the Europeans were drawn into it. Although political relations were indirect, trade was direct and the silver trade had a direct impact on the domestic economies throughout East Asia. After the fall of the Ming, Japan turned inward, but there were new external political and economic forces at work that changed Japan forever.

Japan had a strong central government, advanced technology, and an economy of scale that made it fundamentally different than the island nation it had been before. Here was a semi-unified economic unit with 30 million people in it and a diverse economy. In the early 18th century France was the largest demographic unit in Europe with an equivalent population and England had only 10 million. The Dutch were just a few million, as were Portugal and Spain.

The scale of the trade in East Asia, including South Asia and India, was much larger than the scale of trade in Europe in the 18th century. The rise of the West was a long-term story. But to read backward from the Opium Wars and say that the rise of the West was inevitable following those events of the 15th and 16th centuries is rather dubious. Scholars today note that the rise of the West in the 17th and 18th centuries did not represent the rise of a new modern civilization, but rather the fruition of a global economic trading system centered around China, Japan, and Korea which reached such a scale that it drew in the French, the English, the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the Spanish. Wealth was generated in Europe from trade in the New and Old Worlds, but much of that wealth originated in Asia.

In the standard narrative of the Opium Wars we hear that the Western Europeans, England specifically, were more sophisticated in culture and technology and ran a more complex international system. What do you think?

I don't think we should read that back teleologically into the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. That is to

say, we should not assume that everything the West did back then was somehow preparation for what the West would do in the 19th century. From the seventeenth century the large-scale economic trade in Asia drew the Europeans to the region. Look at what happened to Taiwan in the 15th to17th centuries: Everyone wanted Taiwan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi in Japan planned to invade it, the Spanish and Dutch occupied it, and the Portuguese were interested in it. The wakou pirates were active and ultimately Taiwan was the scene of a civil war between the Ming loyalists and the Manchus. The Manchus ultimately secured Taiwan and made it part of Fujian province for the first time.

China established powerful trading units before the Opium War that integrated Guangzhou and Canton and brought in others from the trading networks of the Yangtze Delta and elsewhere. The global trading system, trade of scale, started in China with the Qing unification and the Europeans were drawn into it because of its value. Ultimately the English, the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the Dutch were integrated into a trading community in Southeast Asia (and the Japanese indirectly), especially trade through Macau and the islands outside Hong Kong. This trade system was called the "Canton trade," and it was the most dominant trade route in the 17th and 18th centuries.

So powerful was the Canton trade that England found itself in a tremendous deficit with China and thus the drive to sell opium to the Chinese led to the final denouement of the Opium War, and the breakdown of the Canton trade. Of course the the Opium War was a single event, but it was the result of many long-term economic developments leading to the treaty ports in East Asia after 1850.

And of course we must take into consideration the issue of technology transfers via the Jesuits.

So if there had been a similar military conflict, say in the early-eighteenth century, the Western technological advantage would not have been so decisive up to the 1790s?

That's right. When the British sent the Macartney Mission to China in 1793 they tried to get China to open its other ports, but the Qianlong emperor just refused. British technological power was not yet significantly advanced over that of China. But Britain was just on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. The breakthrough with the steam engine was still not applied beyond removing water in mines. Lord Macartney was already aware of this new technology as a novelty. When Lord Macartney showed the steam engine to the Canton traders, they also were intrigued, but it had no lasting significance, and the mission was deemed a failure. Only by the middle of the 19th century, at the time of the Opium Wars, did steam engine power start to mature, and the British navy gained a considerable advantage over the Chinese.

One of the essential questions about the Opium War is when and why did Europe pull ahead of China so decisively. Could it be that at a certain point the newly developed technologies in Europe started to accelerate exponentially – not because of any act of man but following their own internal logic? Or was the reason simply that because Europe fought so many wars in the 18th and 19th centuries, it was pushed forward technologically in a decisive manner?

Shifts in science and technology did make a difference. The new Newtonian mechanics served as a framework for a whole new set of applied technologies. You cannot build steam engines, steamships, without technical manufacturing that requires engineering and advanced mathematics such as the

calculus. So, the old strengths of Europe in shipbuilding were still there, but the Europeans had made a decisive step forward in terms of mechanizing in a systematic manner the use of steam power. The new mathematics and psychics after Newton were introduced to some degree to China via the Jesuits. These technologies were transmitted to Korea and then to Japan. But the revolutionary nature of the changes was not yet obvious to the Chinese, Japanese and the Koreans until the early 19th century, after the British and their allies defeated Napolean on land and sea.

After the Opium Wars of 1839-42 the Chinese begin to very rapidly produce their own steamboats. The technology was introduced by Chinese who were trading with Singapore and with Indonesia. They were the first to figure out how steam engines were constructed. So, from the 1840s until the Taiping Rebellion, the Chinese (and subsequently the Japanese) painfully learned how to make steamboats. There was only about 20-30 years when the English had this technology virtually to themselves.

Recent research suggests that it was not that the Chinese, Koreans or Japanese "failed" to understand the nature of the Industrial Revolution. Rather the domestic political situations were such that the problems of dealing with these new forces – the British in particular – were caught up with complex domestic political issues. The Taiping Rebellion, for example made new knowledge of the West politically sensitive and led to the final decline of the Qing Dynasty. The Taipings forced China to develop arsenals and shipyards, in Wenzhou, Fuzhen, Shanghai and elsewhere. The new shipping technology was up to date and powerful. But those naval ships were useless during a major domestic civil war on land.

China was torn apart by internal conflicts like the Taiping Rebellion and could not create a unified navy in the manner that Japan did. Whereas Korea and China were able to drive Japan out through a series of naval battles in the 1590s, by the late nineteenth century, that was not the case. The Japanese unified navy surprisingly defeated the Chinese, but no one in China thought the Japanese would be able to do that well until they saw their actions in 1894-95. The Japanese won the battles decisively. The difference was less a matter of technology than of organization, political context, and background. The Chinese and Manchus could not unite together in a cultural and ideological sense to work for a common goal.

It does seem that cultural and institutional problems kept China from taking advantage of its own strengths.

Cultural factors are very, very important. Let us take the Fuzhou shipyard built as part of the Self-Strengthening Movement. At the start the Japanese worked with the French and mimicked the Fuzhou shipyard as they built their own model navy. During the 1880s, the Japanese adopted the British model for shipbuilding, and started to turn the Yokosuka Shipyard into a copy of a British shipbuilding yard. The Japanese were united culturally and ready to move very quickly.

In a sense the 1830s and 1840s were the beginning of an exponential rate of technological change, which is now still dramatically changing our world. That initial "failure" to make the leap that England and France made was not only a problem for China. It was the undoing of many powers of the 18th century, such as the Ottomans, Persians, and Moghul Indians.

In hindsight, it seems as if the Opium Wars were the signal event in modern history where the British imposed their global trading system on the Chinese. But, a more careful consideration of the previous two hundred years suggests that it was rather Europe that was being drawn into the massive trading network formed by China, Japan, and Korea (although Korea was more resistant to the network), rather than China being forced to join the trading system of the West. For the most part the Chinese were open to the West as long as the trade was peaceful and the basic rules of the tributary system were followed regarding when ships could enter ports. The Canton System of trade that extended from the city of Guangdong, was the foundation for global trade in the 18th century in East Asia – the richest part of the world.

The Chinese were open to the Jesuits and translated many of their texts concerning mathematics, physics and astronomy. Once translated into Chinese, those Western ideas circulated through the entire region. Trade was open in Asia and it formed the basis for supra-national networks for goods and for intellectual exchange.

But although the Chinese understood Aristotelian science and combined it with their own science, the Newtonian revolution of the18th century, and the following rise of steam engines, was not so well understood. Chinese had no idea how fundamentally these new technologies were transforming the East Asian world after 1850.

When you look at China, Japan, Korea today, and listen to the discussion about trade and integration, how do today's events appear in light of developments over the last three centuries?

In the 20th century it was the rise of Japan that posed the greatest challenge to the Asian order. And the fall of the Japanese empire did not alter that reality. Japan emerged after the Second World War with the technology and expertise to be a central player in the industrial world, granted there was a new patronage relationship with the Americans. Today we see an imitation, but not a return to earlier political structures wherein the Chinese were the central power.

Similarly, the role of Koreans as intermediaries between the two groups is being repeated again as well. Both China and Korea are playing a far larger role than they had in the 20th century.

And Japan is profoundly aware of the risk of being marginalized in some future order. Japan tries to play both roles. Asserting its commitments to America's new order and complying with a modified containment theory, Japan at the same time engaged deeply with the Chinese concerning trade, investment and increasingly technology in large scale, low-key, business events.

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 fell on the 300th anniversary of the unsuccessful naval battles with the Joseon and the Ming. But in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan won dramatically and occupied several Chinese ports. This war led the Japanese to start thinking about expansion into Manchuria as a viable strategy.

Japan became the dominant player in economics and international relations until the late 20th century. Currently the rise of China has started to overshadow Japan. Recent nuclear challenges in Japan such

as Fukushima have made Japan less obviously the leading advanced nation in East Asia. Increasingly China and Korea, especially in trade and technology, are becoming dominant. In many fields, from trade and manufacturing to research and development, Korea has become a major player. But China has recently also shown signs of decline in its own growth potential.

The nationalist narrative of the Chinese position vis-à-vis the Japanese is critical in Chinese politics and they need to stress that China is now the dominant player. The new rise of China will result in a new battle for dominance (in one form or another) in the 21st century and the role of Korea may end up playing a role similar to its role before the seventeenth century, before the British, the Portuguese, the Spanish and others entered the market.

I think that Japan's wariness of China and Korea is an indication of the profound shifts going on. The "rise of China" narrative can be read in different ways, and for Japan it is a challenge. For Korea it is an opportunity to return to a prominence it has not had in many centuries.

What of the U.S. role in East Asia? Why has the U.S. played such a role over the last century, and what do you think the prospects are for the future?

The U.S. began to play into East Asian trade and commerce in the 19th century. So, at the time of the Opium War the U.S. was a much smaller scale state interested in trade with China. The efforts to find the North-Western passage from East to West across the North American continent, which led to the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Louisiana Purchase, and the establishment of the United States on the West Coast, was all about getting to the Pacific Ocean. But the point was not just to catch fish on the coast; the United States wanted to be involved in the China trade from the Pacific side.

In a sense, the decision to make the United States a continental power was related to China's economic strength even in its weakened state in the early 19th century.

In the 19th century Philadelphia merchants, Boston merchants, and the merchants of Virginia and southern U.S were orienting their businesses towards the China market and sending their new clipper ships there. So, the U.S. was also sucked into the China trade, even late in the game when China was no longer considered such a great power. The United States was still not a great power, but nonetheless it had a hand to play in that trading network. As the U.S. becomes more and more influential in the 19th and 20th centuries, the U.S. plays the "open door" card at the time, arguing for some sort of transparency in trade and investment in China.

Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 had everyone in Europe worried, the French, the Russians, the English, about Japanese expansion. And ultimately the French and the Russians and the Germans intervened in the Tripartite Intervention in 1895 to kick the Japanese out of Port Arthur and make sure the Treaty of Simonoseki did not give too much influence to Japan.

In the contemporary world, the U.S. has completely replaced the Europeans in East Asian diplomacy. Regarding diplomatic issues within East Asia, only the Russians are active because they are in Siberia. Ultimately the British, the French, the Germans, and the Russians are willing to let the U.S. represent them today in a manner that would have been impossible a century ago.

So when we see a transformation of the world in the nineteenth century, we should understand that this process was not just the result of powerful Western empires, but that Asia also played a role in creating this new world.

For that matter, the current "rise of China" is but a return to earlier pre-eminence.

Perhaps the question will be whether China, when it reaches a higher level of geopolitical power, will continue to adhere to international law, or will it rather, like the United States after it replaced Great Britain as the top dog, turn more to arguments of exceptionalism?

The future, I think, is going to be built around the Pacific. The question is whether the Pacific is a "Chinese lake," or is it an "American lake"? What will be the role of Korea and Japan in that lake?

I think we are seeing at this point that although U.S. economic interests are linked to China, Korea and Japan, the actual nuts and bolts of the sophisticated East Asian economy is quite far away from the direct experience of Americans. It is possible that in the future we will decide that our interests go as far as Hawaii and that's it.

China may end up as the dominant player, but it will not be the only player, and ultimately the Chinese will have to deal with the Japanese and the Vietnamese, and less so with the Americans (if current trends continue).

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Asia Institute seminar with Lawrence Wilkerson
December 03, 2015

What do you see as the underlying sources for the tensions between China and the United States today?

The tensions between the United States and other ASEAN nations with China over the South China Sea today are extremely serious. The South China Sea and the tensions with Russia over Ukraine are the two greatest sources of possible conflict today and I believe that either problem could lead to war if not properly handled.

The problem is in part one resulting from an American drive to confront China, but it is exacerbated, almost daily, because the Chinese leadership has discovered that nationalism serves as a great replacement for the void in ideology that the death of communism has produced. I fear that as growth slows below 7 percent, the Chinese government will increasingly feel a need to throw nationalist red meat to the Chinese people. I fear that the speculation about a possible military conflict could become a self-fulfilling prophecy and I suggest that America and China, and other nations, take concrete steps to reduce the tension and create a broad dialogue. The United States or China could end up in a situation in which both parties, to avoid a loss of face, are forced to do what they said they would do. In the South China Sea – and in particular around the Spratly Islands – we see the greatest risk of a major confrontation.

All sides should recognize that we have a dangerous situation. Such confrontation is not in the interest of the United States, China or the region.

I am not interested in defending China regarding the South China Sea, but there are those who have argued that although some see Chinese activities in the South China

Sea as excessive, or arrogant, China's actions are certainly not worse than American interference in South America in the 1960s and 1970s and that there is no justification for the United States to get involved in what is essentially a regional problem. What are your thoughts?

The argument regarding the United States' meddling is a fair one to make. I would rather want to focus on the need to start a broader and more level-headed discussion about territory in the South China Sea that moves beyond an emotional and nationalist fight between the claimants such as Vietnam and the Philippines, and China. Let us also bring in countries like Indonesia who have a stake in the region. I think the best way to address what I personally think is a mistake on the Chinese part is to have other voices say, "Listen China, these claims are causing an unnecessary problem. You are making claims that are far beyond what any international law would codify and approve."

There are laws and processes that can be invoked to deal with these claims without escalating military tensions. The United States should pull back and not try to make itself the center of attention.

The United States could say, but currently is not saying, "Let's resolve this dispute in a way that benefits everyone and sets a positive precedent for the future."

We need to emphasize above all the establishment of a global commons and preserve our fragile ocean from greater damage. Whatever might come out of these islands of value should be for the common good, and not the national good. Our concern should not be building up a military presence in the South China Sea, but rather getting a grip on the dangerous mass redistribution of wealth going on globally. The United States, the nations of ASEAN and China need to put their resources into addressing social inequality and responding toclimate change.

Perhaps we can take these discussions on such global issues and develop them into global institutions that will eventually replace the sadly out of date United Nations.

I certainly support moving from a simple confrontation between nation states over territories to a global debate on true global governance, to address inequality and the danger of climate change. But what exactly do you think the next step in global governance beyond the United Nations would be?

An important issue in the future will be addressing the tremendous global social and financial inequity. Perhaps an important role of the international institution that replaces the United Nations will be monitoring and perhaps even collecting, that global tax on capital that will assure that wealth is more balanced in its distribution in the future. China, the United States, and other nations in Asia should start focusing their attention on creating a global commons and reducing inequity – a much more critical issue than a military buildup over islands. Perhaps the territorial issues can be handled by this next-generation institution for global governance at the same time it sets out to create a global commons and move beyond the limits of the nation state.

I wonder whether one of the most effective approaches, given the serious damage being done to the ocean's ecosystem, and the risk from warming oceans, is simply to take all the islands that are controversial, Dokudo, Senkaku-Diaoyutai, Spratly Islands, and make them nature preserves. They may be administered by one nation, but their

natural resources cannot be exploited.

Such an approach could also help. I think we have to remember the question of Germany after World War One – in any case you never want to leave a state humiliated over territory. But the general concept of a nature preserve has much promise. For example, I would offer a similar concept for the future of Guantánamo Bay in Cuba – territory belonging to Cuba that is occupied by the United States.

The hope is that by separating out territorial possession from potential profit from marine products and minerals, we can help to cool the disputes over islands going on today. We tell the countries involved in an island dispute that ""You can say it's yours, but you cannot exploit it in any way, and it has no monetary value."

Yes, we can handle many territorial disputes by taking the monetary value out of them and at the same time internationalizing them. Let us take again the case of Guantánamo Bay. This territory has been occupied by the United States, but it belongs to Cuba. Really there is no dispute about whose territory it should be. Many of the Cubans with whom I have spoken about this issue reply in a similar fashion. Obviously we should have returned it to Cuba many years ago. But one way to handle the potentially politically sensitive aspects of the return (in the United States, not in Cuba) some effort should be made to internationalize the function of Guantánamo Bay. For example, the land could be developed as the home for a medical contingency brigade for the Western hemisphere to respond to natural disasters. The Cubans are very receptive to this innovative proposal. The American side, however, although its position is much weaker, remains less receptive.

Turning to Korea, President Park Geun-hye is planning to visit the United States, but the visit has been delayed and there has been much trouble coming up with a viable agenda. Many Koreans worry that the country is being squeezed. The United States is pressuring Korea to adopt a more distant stance with regards to China, but in fact Korea finds itself increasingly working together closely with China.

And recently there was a statement by U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary Daniel Russell suggesting Korea should even take a stance on the South China Sea. Koreans think their position is tragic. Is the situation that serious and what should Korea's strategy be for economic and political survival?

These concerns are not just Korea's concerns. And the problem is not simply one of American demands. There are simply serious institutional vacuums in East Asia.

I had a conversation yesterday with three Japanese journalists. We started out discussing Okinawa, but our conversation ranged over many issues, including Korea.

These Japanese were quite sympathetic with the short-lived period when the Liberal Democratic Party was not making policy. Therefore their perspective on security issues was quite distinct from what one hears in the media.

They expressed concern about Abe's efforts to make Japan a "normal country," i.e. a country with a significant military presence around the world and more corporate and government interest in providing collective security for its region.

As I listened to their concerns about Japan-Korea relations, I realized that not only is there no multilateral security alliance (like NATO) in Northeast Asia, but there is not even the required mutual trust that would be required to set up such a security alliance or architecture. Northeast Asia may be the most vital part of the global economy, but even the basics are missing when it comes to stable military and security relations.

That lacuna is the root of my concern for the Korea-Japan-China relationship, and relationships throughout the entire region. There simply is not the trust and mutual understanding to match the extensive economic interplay.

Of course there is much consultation with regard to trade in Northeast Asia. But when it comes to basic trust of the other person in exchanges, it just isn't there. As long as that trust is missing, there will be ammunition for those who want to promote a U.S.-Korea-Japan alliance. Because there is not a high level of trust, there is not an ongoing dialog between Korea and Japan on critical issues and therefore relations between Korea and Japan are sometimes determined by exterior factors.

The rise of China is the most obvious factor today. If Koreans and Japanese engage in a close coordination with the United States, India etc. and appear to be aggressively trying to contain and encircle China, they will only be successful in exacerbating problems with China, not solving them. Chinese nationalism will only grow stronger if there is a perception of a hostile intent on the part of China's neighbors, particularly if that hostility is seen by Beijing as being stirred up by the United States.

And then there is the question of whether Abe might go all the way and make Japan a nuclear power. The nonproliferation treaty and its noble goals may be abandoned completely in the future, resulting in tremendous risk to the entire world, starting with a drive to take South Korea nuclear.

Do you think that if Japan and Korea go nuclear, that will lead to greater proliferation throughout the region, including Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia?

In terms of politics, it is certainly possible, but the costs are great. I monitored nuclear weapons programs for a few decades and I think that the ultimate issue is not what your rivals think of you, but rather the political and social costs of diverting efforts to nuclear weapons and the simple technological costs of running a program. That is the reason that John F. Kennedy's grim prediction of twenty-six nuclear powers by 1984 never came true.

So if we look at the limits so far on nuclear proliferation, it is not simply a matter of someone preventing these countries from getting nuclear weapons. It is also just damn difficult and expensive to develop them. As a leader you would need to persuade your people that they have to spend that much money and time on this effort and not something else.

Well, it seems that in America we do not have much problem with enormously expensive programs these days. It is hard to make sense of all the money the United States is spending on budget-busting defense systems.

Well, here in the United States we just print our money, so we don't have any problem with big

spending on defense. When we can no longer print our money without the result of 1,000 percent inflation the next day, our thinking will change too.

Returning to Japan, the rhetoric of the Japanese is clearly directed at China and the China threat has been hyped. But the lack of general security architecture is not just about China.

Although the Japanese will not say it explicitly, one can detect in what they state, and don't state, a fear of a future unified Korean peninsula with 75 million Koreans and close ties to China and many other nations. That unified Korea may not give up its nuclear weapons, after all. So although that image is not quite as daunting as the Chinese colossus, it is plenty worrisome for Tokyo.

When I heard Russell's statement, it seemed so unreasonable that I wondered whether hardliners in the United States were not pressuring Korea to align more closely with Washington, but rather trying to purposely alienate the Koreans so that they would be driven towards China. It is possible that things have gotten that bad in Washington?

I don't see pushing Korea towards China as a strategic objective of this administration.

But you wouldn't deny there might be some people out there who have that rather cynical idea.

There are definitely some people out there who would love to see South Korea embroiled in some political conflict with China and Japan. They think that such a policy will strengthen the U.S. hand.

I understand the problems with speculation. Let us rather talk a bit about more concrete issues. For example, there is the recent dispute about missile defense. The United States has been pushing directly and indirectly for deployment of the (THAAD) missile defense system in South Korea. Why THAAD in Korea, and why now?

I have always viewed missile defense as a form of camouflage for big contracts for military contractors. I remember there were discussions in the late 1980s in the Pentagon about missile defense. Then missile defense faded away, but it was back again in the 1990s.

There was a serious debate about missile defense when Bill Perry was secretary of defense, an engineer and a rare man to serve in that position. Bill Perry's team analyzed ballistic missile defense and came to the conclusion that it was simply too expensive and that it would simply take away budget share from other places where the military needed funds.

Then, all of a sudden, along came Donald Rumsfeld, and with the wave of a wand the ABM Treaty disappeared. Suddenly we were committed to a $100 billion BMD program, but every engineer we talked to still told us that the whole idea was infeasible and that it would not work the way it was described.

So here we are now, building this system that at best will shoot down two out of ten targets that are coming at it. And if those missiles are loaded with nuclear devices, two of out of ten will not do very much.

So what exactly does the ballistic missile defense do? Well, it makes sure that LockheedMartin and their friends are well-fed and happy.

Now we are taking that system and we are trying to sell it to South Korea. We're pitching it to them as if it were extremely effective, and we are citing the over-hyped "Iron Dome" system in Israel as proof that missile defense works. But if anyone actually starts launching sophisticated missiles, nuclear-tipped, it will be a complete disaster. Everyone knows the issues with the system and the manner in which China interprets it – and Putin too, for that matter. But if President Park senses it is sufficiently pressing as a political necessity to satisfy the Americans, she will have to have it.

Whether missile defense works or not, it is a potential threat, or at least an excuse to justify a further military missile buildup.

No, no, you've got a point. I think, for example, President Putin has people around him telling him that missile defense is technologically infeasible. But in a political sense that is not all that important. President Putin has an excuse to ramp up the military build-up he has already started. So he cares little if it is effective or not so long as its threat serves his purpose.

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Asia Institute Seminar with Alexis Dudden
November 27, 2015

When you observe the conflicts between China, Japan, and Korea today, whether economic, political, cultural, do you see similar patterns from the past, or do you observe unprecedented patterns of behavior?

The historian in me tries to impress upon students that the twentieth century in East Asia was an aberration from history in that Japan was the powerhouse. Japan's power took the form of traditional military power, but also it took the form of knowledge and education. The Japanese defined the terms for intellectual debate within East Asia to an unprecedented degree.

Those strengths were a result of the decisions made during the Meiji Era that set Japan on a path of institutional reform and technological revolution that put it suddenly ahead of the continent.

There were reasons for that breakthrough. This may come across as a reductionist perspective, but ultimately it did matter that Japanese thinkers as early as the eighteenth century had started to embrace a profit-based conception of the political economy which was beyond the pale in Korea or China.

But where exactly did this difference come from in terms of Japanese development? Was Japanese culture so different, or did they just buy into rapidly expanding technologies at just the right moment?

Japan was able to respond to the global development of a market economy and pre-modern Japanese were more comfortable with the concept of market economies. We know Adam Smith as the great father of capitalism with his concept of the invisible hand of markets that helped the businessman to make a profit. But in Japan, there were already Confucian thinkers like Ogyu Sorai in the early

eighteenth century who wrote about the economy not as something divine or natural, but as the product of the diligence of merchants.

Such a view contradicted the concept of a benevolent Confucian world order which did not see making money as a virtuous act. But thinkers in Osaka in the middle of the eighteenth century, flipped Confucianism upside down, and defined profit as a virtue. They were confirming a reality in a country where markets were at the center of the political economy in Japan.

Now fast-forward to the arrival of the black ships from the West, particularly the visit of the American Admiral Matthew Perry to Japan in 1853. The shock of a global economic system demanding the participation of Japan was great, but Japan already understood how to make a profit and power the economy based on markets. It was no accident that Osaka was the world's first future's market.

Korea and China understood money and trade and they saw its advantages clearly. But Confucian ideology did not define profit as a virtuous exercise. So in the case of China and Korea, American, British, French, German merchants were able to formulate, create and manage trade, finance and profit more easily because the Chinese and Koreans had no competing system already in place.

Japan however, had its indigenous models and it quickly figured out how to respond in a Japanese way in the Meiji Restoration. The implications were not limited to markets. Japan could also start a modern military or a postal service effectively and quickly. There was simply much less ideological resistance. Japanese thinkers like Ogyu Sorai understood money and power in the terms close to those employed in industrialized society.

At the time of Perry's visit, the United States was trying to thwart British attempts to be the dominant power in Japan. The United States wasn't going able to challenge British supremacy in China. Americans were dependent on British imperial ships to do business with China. But the U.S. got its foot in the door in the case of Japan and a unique relationship developed between these two powers, both of which ultimately was challenging the British system.

Japan was in shock at first, but it quickly found its footing and was hard at work giving contracts to rival countries to build modern ships. Japanese could not build a new navy and army fast enough. Most astonishing was the remarkable consensus on the project among Japanese elites.

So where are we today?

Today we see the return of the more traditional world order in East Asia, one that is increasingly focused around China. The dominance of Japan that shaped the 20th century is fading and the impact of the "Western powers" is less critical, at least in the popular imagination.

But we have not gone back to the past in any sense of the word. This is an entirely different world with a global service industry and a financial industry that is constantly trying to figure out what kind of money it can make off of the most recent development in geopolitics. In the late nineteenth century Japan challenged the China order by aligning its modernity with Western definitions of knowledge and power and adopting Western approaches to education and science.

To this day we see Japanese saying "We in the West" and clinging to the image of Japan as a member of the G7 that can hobnob with the Westerners in Brussels or Washington D.C.

And yet today some argue that China is more Westphalian in its approach to international relations than anything the rest of the Westphalian system ever produced. Chinese leaders speak about law and order, sovereignty and international law in ways they could not have imagined a hundred and fifty years ago, and in many respects, would not have 40 years ago. The social sciences have won the intellectual debate and are preeminent in China.

The loss of the humanities in China has been tragic. For me the greatest draw about China was the importance of the humanities in the tradition. It was a country where you could study literature and philosophy and then go on to serve in government at the highest levels. Marxism has been driven from the curriculum and departments of Marxist economics have not been popular with students. We do see a bit of a reversal in this trend recently.

Marxist terms in China are the center of an intellectual confusion. Chinese use words and concepts in a manner that they did not do twenty-five years ago. This creates internal chaos in terms of what national priorities should be. So China's biggest problem, obviously, is China. How do you feed that many people and keep the economy stable? They certainly are reflexive participants in the politics of China even if the society is not entirely open.

But the major problems we see today globally originate with the United States on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

What are we to make of the confrontation of the United States with China? I find it unfathomable that the country I grew up in is now engaged in this rush to militarize East Asia without even considering arms control agreements or opportunities for engagement. Is this sort of behavior on the part of the United States just something inevitable? Do countries that become powerful also grow arrogant and then structurally fall apart?

I don't think we've ever seen anything like this situation in world history, to be honest. Geopolitical developments today are unprecedented in two respects. Of course, there have been great empires that clashed, or competed, throughout world history. But what we've see now is on a different scale in terms of politics and, more importantly, in terms of the potential devastation.

In the United States we have developed this dangerous culture of violence that colors everything in our foreign policy. At the same time, we have one of the most interdependent economies in the world. I mean, my child would not have an article of clothing or a toy to play with without China.

And yet there are those in America who seem to think you can just start a cold war, or plan for a hot war with China. But do these people know what exactly they are talking about? China is a continent; China is one in five people in the world. China is an enormous part of the United States economy.

And the technologies are such that the consequences of militarization go far beyond what we see on TV. We see a lot of hype in the United States. Not much of a calm approach to these issues. Nobody has posed the question, "what is the future goal of the United States in East Asia" or "what is our vision for what cooperation in East Asia would look like." That's where the rather alarming desire of some to quarantine China over a few sandbars in the South China Sea is hysterical, and unrealistic at every level.

We have to think about this question of climate change. This threat dwarfs everything else. And yet these new missile systems, and fighter planes, they have no role to play in the response to climate change. But even to ask that question is simply taboo.

That misconception of security has meant we cannot grasp real security threats like climate change. I mean, who's really worried that the United States will not have a toehold in the Pacific?

In any case, the United States has been complicit in the rise of China at multiple levels. The whole process of financing China, buying cheap products from China, and encouraging production in China at a low cost by underpaid workers was an American idea. The China problem is an American problem at the core.

But rather than make that fundamental shift, we have rather clung to this bizarre concept that somehow we should prepare to fight World War II again.

The damage control moment brought to you by the American authorities in 1945 set the stage for our current misunderstanding of the nuclear bomb. The bomb that has inspired such fear as a weapon of mass destruction, morphed into a good and a necessary thing for peace. The last fifty years has resulted in a complete failure of Americans to understand what security means and ushered in the current catastrophe.

I think a related problem is the inability of Americans to simply understand what the United States committed to in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We promised to stop possessing them. But instead we are designing new ones and asking other countries not to possess them.

Many American policymakers have completely forgotten what the Non-Proliferation Treaty says. Just like the US State Department condemns China for violating the Law of the Sea, but the United States, unlike China, has never signed the Law of the Sea.

So here we are with the power to destroy the planet at many times over, and today's nuclear weapons are hundreds of times more destructive than what we used in 1945. But when we flip on the television we just hear about North Korean nuclear capability.

And we are not just talking about nuclear weapons. Nuclear waste is just piling up and we have not figured out a way to dispose of it because there is no way to dispose of it.

We were cursed with the education to know how the world really works, but we do not have any easy way to change the course of events other than to simply keep on trying.

Well what is disturbing is the emergence of an America that doesn't know how to define the rules for the region or project a convincing order. It sometimes seems as if the US is just there in the middle of everything, standing on a tank or on a battle ship, to say "we are doing this because we can." It is not clear to the region that the United States represents anything greater than the spectacle or offers anything more than images of strength. We have tired out all our old supporters in the region with our antics.

We are seeing, for the first time in forty years, real challengers to the old order, both good and bad. I think the most exciting thing that is going on in the region right now, is the articulation of an alternative. We see Japanese people on the street saying: "You know what? You can't change our constitution. We have a democracy, and that is the world order we want." We have not seen that since the 1960s and in some respects the passion is unprecedented.

We do not know how this ends, but I will say that democracy in Japan is working much better than most of the Washington-based "alliance managers" give credit for. They've missed the fact that the Japanese occupation actually did what it was supposed to do, built a real democracy.

And we see original thinking in Japan and indigenous social theory and democratic urges. Let us face it. Japan's is really one of the best constitutions standing on the planet. Some dismiss Japan, but the opposition there may have a chance again to offer an exciting challenge to what The United States or China are offering the region in terms of future vision.

I must say that Washington D.C. is not moving in a healthy direction. I've never seen anything like the reaction in Washington D.C. to the election of Hatoyama Yukio. I was in Japan that year and I was shocked to see how the establishment was committed to undermining and deposing a democratically elected prime minister.

Hatoyama challenged establishment thinking about U.S. bases in Okinawa and he talked about greater cooperation in East Asia. Nothing was wrong with what he was saying, although he used the wrong words sometimes. But the difference between Hatoyama, who was on his way to creating a new rapport with Japan's neighbors, and Abe, who is ratcheting up tensions, is startling.

All Abe has been able to do is slam the door on Asia for Japan. He has embraced a bastardized version of the "cold war" which lacks any vision.

So, what is Korea supposed to do, being openly pro-American? More pro-American than Japan? Washington seems determined ignore the fact that in Japan, the other ally in Asia, we have someone determined to make Korea disappear from geopolitics.

Abe's speeches completely ignore the role of Korea and he tries to overturn the progress made in deepening ties between the two nations.

But Abe clearly does not represent all of Japan. Cooperation wasn't totally flipped over by Abe and there is a faction in Japan that wants closer ties with China.

That is true. Abe could not reverse all the trends. But what is very pernicious and will make things difficult moving forward is the sense among young Japanese that they should despise Korea. Such an attitude, picked up from the mass media, is counterintuitive. Because even as young Japanese enjoy the Korean Wave, there is this "get rid of the dirty Koreans" attitude that has just blossomed among average, young Japanese in recent years.

That trend is combined with the withdrawal of young Japanese from the world. They are not studying abroad and they are not establishing close relations with their peers around Asia.

This turn inward makes Abe's claims that he has modeled himself on Meiji heroes like Yoshida Shoin seem a bit ridiculous. He does not offer anything to Asia and it seems he does not want the Japanese to go into the world other than as an armed force. In fact, he is not even encouraging internationalization.

When Hatoyama came into power, his party published a manifesto in the summer of 2009, saying: "Yeah, we need a change, but we need exactly the opposite of what Meiji did. We need to decentralize."
Ironically, it has been Korea, which Abe so despises, that has actually managed to start the ball rolling with decentralization and Sejong City is looking rather promising.

People are grumbling because their institute is being sent to Busan, but it's being sent to Busan anyway. The opposite trend is going on in Tokyo. That city is going to sink under its own weight at some point!
China is decentralizing in many respects, but at the same time its cities are growing very rapidly and that centralization at the local level poses serious challenges.

The power of local government has increased dramatically in China over the last twenty years. I see local government in China engaged in its own version of diplomacy and trade with local government in Korea and Japan these days, and even hiring regional specialists, as is Korean local government.

Over the long term Japan will change its perspective and return to the Hatoyama vision. There is evidence that Japan wants to be integrated into new structures and organizations for development, culture and administration, otherwise it will wither and die.

There are a number of really interesting alternatives concerning what we can do with the Self-Defense Forces. For example, we can think about what we really need: a humanitarian force that is not the U.N. which can serve as a first responder in places like Nepal. This is precisely the gift Article 9 has given to Japan and to the world: the potential for a military system that is not dedicated to war. And they would have enormous credibility because their soldiers don't fire.

If Article 9 remains, then you get an entire fleet of ambulance drivers and first aid responders. Granted the refugee crisis in Europe, that is exactly what we need. That's what they're good at!

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Asia Institute Seminar with Michael Puett
November 11, 2015

There is great admiration for the remarkable emphasis on education we find in Asia. There are parents in the United States who want to imitate that approach to learning. But the people of Asia feel that their educational system is completely out of control. Students feel that they are drowning in the sea of examinations and certification. We have to ask ourselves why in Asia what school you went to is so very important. .

I think there's a lot of truth to both those perspectives on education in Asia.

On the one hand, yes. It is very true. There has, traditionally, been an extraordinary emphasis on education in East Asia. We're seeing the fruits of that tradition now in East Asia, where economic development is directly related to the incredible emphasis on the importance of education in that culture.

At the same time, we must recognize that education in East Asia has assumed a rather dangerous vision how education is supposed to actually work. There has been a destructive drive in East Asia to assess education on testing and link all social success to those tests. By definition, therefore, all the education children receive in schools and with tutors is aimed primarily at having them do well on these tests so that they can advance to the next level. These tests are often geared to de facto natural aptitudes. So, for example, some tests are designed to find out if you're particularly good in mathematics, in which case you'll be tracked into a mathematics line. Or if you're particularly good at some other field, in which case you'd be tracked in that direction. This approach to education, it's true, is related to earlier East Asian notions about education and service, specifically the concept of meritocracy.

The initial impulse behind the tests in China was to create an educational system wherein people could be systematically educated, and, if they did well in their studies, they could serve at high levels in

government. The concept is wonderful.

The meritocracy system today in China, Japan or Korea is dominated by a few big tests, and these days the those tests are linked intimately to the test prep industry that makes money off of the process and has an incentive to continue the system. This situation has led to a huge backlash, and there are even those who send kids to the United States to escape.

I understand why so many claim that education in Asia has gone too far, and that we need to pull back. But as someone who looks at how education actually functioned in the pre-modern states of East Asia, I want to just say, "Look! Actually, there were some values in traditional Asian that we could really learn from." The exam craziness should not be confused with the traditional Asian approach to education.

If you consider how education was understood, how training was understood, and what exactly meritocracy meant in ancient China, then you will see that although exams were important, and learning was related to the exams, there was another dimension to learning. There was a keen sense that we must train ourselves to be better. Education was part of a holistic approach to life and human relations that went far beyond the narrow test taking skills we so often see Asian students trying to master these days.

I am reminded of Lin Yutang's classic book The Importance of Living which details the very human and humanistic vision of much of the Chinese tradition. It stands in contrast to the "examination hell" that we read about in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. From LinYutang's book we get the sense that life itself is the purpose of education.

Well, one of the key points of traditional Chinese education, is that it wasn't at all based on natural aptitude. The whole idea behind education was that we, as human beings, are kind of messy things. What we'll become over the course of a lifetime depends upon, among other things, how we train ourselves to become better.

So the focus in traditional learning wasn't on whether you were skilled at mathematics versus some other skill. The notion was rather "No. You are not born good at something. You train yourself to be good at something and the focus should be on the practice, the training, not some innate genius." Confucian scholars were not looking at aptitude. If anything, they were looking for a positive disposition. Training was what would make the difference.

Second of all, and at least as important, learning was not primarily about skills for them. Skills are things that you gain to realize some higher purposes. But the higher purpose, the sense of what it means to be an educated person, was the primary concern in education. And that higher purpose was defined in moral terms. Being a cultivated and moral person was an aim in itself.

They wanted to create people who are ethically good human beings, people who, through the educational process, have been trained to sense situations well, to sense how to behave in the world in a manner that will help those around them. More than anything else, leaders must have a ethical base. Human beings should have a sense of how to operate so as to help those under them if they're in a

position of authority.

The critical point for those who are going to be in positions of authority, with the potential for abuse is to emphasize moral cultivation. Memorization or problem solving is not that critical. And ironically, the current form of testing used in East Asia undercuts all of these aspects of traditional education.

More often the stress is on natural aptitude, not on development of the self. If there is a sense of development, it is not for the character and attitude, or ethical sensibility. The focus falls on things you can test in a standardized way: "Are you good at math?"

In Korea and Japan, standard testing is quite different than it was thirty years ago. On tests, there used to be questions that required some sophisticated, three-dimensional thinking. Unless you really had some insight into the problem, you couldn't answer the question just by applying formulas. Today's tests, however, assure that if you've gone to cram school and practiced the questions ten-thousand times, you'll do well on the test. There's no out-of-the-box thinking. It's just following the drills over and over again.

Yes, we see an unfortunate tendency to make test taking a "rite of passage" rather than a learning process. Such a move undercuts what had been the definition of education. If you look at the testing in the civil service exam of China that determined placement in government, the content of the exams was by definition not something you would spend at lifetime cramming for. The tests were for the most part aimed at trying to find out if you were becoming a good human being.

What was the actual content of the exam? Obviously it varied from dynasty to dynasty, but how did they measure one's moral cultivation on the civil service exam?

Let me just give one example. The exams would include unanswerable problems. A problem would be given to you, and you would be asked: "If you were a government official, how would you try to deal with this?" The test was unanswerable in the sense that it'd be based upon tons of complicated issues. You see, the test wasn't about giving a right answer. In most case there was no right answer. What was being tested was whether you could actually formulate an essay that demonstrates how you're trying to deal with the complexity of the situation. Such an exam required broad-based learning, knowledge of precedents from the past that may or may not be relevant to this specific situation. So the actual test is about degree to which you're striving to honestly assess the situation and assess how to act in a good way if you were in a position of authority. Yes, passing a test like that is an intense educational experience. But the whole focus of the test is: "Through this educational experience, are you training yourself to be a better human being?" That is what you're being tested on. You must demonstrate a complex, multifaceted process of character development and cultivation. You cannot cram based on skills in X, Y, or Z.

At some periods in Chinese history, the examination included poetry, belles lettres, essay-writing. What are we to make of the fact that literary composition was considered so important?

Because exam was focused on that question, "How do we actually design a test that will determine if someone is actually becoming a better human being through education?" There was a need for new ways of testing for this aspect of human character. And one of the ways, for example, of testing was requiring that you write poetry. That may strike us as an odd thing to ask someone to do. But the assumption was that if you read someone's poetry, you can gain a sense of what they're like as a human being. And I think there is something to this idea. And so you're not being tested as to whether it's a good poem, you're being tested as to the moral qualities that you would demonstrate through the process of writing.

How would you describe the nature of education itself, in terms of the relationship between the teacher and the student, the way in which texts were approached, and the use of oral or written exams? What was the experience of education in traditional China?

The whole point of the educational experience was to train people to be better human beings. Of course students would, for example, be asked to reads tons of things, memorize tons of poetry, etc. But education did not stop there.

Education started there.

The goal of all learning was to be a better human being. Teachers would to emulate Confucius as he was portrayed in The Analects (the collection of his writings). Confucius was portrayed as working with his disciples to try to and first be a better human being himself and help them become better human beings.

The common approach taken by Confucius was like this. When Confucius was confronted with some situation, a disciple would have to quote lines of poetry that helped to explain, and also to alter the sense of the situation. There's not a right answer to Confucius' request. He's simply saying: "Okay. Quote some lines. Here's the situation, quote some lines that in this conversation right now can affect the flow of the discussion in a good way. So, for example, a discipline would will quote some lines that are too obviously fitting to the situation. And Confucius would shake his head and say: "No, no." And another one will quote some lines that were too weird. And Confucius would remark, "No, no, no." And then a disciple would quote some other lines, and Confucius would say: "Yes."

The "yes" means that the lines fit the situation and push the envelope for observers in a powerful manner. Simply quoting these lines can different response in the listeners to the situation.

The test is by nature transformative.

Precisely. And the idea here isn't that there's a correct set of lines to quote. The test was: are you able to sense the situation well and bring the learning you've done to the situation in a way that transforms those around you? That approach suggests an educational system wherein that's what you're looking for. The issue is not how much you have learned, but rather whether you using this learning in daily life

to act in ways that are good to those around you.

One of the biggest problems with education today - in Asia and around the world - is this assumption that you must make the students digest information. They're just vessels that you pour knowledge into. But the end, they're still the same vessel, just with more knowledge. The process is not transformative. You yourself should be transformed in the process of learning.

The fundamental vision in all East Asian cultures was education as a means of transformation. In so much contemporary education, you can become incredibly strong in every topic you're being tested on. So you get A's in the classes and you get high marks on standardized tests. But none of this implies in any manner, shape, or form, that you've actually changed as a human being in any way. In traditional East Asia, such an approach to education would have been unacceptable. The whole point of education was to be transformative. It's to transform into a better human being.

At the same time, in Chinese education over the last 2,000 years, there's has also been a cyclical quality. As the dynasty drags on, the examination tests become formalistic practices that have nothing to do with moral issues. There were those periods when we lost the emphasis on abstract ethics.

We do find such shifts, but there is nothing absolute about the evolution of education. It is always possible to find room for reform. There was intense internal debate in China for centuries and centuries about how education should operate and how to design tests that would test character. And needless to say, they never came up with a perfect solution. Over time, the approach to designing education systems would coalesce and become overly formalistic. People would see that they were growing away from actual ethical issues and there would be again a big debate. We see real shifts occurring as a result. I think that what's exciting about the Chinese tradition is that the debate was about values, not about test scores.

Coming back to the present day, youth are confronted with an intense test-driven system based upon a restricted notion of what education means. But sadly, we've taken that restrictive notion to be a "necessary evil" and therefore so natural that there's no reason to debate it or rethink it. But we can learn from the past. The debates in China and Korea were healthy and offer clues as to what we can do today to reform this test culture in Asia. We need to ask, "What are the values that are being distilled through this education system?" And if we're not comfortable with them (and I think many people are not) then we need to ask ourselves how we can change them.

What about the role of the teacher? Teachers had a very different position in traditional East Asian societies than they do today. Often Koreans and Chinese say, "we respect our teachers as we did in ancient times." But I do not believe this part at all. Increasingly teachers and students are seen as products for consumption.

Teachers in China took Confucius himself as their model and saw his devotion to training disciples as an imperative. Similarly, striving to be a good person in all actions was an essential part of being a teacher, more than any technical aspect of one's research or teaching technique. The entire educational

process was seen as one of growing as human beings - both teachers and students. Teachers were, hopefully, further along in the process, but they were still far from perfect. The expectation was that teacher was trying to be a good human and would inspire those around him to do the same.

The teacher wasn't there to instill a body of knowledge to help you ace a standardized test. Tests were meaningless if they did not have some ethical imperative in them. The teacher was there, ideally, to be an inspirational figure, someone striving to be good, and inspiring the next generation to do the same.

But the conditions in modern China are so radically different. If you went to a professor in a Chinese university, or a bureaucrat in the Department of Education, and said that, they would probably respond, "That's a great idea, but we can't do anything because the whole system is built this way and we're trapped inside it." What do you think are effective methods of change? How do we get back on track?

The starting point is to reignite a debate about why education exists. If we stop asking "How to get into a great school," and start asking, "How can education help make a better society?" then we start to address the real issues and perhaps enough people realize we have real problems and start to take concrete steps to affect actual change.

We need to take on the exam structure itself and its role in our society. As long as the entire system is based on the exams, then education will just focus on getting students through each loop of the exam.

Let's begin by sitting down to think about the purpose of these tests--oddly, we very rarely do so. Should we be having these tests at all ages for all kids? In many respects the answer may well be no. If we think carefully, we will agree on a space for some kind of test, but we also need to think about how we can reformulate that test so that our primary concern is the values and motivations for the test, and not the test itself. Once you change the assumptions, then it makes no sense to have an educational system based upon jumping through hoops. It will no longer make sense to put the hoops there.

Who do you draw inspiration from as a teacher?

I certainly tried to live up to the ideals that we've been discussing. And I am afraid I have fallen short. But I get up each day, brush off the dust, and start again.

I have been fortunate to have had some truly transformative teachers. They were people whom I really did look up to as great human beings. They were inspirational to me and they saw the classroom experience as transformational. For those teachers, education was about making students into better people, not learning facts.

Different teachers used different techniques, so there isn't one right way of doing this. But in their own way they helped me break out of my usual way of being and thinking and inspired me to try to become a better human being. And certainly much later, when I actually started reading Chinese philosophy, I found a vocabulary to talk about what I had experienced with those teachers.

My goal in teaching is to try to do what I can to help the students become better human beings and

hopefully help them to change the way they're living in a good way. The learning part they will do on their own.

Can you give a concrete example of how you challenge your students through Chinese-inspired pedagogy?

One of the courses I teach is on Chinese philosophy. I teach using only primary sources, in English translation. The readings are not in classical Chinese. But the students are only reading primary sources, not commentary. And I ask them specifically not to read the secondary literature.

I find that secondary literature will often try to put these primary sources in certain frameworks that, in many cases, we may want to question.

I tell them: "We're only going to read the primary sources." I ask the students to allow these texts to challenge some of their fundamental assumptions. And I tell them: "You won't like having your fundamental assumptions challenged! And you may not agree with what you're reading in the text. That's perfectly fine. But take these things and challenge your assumptions." Challenging the students is our overriding goal. We are not trying to translate the texts into easy to understand English that anyone can digest. I want the students to take these texts seriously, to struggle with them. You don't have to agree with the content of the essays, but you must take them seriously.

I am constantly posing questions in class, and encouraging the students to pose questions. If they give a reading that seems overly facile, I say: "Yes, but what about this word? What about that phrase?" I want to roam the classroom trying to lead them to the point that they see how the texts challenge their assumptions.

There is a risk when teaching Chinese philosophy that you get bogged down in repeating the Confucian values: "A gentleman should be a good person, honor his elders, take care of his family.blah blah blah. Blah." But if you read those texts carefully, you discover they are not just listing virtues. There are all sorts of ambiguities and potentialities in between the words.

Yes! That is a real danger that when you read through a text, you can end up just glossing over it thinking it just says: "Be a good person, try to help those around you." But the goal of the teacher should be to point out to the student, "Yes, but really read this stuff. Really see what they're saying, the gaps between the words, and look at the complexities of what they mean by "being a good person" and ask yourself why they selected the particular analogies they use." I want the students to get into the complexities of the material. I want them to understand the complexity of being a good human being.

Let us talk about the general crisis in education around the world. We see universities being judged more for the quality of the dormitories than the content of courses and a focus on getting a job, as opposed to learning. There is a disturbing hollowing out of education overall. What does it take to get us moving in the right direction?

We have a lot of work to do at very different levels. At the institutional level we should be concerned that money increasingly controlling the educational process. We must understand the degree to which the evolution of institutions is directed by money interests. We must push back against that trend and offer alternatives that are viable. At the local level we need to simply take teaching more seriously. That starts with just a few people serving as innovators and a community that will support them. We must push for big institutional changes, like redesigning exams and classrooms, and battling against drives to squeeze profit out of education.

At the same time, it is critical to have a handful of people who just start teaching in new ways. If we do not have concrete examples of good teaching we can identify and support, we cannot solve the huge institutional. Bureaucrats cannot design innovative teaching. It must be built from the ground up through experimentation.

I find that my interactions with students outside of class are a critical part of the education process. I like to talk to them about how what they read relates to the world we live in.

We just have to take a look at how Confucius is portrayed in the analects. He is not in the classroom and he is not administering written tests. He is working with his disciples in any number of ways and applying learning to very real concrete cases. Education is often more effective outside of the classroom. How we can achieve this approach within institutions that demand grades and classes is not obvious, but there is plenty of room for experimentation.

If you brought Confucius to the podium of a lecture hall in front of 400 students, how would he respond? Would he prepare a Powerpoint? How would he answer when students asked him: "Is this going to be on the midterm?"

I do suspect he'd start with some of the points we've made. I can imagining him starting out saying, "The goal of this class is not for you to learn X, Y, and Z, or to do well on your exam." I suspect he would immediately try to restructure the classroom so that it became an arena wherein people are actually being transformed by the process of learning. And the fact that it's a big lecture hall doesn't mean that it cannot serve that function.

Confucius would want to challenge the students. He does not want to make the course easy, but also not to make the "difficulty" a matter of just learning more facts. For Confucius, there is not learning if it is not linked at some level to the process of becoming better human beings. In a way, learning parallels the rituals that Confucius discusses at length.

Your emphasis on ritual is very refreshing. We've distanced ourselves from rituals as a society. If you ask students, they will say that rituals are things practiced by previous generation, by people in primitive societies. But in fact students are engaged in any number of rituals, from the way they talk to each other to the way they buy designers clothes.

You may say you have no rituals, but that only means you are unaware of them.

Confucian is strong because it offers a language to discuss rituals and links them to ethical concerns.

It's very common in the United States, but you also can observe this in East Asia, for youth to think that rituals are these old things that people used to do in traditional societies when they believed in spirits and ancestor worship. And now, they think, we are modern. We don't do those silly rituals anymore. We're are just true to ourselves and we don't engage in rituals. But f Confucius could be dropped into any part of the contemporary world, most certainly including contemporary America, he would say: "Well, no. You people are engaged in rituals all the time."

The danger is that because we are unaware of the rituals that we engage in, we do not take them seriously and therefore they do not achieve their intended purpose. Rituals work when they are truly transformational, like the expression, "I now pronounce you man and wife." If we don't take the rituals of life seriously, we do not gain anything from them. Some dismiss rituals, saying, "I don't want to bow before my ancestors." And yet that same person insists on driving a BMW and sending their children to the most expensive private schools. We should be first accept that these are modern rituals and post the question: "Is this ritual making us into better people?" If the answer is no, we need to be aware that this is in fact a ritual and be aware of its symbolic and social function so that we can bring it under control. Denial or suppression is not really a solution. We must modify the ritual and make it more healthy.

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Asia Institute Seminar with Joseph Nye
October 30. 2015

Clearly, China is the rising power in the world. And yet I wonder whether the inevitable competition between the United States and China necessarily has to end in a bitter confrontation. I think that such an anticipation is culturally based with no real basis in reality. How do you think the fates of the United States and of China will be interlinked? Do you think that good relations are critical to the United States maintaining its global position?

China's size and its high rate of economic growth will bring it closer to the United States in terms of the basic resources for influence over the next few decades. Such an evolution does not necessarily imply that China will surpass the U.S. as the most powerful country. Even if China were to suffer no major domestic political setbacks, many of the current projections for its future growth are simple linear extrapolations of current growth rates and those rates are likely to slow in the future. Moreover, looking only at economic projections can result in a one-dimensional understanding of power because one ignores the strengths of the U.S. military and American advantages in terms of soft power. Also, we should not overlook China's geopolitical disadvantages within the context of the internal Asian balance of power. China's position is less favorable by comparison than America's relations with regards to the Americas, Europe, Japan, India and other countries.

On the question of absolute decline, rather than relative American decline, the United States faces serious problems such as debt, general access of the population to adequate secondary education, growing income inequality and political gridlock at home. Although these issues are important, they are ultimately only part of the picture. On the positive side of the ledger we can find favorable trends for the United States in terms of demography (not the serious aging of the population that we find in East Asia), technology (lead in research and the creation of new fields), and energy. And there are abiding factors that favor the United States such as its geographical location and its enduring

entrepreneurial culture.

As an overall assessment, describing the 21st century as one of American decline is inaccurate and misleading. America has many problems, but it is not in absolute decline in the sense that the late Roman Empire was. The current trends suggest that the United States will remain more powerful than any single state in the coming several decades.

I think that ultimately the greatest challenges for the United States will not be that it is overtaken by China, or overwhelmed by some other contender. Rather the United States may well be faced with a complex landscape of power resources made up of both states and non-state actors that pose unprecedented challenges. The task for the United States increasingly will be to organize alliances and networks that can be mobilized to effectively address an increasing number of new transnational problems. And increasingly we will be challenged to organize such complex multilateral cooperation for their solution.

Contrary to the claims of some who proclaim this century the "Chinese century," we do not see any signs of a post-American world. That said, although American leadership will continue, it will take a different form than it did in the 20th century. As I wrote some time ago, the paradox of American power is that although the United States has tremendous assets, unmatched in the world, nevertheless the only superpower cannot go it alone.

I do not think that China should make the mistakes that the United States made. For example, China should not be a free rider on global issues, benefiting from the global order but not actively contributing to it. The United States did so in the 1930s and it was a major error.

The American share of the world economy will be less in this century than it was in the middle of the past century. But the greater challenge will be responding effectively to the simple complexity of new challenges. That means newly emerging countries and a panoply of non-state actors. These new challenges will make it difficult for even the largest power to wield influence and organize action. In the end, I feel that rather than China, the greater challenge for the United States will be institutional entropy.

Why did you feel there was a need to affirm America's strengths at this particular moment? What are the reasons that some are led to underestimate America's capabilities?

In the 1990s, I wrote that the rapid rise of China could cause a global conflict similar to that described by Thucydides in his monumental study of the disastrous Peloponnesian War in ancient Greece. Thucydides concluded that the rise of Athenian power instilled a fear in Sparta that set in motion an escalation of tensions and conflicts.

Today, I think that such a scenario of overt conflict between China and the United States is unlikely in the current environment. There are, however, analysts who insist that China cannot rise peacefully.
And then there are those who draw analogies to the geopolitical tensions that brought on World War I, specifically how Germany surpassing Britain in industrial power brought the order in Europe into question. In this respect Thucydides' other warning is important to bear in mind: the belief in the inevitability of conflict can become one of its main causes. There is a possible scenario in which

each side, believing it will end up at war with the other, makes reasonable military preparations in accordance with that assumption which then are read by the other side as confirmation of its worst fears. Such a vicious cycle can be set in motion.

An accurate assessment of power relations is essential to prevent miscalculations in policy. There remains a concern that as China grows more nationalistic, it faces the dangers of hubris. Similarly, there is a risk that the United States will overreact to fears of dangers posed by the rise of China and exacerbate the situation.

Fortunately, it is doubtful that China will have the military capability to pursue any overly ambitious dreams in the next several decades. Costs matter. It is easier to indulge one's wish list for future expansion if you are looking at a menu with no prices attached. Thus, if Chinese leaders try to match the United States in any meaningful manner, they will have to contend with the reactions of other countries, as well as with the constraints created by their own objectives of continued economic growth and the pursuit of external markets and resources.

Thus I continue to welcome a peaceful rise for China and I believe that with thoughtful statesmanship serious conflicts can be avoided.

When we try to assess the U.S.-China relationship, it is valuable to look back to the past, like the completion of Athens and Sparta, or the United States and Great Britain, or Great Britain and Germany. But it is also true that we are witnessing technological developments today that are simply unprecedented in human history. The advancement of computer processors at an exponential rate has transformed some aspects of international relations, and complicated the relationship of the United States with the world. This development cannot be found in history books because it has never happened before. It appears that technology will not only determine wealth and power, but also transform the very nature of international relations.

The U.S. will likely maintain its technological lead for the next five to ten years, and probably beyond then. It is impossible to predict fifty years in the future. U.S. spending on research and development is currently about 2.9 percent of GDP, an amount exceeded only by the spending of South Korea, Japan and Germany. China and the European Union are closer to 2 percent of GDP. Equally significant is the strong entrepreneurial culture and the access to venture capital in the United States which pushes forward technological change.

I am not as optimistic about the United States and its prospects for the future in science and technology without radical reform. I worry that the overall level of competence is slowly dropping in relative and in absolute terms.

If one looks at the technologies that are often cited as most transformative for this century we find generally that the United States remains at the forefront of new developments. This statement holds true for biotechnology, nanotechnology, and remains true for the next generation of information technology.

Some suggest that climate change is a game changer at multiple levels. First, the response to climate change will require a new level of engagement with the world as equals that the United States may find difficult. And secondly climate change means that the United States will suffer because the economy is too deeply invested in oil. Just as the United States was able to pull ahead of Britain because Britain was too deeply invested in coal in the last century, could it be that this time around that China will find it easier to move to solar and wind power because it is not as invested in oil? Also it may be that the U.S. military cannot make the shift as quickly to addressing the security challenge of climate change because it is so deeply invested in weapons of the past.

I regard climate change as a very important issue. China is now the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide and it has become the world's largest oil importer. By the 2020s, the shale revolution may mean that North America will no longer be an energy importer. Much of the shale gas will be able to displace coal and oil which produce more greenhouse gases.

China also has massive shale resources, but it has been slower to exploit them. Overall the U.S. is better placed than China to respond to climate change. That said, the challenge of climate change is going to require the cooperation of the United States, China, India and other nations. No one country will be able to solve this problem on its own, or to escape its consequences.

Although it may be true that U.S. power will continue longer than many had anticipated, the "death of distance" that rapid technological development has brought about, to quote Frances Cairncross, is increasingly making China a big part of the United States economy itself, and a part of American corporations. Will not the future U.S. be deeply integrated with China, perhaps to a degree unprecedented?

The U.S. and China are deeply entangled, and that state is largely a good thing. Deterrence of destructive military or cyber actions can rest on denial, punishment, or entanglement. China and the U.S. would each suffer if they launched a nuclear strike, or took down each other's electric grid. That discourages such drastic acts. In the economic realm as well, China cannot afford to dump its dollars onto world markets because such an act would hurt them as much, or more than, it would hurt the U.S. As Robert Keohane and I wrote about power and interdependence forty years ago, where there is symmetrical interdependence, there is not much power.

The former Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government Joseph Nye has been a central figure in American foreign policy for the last four decades. He has served in the United States government as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Chair of the National Intelligence Council, and Deputy Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology.

He has written many influential books. Best known is Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. His most recent book Is the American Century Over? (Wiley, 2015) argues that the United States remains the critical power in the world and that current trends suggest it will maintain that position, although the nature of its power will shift.

Asia Institute Seminar with Richard Bush
October 22, 2015

What do you make of the global economy today and what are the implications for East Asia?

For all its weaknesses, the United States economy has recovered beyond people's expectations over the last five years. Granted that the recovery has been gradual, it has been steady. There are a couple of problems that remain. One is present and the other is over the horizon. The present problem is that the recovery does not affect all people equally. Wages are lagging behind corporate profits and the rise in stock market does not correspond to more general prosperity. This problem is found in all advanced societies. The United States, and other nations, haven't figured out a way to address this problem. Perhaps the Scandinavians have come the closest.

But the long-term problem for the United States is our lack of attention to the "pillars" of national strength.

At the federal level, the fiscal system of the United States is a mess. We are neglecting our infrastructure to a dangerous degree. We could do a lot more to promote education and research in the sciences. That lack of concern for education and research recently is odd considering that ours is an economy that depends on innovation and services. Overall the quality of the civil service in the United States is declining and we are having tremendous problems finding to find the right balance between permitting market freedom to spur growth and imposing regulations to prevent market excesses and distortions. Finally, political battles over taxes and spending take all attention away from long-term strategic planning.

In the case of Japan and Korea, their aging population is the biggest concern. At present Korea's doing better than Japan, but that may just be because it's lagging behind Japan by a decade in terms

of demographic change. Recently we are reading about South Korean villages that are disappearing because of the aging populations and the move to the big cities. We saw that sort of story already two decades ago with regards to Japan. The aging of the population is a major challenge to the entire economies of those two countries.

I think that China has done a good job since 1979 in taking advantage of its comparative advantages and establishing itself as the world's major manufacturing center. In this respect, China resembles the United States of a hundred to one hundred and twenty years ago – but changes are taking place today much more rapidly than was the case then.

The United States back then experienced rapid growth, but it was undermined by entrenched corruption and a weak rule of law. The United States was hobbled at the time by difficulties regulating economic activity. Strong vested interests lined up against reform. In the U.S. case, it was private corporations and the families behind them that dominated the economy, and in the case of China today, it is state-owned corporations. We in the United States were fortunate that we had presidents who were willing to "betray their class" in the interests of the nation. First, there was Teddy Roosevelt, and then Franklin Roosevelt. Both were from wealthy families but bravely set out to strictly regulate industry. In some respects Xi Jinping is also going against the interests of his supporters in the Communist aristocracy, in his crackdown on corruption and waste. More power to him!

But some say that since no princelings have gone to jail yet, Xi Jinping has not actually "betrayed his class."

Yes, there are limits to his actions, but he's clearly making a lot of enemies through his crackdowns. I am talking about the communist aristocracy in slightly broader terms. China also has a serious aging population problem as a result of the one-child policy. China has serious environmental problems, as the U.S. also had a century ago, because of rapid industrialization. The air is a problem, but the pollution of water is an even more serious problem.

If China cannot successfully make the transition from an economy based on export-led growth to one based on consumption, the social and economic consequences will be serious.

There is a risk that China will peak in economic growth before it reaches its development goals and will be the first major economy that grows old before it gets rich.

I hope China succeeds, that Xi Jinping succeeds in his plans to reform the Chinese economy and eliminate corruption. If Xi is successful, we will see in China the emergence of a substantial middle class which will exert pressures for an opening the political system such as we so previously in Korea and Taiwan. But the jury's still out concerning China's political legacy.

So you feel that for all the limitations on his reforms, Xi Jinping is heading in the right direction.

Well, I think that first of all, he understands better than any of his predecessors, the endemic nature of corruption in China and he had committed himself to addressing this challenge. The Chinese Communist Party, the central government, the government at all levels, and the military cannot do

their job well if offices and promotions are being sold to the highest bidder, if disagreements are settled with cash payments. Xi has an extremely hard and thankless job because the very people he needs to help him carry these reforms are those who are most likely to engage in corrupt behavior. Xi is trying to carry out his reforms through campaigns, public attacks on corrupt officials. But there are limits to such an approach. At a certain point the only way to build a sustainable system which is not corrupt is through institutions, not through people or campaigns. We have not seen signs of that form of political reform in China yet.

To build institutions, independent agencies in the government that can attack the issue of corruption, requires reform at a level that meets tremendous opposition in the communist system. Hong Kong, which is part of the People's Republic of China, contains powerful institutions for addressing corruption. But there has been extraordinary resistance to importing those institutions. Such a reform may be beyond even Xi Jinping's ability.

Certainly President Xi Jinping is putting people in jail for corruption, more so than say President Barack Obama is. But is perhaps the problem that enforcement is not systematic?

Well, the jury's still out concerning the effectiveness of Xi's approach. Hong Kong also implemented a get tough campaign and put people in jail. But it does not necessarily change the basic practices and ten years later you see the same practices returning. But Hong Kong has the advantage of being a sustainable system of rules and practices. Everybody is highly socialized and subject to peer pressure. Hong Kong has many rules within the bureaucracy to deter corruption. They have a system through which citizens can report corruption that they witness and the government follows up. Hong Kong's approach is comprehensive. That's really what China needs.

So you see Hong Kong as offering a model for China?

Absolutely. Hong Kong is already a model for the rest of China.

What about Taiwan? Is Taiwan also a model.

Until the late 1990s you could have said that Taiwan could be a model for good governance in China. But there has been some retrogression in Taiwan, [with] increased corruption at many levels. I'm not sure that the institutions in Taiwan are as strong as they were. Increasingly the best measure against corruption in Taiwan, and in the Republic of Korea, is hyperactive prosecutors.

The use of prosecutors to attack corruption is the distinguishing characteristic of Korea in its developmental period. That policy is what distinguished Korea from other developing nations in terms of the relatively low level of corruption.

When we see prosecutors running around arresting high-profile figures, we have to ask ourselves where proper due process is being followed. But the approach followed in China is another order of magnitude.

-But China has been wrestling with corruption for a long time. We read predictions that there would be some sort of enormous collapse because of corruption and speculation. And yet that hasn't happened yet. Or we should say that such problems have not led to the disaster some predicted fifteen years ago.-

No. That is certainly true. And the Chinese regime is good (at least in the economic arena) at spotting major problems quickly and surging to respond to them. The manner in which they intervened in the Shanghai stock market recently is an example of that. The government did make a mistake when it promoted a rise in the markets and they clearly learned a lesson. But it's not as if the economy is beyond any government control. The government is constantly learning and adapting to new situations. The most serious problem is the consequences of rapid industrialization and what growth means in the context of an aging society. Will China be able to engineer a shift in its basic economic strategy in the face of strong vested interests? Even the immense power granted to the president does not guarantee success.

What do you think about Japan's condition these days? There's been a lot of concern about Japan's economy and also about its politics. But whatever the concerns may be, Japan remains a massive economy with tremendous technological advantages.

Well, the number one problem for Japan is its aging population. I guess the second largest concern would be the lingering corruption in certain sectors, especially agriculture and construction. And the third would be overregulation of the economy. I think that Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe, particularly with his "third arrow," has recognized the imperative for deregulation.

Explain for us what the "third arrow" is, please.

The first arrow was monetary policy. That provides short-term benefits. The second arrow is fiscal policy. And the benefit it offers is balanced regarding the debt you take on. That issue is not a minor problem for Japan. You can take steps that stimulate the economy on the fiscal side, but then, if you raise the consumption tax, you undermine the effect. The third arrow is deregulation, and at last people recognize that it has been needed in Japan for a long time. I think that the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) can serve as a mechanism in a number of areas to reduce overregulation and open up the economy. This stimulus to change will allow for transitions that should have taken place a long time ago to occur. And some sectors will lose out, and others will emerge that have been constrained from doing so for a long time.

And what do you think about the prospects for South Korea, in terms of economic growth?

I think South Korea's prospects are actually better than Japan's at this moment. Korea has some very strong companies – global leaders like Samsung and Hyundai – who are increasingly innovative in their approaches. If Korea can keep up its positive growth in global business, and somehow manages to produce enough people with the skills to staff an innovation-based economy, in the face of an aging society, it has excellent prospects.

What advantages do you think Korea has in the current global business environment,

vis-à-vis Japan and China?

Well, first of all, I think that although the Asian financial crisis was a great shock for Korea, the adjustments that Korea was forced to make coming out of that crisis have benefitted it. I think that Korea has been much more willing than its neighbors to negotiate truly meaningful free-trade arrangements with other countries, such as those with the United States and with Europe. And those free trade agreements are not only going to open up markets, but they will also foster needed structural adjustments in the domestic economy. So you have a few losers, but you also have winners. And you those winners will be players in sectors that didn't exist before. So I think that Korea is ahead of Japan and China in that regard. As I understand it, the free trade arrangements that China has engaged in are so riddled with exceptions that China is missing out on the true benefits that these arrangements can offer.

And what about North Korea? Does it even have the economic scale to be taken seriously in global economics? What are the prospects for North Korea's position in the Northeast Asian economy?

I think that in the short term North Korea is managing to get by. Bu their long-term prospects aren't good. The economy has stabilized after tremendous chaos mainly because of the exploitation of natural resources for export. And most of these resources are being exported to China. That trade creates real revenue, but it also saddles North Korea with what's called "the resource curse." When economic strategy and growth are dictated by a need to export natural resources, tremendous distortions will set into the economic structure of a country.

What exactly is this "resource curse?"

The resource curse refers to the problems that emerge when natural resources become the main source of growth for a country. There is a tendency in economies based on resources for the government to devote its resources to regulating the production of resources and capturing rents from the exports of those resources, rather than developing the manufacturing sector or expanding research in science and technology. We see a marked break with what happens in the development of a manufacturing economy. So if you look at oil-producing and mineral-producing countries, they tend to have a rather simplistic economy, a shallow ecosystem for innovation and a relatively authoritarian system of governance.

Now there are a few exceptions like Australia, Mongolia and Norway, but it takes an advanced democracy and constant vigilance to avoid the tendency to let the export of resources completely dominate the economy, and, by extension, the politics.

Although there has been some liberalization, particularly at the consumer level, North Korea remains a controlled economy. And North Korea has missed out on the wave of globalization that has swept Asia over the last twenty or thirty years. North Korea still has, hypothetically, an opportunity to become, with a lot of South Korean help, a manufacturing economy. But that would require a lot of changes in state policy and it would not be as easy as relying on natural resources. We do not see any evidence of that sort of fundamental shift yet.

I've heard conflicting descriptions of North Korea's relationship with China. Some people believe that China has made enormous, long-term contracts with North Korea for raw materials, and that therefore North Korea's becoming increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy. Others have said that the North Koreans have taken all sorts of measures to limit their exposure and the degree to which China controls the economy. What is your sense of the process of economic integration between the two countries?

Well, at the risk of being snide, I would say that given the stress on national independence of North Koreans (and to some degree of all Koreans), I don't think there's too much of a danger of North Korea being overly dependent on China. The problem is that although this economic relationship benefits the elites in the North Korean regime and benefits a handful of Chinese companies, its impact is limited. It's my impression that the North Korean regime understands the political dangers of economic dependence and is vigilant about managing them. So it's no surprise that the political relationship between the two countries is today not good at all.

You are perhaps referring to the decision by President Xi Jinping to travel to Seoul and obviously snub Pyongyang.

That is one glaring example Beijing has adopted an attitude of indifference towards Pyongyang. They'll help keep North Korea afloat as a means of limiting China's geopolitical exposure, but that is about all. China is engaged in quiet diplomacy at many levels to limit the reckless activities undertaken by North Korea regarding its the nuclear program, its missile program and conventional attacks on South Korea.

Finally, perhaps you could say something about Taiwan and its role in East Asia. What are its actions towards China and their significance?

In my personal view President Ma Ying-jeou's economic and political strategy for engaging China has been reasonably effective, especially in his first term. Exchanges went smoothly because the two sides agreed on things that were mutually beneficial and were easy to do. But the situation grew harder in Ma's second term because the proposed market opening was much larger and therefore politically controversial. Those political debates within Taiwan have a special character because of the China-Taiwan political relationship and public fears in Taiwan of becoming too dependent on China economically. Taiwanese are not only afraid of competition from China in their domestic market, they are also concerned because economic dependence makes it easier for China to pressure Taiwan to accept its goals. The two governments are engaged in an elaborate political dance and as a result the market opening and market liberalization measures proposed have essentially stalled. And that situation isn't good for Taiwan, given the unique character of the political relationship with Beijing. Taiwan needs to step up its economic liberalization with China before China will give the green light to third economies to liberalize their economic relations with Taiwan via free trade agreements. Taiwan badly needs to diversify its liberalization, including taking advantage of the TPP. But its trade strategy has been held hostage to cross straits politics.

And so Taiwan may end up missing the structural adjustment benefits of economic liberalization. Like Korea, like Japan, Taiwan has some innovative and savvy companies. They will probably do ok. But for other firms, the lack of reform in Taiwan will slow them down significantly.

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Asia Institute Seminar with Francis Fukuyama
October 15, 2015

We have to start with the simplest of questions. If we want to understand the challenges in East Asia today, we must first consider why it is that Asia has become so central in the global economy and why it plays an increasingly large role in global politics. How do you explain the enormous shift that we are witnessing today?

Well, there is a significant difference between the economic and the political spheres. Obviously, the biggest shift is to be observed in the economic realm. We can trace it back to the industrialization of China after the Cultural Revolution and rise of the four tigers: South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. But the shift in terms of political power is a much slower process than the economic shift.

Overall, Asia punches below its weight in terms of its ability to shape the rules for the global system and the direction that global governance is evolving towards. It is an issue of what Joseph Nye refers to as "soft power" – the ability of a nation to project ideas and concepts, build influential institutions and practices. The lag at the level of ideas is even more severe than the lag in terms of political power.

So if we talk about the rise of Asia, we must be sure that we are clear about what aspect of the rise we are referring to. If we ask the specific question, "Why has East Asia's economic development been so successful?" We can speak with more confidence about a clear rise, although that rise does not necessarily fulfill all the traditional expectation for growing power and influence. We can be sure, however, that China will continue to increase its influence in global affairs for the foreseeable future.

And yet China's rise is profoundly paradoxical. China is increasing influence in the political and economic spheres today, and is engaged in large-scale aid projects that are unprecedented in its history. At the same time, if you go to Shanghai, you will find more and more Chinese students studying English and trying to go abroad to study at American universities. There is more interest, not less, in moving to advanced countries

now than was the case twenty years ago.

The trend is real, but it perhaps has more to do with the fact that there are simply more Chinese who have the money to send their children to the United States for their studies than anything else. Nevertheless, we can see that although China has the economic, the cultural and educational soft power is still lacking.

For all its weaknesses, the United States projects a tremendous amount of soft power globally. China cannot match that power yet.

But what is it exactly that gives the U.S. that advantage? Why has it been so hard for China, Korea and Japan, in spite of astounding economic growth, to have that sort of cultural impact? Certainly the cultures are extremely sophisticated and the level of education is very high.

We are seeing some changes these days, but the building of institutions, the growth of global networks, and the acceptance of new cultures takes generations.

Korea has done well in terms of culture. If you look at the spread of K-pop, Korean soap operas and Korean movies, Korea is producing a highly competitive culture that is expanding rapidly, even including spheres like manga and anime that were once exclusively Japanese. But such cultural influence has very little to do with GDP.

Significant shifts may come, but they will not be fast.

I suppose that the dominance of the English language is also an important factor.

The power of English has a long history, dating back to the British Empire, but its continued dominance is in part a reflection of culture, and in part a reflection of U.S. dominance in international business. In spite of the remaining dominance of English, we can perceive significant shifts. People are starting to learn Mandarin around the world, and that trend will continue. For some in Africa, Chinese seems like a very significant language. Eventually cultural influence will follow from growing economic power, but the lag time is significant.

And we are in an age of unprecedented age of globalization that defies previous precedents. For example, if you read the published statistics concerning members of the Chinese Central Communist Party committee, you will see that an extraordinary number of them have either a relative living abroad or own property abroad. They are committed to a global economy and they have an interest in the economy of the United States. We can see those overseas investments as a way to stash the cash, but there is also a sense in which those overseas investments are a security net of sorts. I do think there's a sense that Western countries, whatever problems they may have, are fundamentally more stable politically than developing nations.

Therefore, despite all of China's remarkable success, continued stability and prosperity is not something that they can take for granted. The accumulation of capital is not a replacement for quality of life, for getting a quality education, having safe food to eat. Even the superrich in Beijing can have

kids with asthma who become terribly sick because of air pollution.

The author Lee Chang Rae recently published a novel entitled On Such a Full Sea describing an authoritarian state in a megacity B-Mor (the former Baltimore) which is populated with immigrants from a village in "New China" that become uninhabitable because of climate change. The novel suggests that we may encounter a world quite different than our common "rise and fall of great powers" assumptions and that technology and climate change will be major factors. The entire world is being impacted by China's rise and Lee Chang Rae's scenario is not far-fetched.

There is a debate in the West, and to some degree in China, as to whether China is really capable of fundamental innovation. I probably fall into the camp of those who say that you we should not underestimate China's ability to make profound shifts. China has changed far more than anyone imagined since the Cultural Revolution and it has a long history of institutional transformation. Although much of China's recent economic and intellectual progress has been a form of catch-up. China is a vast country with many smart people. I would not assume that just because China lacks great political freedom that this means China isn't going to be able achieve astounding progress, to innovate in technology and institution building.

Certainly China has a long tradition of good government and of institutional innovation. From the Tang and Song Dynasties to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, China has been able to generate internal reform on many occasions. There have been some scholars like Daniel Bell at Tsinghua University, in his book The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy, or Zhang Weiwei of Fudan University in his book The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State, who argue that China is fundamentally different than other nations in that it is a civilization, not a nation state. Is there perhaps something transformative of China that seeks to remake the entire world, not just expand into new markets?

I'm a little skeptical of such efforts to see some sort of new Confucian vision in the chaos that is the present Chinese political economy. I just do not see an integrated package; it's an incoherent package. The official message coming out of China in its official sources is still taking Marxism-Leninism as its base. Perhaps there is a sincerely interest in the past, but basically Chinese are pretty confused about Confucianism. Although it may feel good to think on is building on a great tradition of millennia. But when push comes to shove they are back to Marxism or neoliberalism. They end up filling the ideological vacuum with consumerism and greed. As long as the economic growth keeps up, they will be alright. But I do not see too much Confucian civilization in the hard choices that Chinese politicians make.

But in the West things are at last shifting a bit. Western intellectual are taking a stronger interest in Asia and reading and writing about China and its culture and politics. How broad is the interest in East Asia in Washington D.C.?

Although interest in Asia has risen remarkably, it is probably still far from what it should be. The rise of China has triggered broad introspection about Western and American institutions and their

shortcomings. There have been some debates in the fringes, but the serious reorientation has not started. Most people in the West acknowledge there is a new drive in China and they express concern about job losses in the United States. But there are few who look at the rise of China and East Asia as a challenge to the dominance of Western civilization.

What do you think is the primary challenge to the U.S. and Europe today?

Many social scientists in the United States have postulated that economic freedom without a corresponding degree of political freedom is not sustainable. They assume that China will have to open up its political system and to democratize in one way or another. But there are serious problems with this assumption. If we think long term, say thirty years in the future, could we have a China in which economic growth is significantly higher than that in the West, a Chinese economy that has completely displaced the U.S. in scale and impact, but still have a China in which the government calls the shots domestically and internationally? Such a scenario is entirely possible and could create immense challenges to current global institutions. Few in the West want to imagine such an outcome. But that is not an excuse for presenting wishful thinking as critical analysis.

At the same time, the question of freedom is a complex one. Certain areas of Shanghai, for example, have access to Facebook and Google and there are virtually no cases of interference from the government – if you are part of the "international community." Many American expats feel oddly freer in that Chinese environment.

Yes, there are clearly pockets in China that are quite open these days. Globalization produces all sorts of complexities.

And what about Europe? How has the rise of Asia impacted France, Germany, Italy and other European powers?

What is striking about Europe is just how little attention they pay to China. Although I wish the United States took Asia seriously, compared with Europe, we are doing a pretty good job. You would be amazed to see how much Europeans still are talking about the challenge from America and the American model for business. They are having trouble getting their heads around the fact that China going to be a major player in the world and that what happens in the Chinese economy impacts the European economy. Similarly, the study of China, Japan and Korea in Europe is far behind the United States. There are not that many Chinese speakers and almost no one who can deliver a speech or read a book in an Asian language.

We have stressed China so far in our conversation, but in reality Korea and Japan remain quite significant. Might there be a risk that America focuses too much on the China challenge and loses track of the important developments in the rest of Asia. After all, Korea and Japan are major players in Southeast Asia and Africa, often displaying a greater sophistication than China.

Asia is polycentric, multipolar, and constantly evolving. There is no uniformity in Asia in terms of

geopolitics and culture and each of those countries is a separate world to itself, even as it overlaps in trade and commerce with its neighbors and with the United States. It is a challenge for Americans to keep up with that region.

The conditions are really different in each country. If we take a slightly longer-term horizon, all of Asia will be caught in this demographic trap (declining and aging population) which may have unintended consequences. Japan was the first to experience that shift, and we have seen articles about aging villages in the Western media for some time. But the trend for the future is actually more severe in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. These countries are struggling to come up with some solution to the aging population crisis, and the resulting growth of a multi-cultural society.

But if you looked at middle-class and upper-middle class Caucasians in Europe or the United States, is not that population is more or less following the same trajectory as the aging populations of Korea or Japan.

One cannot make sweeping statements. The fertility rates for Caucasians in the United States remains higher than that of countries like Korea and Japan. In the case of Scandinavia fertility rates have risen above the replacement rate. I speculate that countries that have the lowest fertility rates in the world are those in which you have a high level of female education, but still socially conservative mores that limit career opportunities for women. That is exactly what we find in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, where a lot of women don't want to enter into marriages that require them to stay home and raise families, but the childcare facilities necessary for them to pursue careers do not exist. In Japan, the average age for the marriage of women keeps rising every year.

It's amazing that although many families in Korea or Japan place so much emphasis on education for both boys and girls, there is an absolute distinction after graduation from college. Equality of opportunity suddenly ends when the student receives a diploma.

I met a professor at Julliard who was just livid because although many of his best piano students are Korean women, not a single one of them has turned that talent into a career as a musician. Despite all their talents, they dutifully go back to Korea and marry a rich corporate executive. Their outstanding musical talent becomes, he lamented, but an adornment, a hobby. There was no opportunity for those women to pursue a career in music.

Let's talk about the current tensions in Asia, specifically those between China, Japan, and Korea. Although some make grim analogies between Asia today and Europe just before World War I, it seems to me that the conflicts over islands are fundamentally different in its nature from the battle over territory occupied by large populations.

I think the conflicts are quite serious because they are powered by the rise of nationalism in Korea, Japan, and China. Young people in each of these countries are growing more nationalistic than was their parents' generation, and that trend is quite dangerous. Honestly, I am quite worried by what I see happening today. The territorial disputes are not inherently critical, but they take on tremendous symbolic significance and they are at the center of a struggle over geopolitical power. The fight over the future of the Senkaku Islands is not just about a few uninhabited rocks. It is a contest over who will set

the rules in Asia, China or Japan. It is this larger question that absorbs the interests of both countries.

It's still a different situation from, say, Alsace-Lorraine; no one lives there after all.

Sure, no one wants to start a war over a stupid bunch of rocks. But history shows that strange things like that can happen.

What are your thoughts about the U.S. and its position in East Asia? What do you think is the appropriate role for the U.S. to play in Asia going forward?

I think the U.S. needs to adjust to growing Chinese power but needs to be mindful of existing commitments. The accommodation of Chinese power cannot come at the expense of traditional allies – Japan, Korea, etc. Doing that is going to be very difficult. In the case of Japan, the Japanese have actually provoked a lot of the problems that they're in right now, by the kind of nationalistic planes of revisionism that is going on there.

I am concerned by nationalist activities throughout East Asia. But as someone who taught Japanese studies for many years, I am disturbed especially by the purging of information about the Second World War from school history books and the shutting down of museums that provide an accurate narrative of what Japan did during the war. Japan is a sophisticated nation with a highly educated population. Such steps are just wrong.

There are definitely a lot of disturbing trends in Japan. The majority of the Japanese people do not support these actions, but there is a significant nationalistic right that has not accepted the outcome of the Second World War in the way that the Germans have.

You have grown up in the United States, but your family is from Japan. Does that impact your perspective?

My perspective on East Asia is completely American. I have no sympathy for the Japanese nationalists. The United States has an alliance commitment to Japan, but the position Japan has taken on many disputes with its neighbors has been self-defeating.

Coming back the U.S. role in East Asia, you suggest that the United States must engage China, and recognize its new status, but that there may also be some legitimate reasons for the United States to remain wary of China's intentions. What specifically must the United States do to create a stable security architecture in East Asia?

I feel that the U.S. needs to promote multilateralism in Asia and to consider multilateralism to be in its own long-term interests. The United States has certain advantages in its bilateral alliances. But the use of bilateral relations in Asia can also undermine American influence.

For example, China would like to deal with all ASEAN countries individually, through bilateral

exchanges. But can we solve the complex multilateral disputes over coral reefs in the Pacific by a series of bilateral discussions? I think we need to do so through ASEAN, other international bodies, or new institutions that we will build.

I made a proposal in Foreign Affairs about a decade ago for a multilateral structure related to diplomacy and security in which all countries, including China, can talk openly about defense budgets, confidence-building measures, and other topics and come to meaningful resolutions.

I have noticed that Koreans, whether politically conservative or liberal, are committed to a multilateral vision of the future. Unlike the United States or Japan, there is no conservative faction that wants to dismantle multilateralism and pursue national military power without regard for international opinion. Perhaps this is a result of Korea's position in multiple trade agreements that make its economy inherently multilateral.

I have noticed a strong interest in multilateral institutions in Korea. Such arrangements serve as a force-multiplier.

Let me close with a question about technology. How do you think evolving technologies (drones, cyberspace and other technologies with dual uses) are changing the nature of conflict and international relations, and what are the implications of those changes for East Asia?

I think you can see profound changes already in cyberspace. Already there are essentially no rules whatsoever. For example, if you hack into another country's computer system, whether the computer belongs to a corporation or to the military, does that constitute an act of war? Who counts as a representative of the government of a country in cyberspace?

We have no agreement about the remedy to growing cybercrime. In fact we do not even agree on what kinds of responses are acceptable. Even if you do know who committed the crime, experts do not agree on how serious it is. And numerous reports of hacking have tended to make the public somewhat skeptical.

I suspect that rules and regulations about online crimes are going to be harder to enforce simply because the technology is so rapidly changing and often it is hard to show there has even been a crime.

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Asia Institute Seminar with Ezra Vogel
September 29, 2015

Many are expressing great concern these days about the considerable rise in the tensions between China and Japan over the last ten years. Do you think that this rise in tensions was an inevitable course of events? Or are there steps that could have been taken to avoid this ratcheting up of tensions?

Conflicts between China and Japan are not inevitable. Unfortunately, leaders in both countries have chosen policies that have exacerbated tensions. After the Tiananmen incident and the debate about democratization in the 1980s, Chinese leaders were most concerned about what the attitudes of youth towards government would be. Would youth be loyal to the government or would they adopt a rebellious attitude.

But once they introduced patriotic education, then it was inevitable that historical issues, and a focus on World War II would become the primary lens through which Chinese perceived Japan. For their part, the Japanese have not done all they could have to make it absolutely clear for their neighbors, and for the world, that they have fundamentally rejected the attitudes and policies that led to World War II.

I think it's ridiculous to assume that changes in the policy for Japanese self-defense forces policy mean that Japan is going down the path of militarism. The entire situation is quite different than the 1930s and 1940s and there are many institutional barriers to the militarism of that era in place. There is much that Japan is doing, and could be doing, as a member of international efforts for peacekeeping and there is no need to be concerned about these contributions.

At the same time, for rather complicated reasons having to do with domestic politics, many Japanese leaders have not been as forthright as they should about Japan's position, especially with regards to the history of World War II. Perhaps they are thinking about the impression that young people have about

Japan and so they try to play down the mistakes of the past. But although building up confidence in Japan's past at home makes sense to them, it leaves them open to criticisms from Korea and China.

The relationship of Japan with its neighbors China and Korea is complicated. Although the emotions roiled up by the declarations of Abe Shinzo have created major rifts, we also find enormous cooperation, such as the China-Korea-Japan Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat. There are many conferences on technology, business and government in which we see cooperation between these three nations becoming increasingly routine. You would never guess as to this reality if you just read the newspapers.

The leader of any country must balance domestic political pressures with the realities of the international situation. A leader must help the citizens of his country think positively about their country and take pride in their work. This responsibility is a significant one and it is a natural one. In the case of Japan, there is a real feeling among many Japanese that they have been asked to apologize too many times. They see that other former colonial powers, including countries like Belgium, Great Britain, and even the United States with regards to the Philippines and Hawaii, have taken aggressive actions against other nations. But Japanese scratch their heads and wonder why it is just Japan that must apologize.

This feeling is widespread among many Japanese and Abe is reflecting that perspective as a politician. Although we may disagree about the long-term motivations behind those policies, it is a fact that the educational system, and the infrastructure, was significantly modernized in both Taiwan and Korea during the colonial period. From a Japanese perspective, the complexity of Japan's role is ignored and rather Japan is being treated unfairly.

The leader of Japan has to balance the need to respond to the domestic response to the complaints of China and Korea with the reality of international relations and international business. Japanese businessmen, and politicians, know that it is in the long-range interests of their countries to develop strong economic ties with their neighborhoods.

Abe Shinzo's grandfather, Kishi Nobusuke, was deeply involved in the development of Manchuria during the colonial period and Abe clearly feels a direct connection with that period. But as a politician he has sometimes underestimated the response to his actions. For example, he did not anticipate the outcry in China, Korea and the West regarding his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine during his first administration.

Abe is trying to balance his own personal sense of pride in Japan with the practical diplomatic and geopolitical issues that Japan faces, especially concerning the history issue. His recent moves show increasing sophistication and I think he is laying the groundwork for a significant improvement in the Japanese relations with Korea and China.

The consensus for an improvement in Japan's relations with its neighbors is strong. Some argue that it is rather in the perceived national interests of China to keep Japan on the defensive with regards to historical issues. Chinese leaders may be tempted to use the history of World War II to keep Japan on its toes, but at the same time we find that many Chinese see the significant advantages of meaningful engagement with Japan.

I have met many thoughtful Chinese, especially young people, who honestly embrace a vision of a peaceful, integrated Northeast Asia and are developing relationship with Japan and Korea. They are not hyped up on anti-Japanese propaganda, but are very committed to serious engagement.

China, Japan and Korea are immense economies with extremely complex political structures. It is hard to make any meaningful generalizations, although people do try.

But in the ideological discourse within China concerning the Second World War, there were either patriots or traitors. There was nothing possible in between. But the discourse on regional affairs in East Asia is growing increasingly sophisticated and we find many cosmopolitan people in China, Japan, and Korea who realize that these countries should work together, and advocate for collaboration. We have a generation of Chinese and Koreans who have had frequent occasions to visit Japan, collaborate with Japanese colleagues and see Japan on a daily basis.

They know that the descriptions of Japan that appear in the Chinese press are not accurate. They bring balance to debate on China's relations with Japan.

We find a complex mixture of responses in China. There are many cosmopolitan people in China who have a balanced view of contemporary affairs. They do not pay attention to the sensationalist reports about Japan in the mass media and maintain close ties with Japanese colleagues. They have a long-term view, but when the domestic political situation is such, they feel they must also step forward to offer their criticisms of Japan. But that does not mean all Chinese are swept over by emotions, or anger at Japan.

The question we need to think about is how the top leaders in each country can lead the big, complicated ships of state in an overall good direction. We cannot expect them to be miracle workers, and we cannot expect them to simply drop all patriotic rhetoric. Nonetheless, there are certain low-key steps they can taken that telegraph restraint to the other party. Personally, I think there are signs that we can expect some substantial progress in Sino-Japanese relations and that Abe will meet with Xi Jinping in one format or another.

In the case of the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of the "victory over Japan" do you think there is any format or approach that would have convinced a Japanese prime minister that it would be possible to attend?

I think there was a manner in which the event could have been carried out that would have made it possible for Abe to attend. But given the current mood in Beijing and Tokyo, and the inevitable domestic responses, it would be very awkward for any Japanese leader to attend at this moment. If I were in Abe's position, I would be very careful about what would be said concerning historical issues at any meeting I attend. That said, given the passage of time, it is entirely possible to put together a summit meeting between Abe and Xi that would be sufficiently balanced so as to avoid domestic criticism for both leaders.

Many Americans are drawn to China as the great rising power in the world economy. Even Donald Trump, as he attacks China, speaks in glowing terms about the business

opportunities available in China.

The dominant opinion in mainstream America, including Washington D.C. and much of the business community, is that we have to work with China.

China is a major power and China has shown consistently that it is possible to reach agreements, to work with them. The process will be complicated, no matter who is president. We are talking about the two largest economies and they, like other countries, have competitive urges. Some of the geopolitical issues are going to be extremely difficult to resolve.

In any country, the military has a responsibility to defend the country and to be prepared for conflict. That need will be there, no matter how good exchanges are, and we should not take the calculation of security issues by the military as an indication that close relations are impossible.

The question is HOW you find a way to work with the other country, not CAN you find a way. Given the depth of collaboration between the Chinese and Americans now in business, academics, student life, tourism, etc. we are already deeply intertwined. We need to preserve and build on those ties.

We are in a very different environment than that of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. There are those in the United States and in China who for financial reasons, political aspirations, or patriotic sentiment want to get tough with the other country.

There are plenty of people in the United States who feel some frustration with China, and often for legitimate reasons, but the news media picks up these threads and blows them up into garish stories that will attract viewers or readers. In my view, those who scream out in the media about China are not offering a meaningful policy for the United States. We certainly saw that sort of "bashing" of Japan in a previous age. Trade, finance, technology and security are complex issues that require a balanced, long-term, educated dialog.

And what do you make of Korea's current role in the world? Korea has become visible over the last ten years, but it still does not quite have the established reputation of other developed nations. What do you see Korea's role going forward in East Asia and in the world?

In fact, Korea has been very central to the geopolitical order in Northeast Asia for centuries. A number of interests in Asia come together in Korea because it is so centrally located and it is tied directly to the Japanese, the Chinese and the American economy. Historically, Chinese culture was introduced to Japan through Korea.

These days Koreans are assuming that their future will be influenced by a strong China. They are putting a lot of thought into how to position themselves relative to China: How can Korea develop closer ties appropriate to greater economic integration and at the same time maintain their independence? There are no simple answers and Koreans have wrestled with this problem for centuries. There have been Chinese, and Japanese, invasions by a variety of dynasties.

Obviously strong relations with Japan and the United States are essential to reduce the possibility that Korea will be swallowed up by the Chinese economy if China continues to expand. But although the

alliance with the United States is important to most Koreans, it is also true that the Chinese have been quite successful in enlisting Koreans in campaigns to criticize Japan for its actions in World War II.

The Koreans are very responsive to the criticisms of Japan and the history issue is increasingly dominant in politics, even as those with living memories fade away. The most prominent issue is that of the comfort women. The issue of comfort women and their experience has become a rallying call that evokes the entirety of the Japanese occupation after 1910. The suffering of Koreans during the Japanese occupation and because of forced labor in Japan during World War II have still have tremendous emotional significance despite the passage of time.

At the same time, we see good relations between Koreans and Japanese at many levels and the inflammatory statements of politicians on both sides obscures significant cooperation and cultural exchange. Many Koreans have extremely close Japanese friends and speak Japanese fluently. When Koreans actually visit Japan, they often have a pleasant experience and feel very much at home. So the depth of personal contacts between Koreans and Japanese is much greater than the newspaper headlines highlighting anti-Japanese sentiment convey.

How are China, Japan and Korea been described in American discussions of foreign policy in Washington D.C. or at Harvard?

One of the problems for the United States diplomacy is the logic of the election cycle. It's very difficult for the Obama administration to talk about long-term issues when Washington politics is focused on the next election. But Xi Jinping can talk about the next seven years. Overall, the members of the U.S. administration are pleased that Abe is making an effort to increase Japan's burdens for international security. There is a group of policymakers in Washington D.C. who are deeply concerned about broad national security issues, and they're pleased with what they see as a very forward-looking position on the part of the Abe administration. Overall Abe's visit to the United States was quite successful. U.S.-Japan relations are quite strong. There are many who hope that Park Geun-hye will take steps to assert that the U.S.-ROK relationship is strong.

In the case of Xi Jinping, there is a broad-based effort in Washington to find a way to work with China. This effort is complicated, however, by the manner in which China has behaved rather strongly at times. China's claims of the islands in the South China Sea are broadly perceived, even by those who support closer collaboration, as being excessive. So there is considerable concern about how Obama will behave during the summit meeting. In a sense, he will have to think very carefully about domestic politics because China, and its growing economic power, is increasingly a domestic issue.

What is your take on the recent economic downturn in China?

I think the downturn will take a little wind out of the sails for China. The Washington crowd is less impressed by Chinese economic power. But I think that the articles reporting China's demise are a bit premature. If you look at the Chinese stock market, it's so much higher than it was a year ago. And I think that perspective needs to be reflected in the media. Whatever the slowdown, the Chinese economy is increasingly powerful and that continuing trend is the most likely scenario. All the discussion about the collapse of the Chinese stock market is a tempest in a teapot and unlikely to be a long-term problem.

That said, China does face some serious challenges. From the aging population to the serious pollution of water, China will have to confront some difficult domestic issues over the next decade.

South Korea remains a strong ally of the United States and cooperation is quite good, but there is some nervousness in certain circles about warming relations between China and South Korea. President Park's recent visit to Beijing on the seventieth anniversary of the "victory over Japan" raised concerns, especially in light of close U.S. cooperation with Japan.

The long-term status of the Korean peninsula and the response to North Korea by the United States, Japan and South Korea are important topics that will continue to demand attention. Unfortunately, with only a year and a half left, Obama cannot do any long-term planning. But the future of the Korean Peninsula is extremely complex and will require much discussion between China, the United States, South Korea and Japan.

With the expanding conflict in the Middle East and the disagreements with Russia, I wonder how much time American policymakers can devote to long-term thinking about the Korean peninsula.

Inevitably it will only be a tiny group in Washington D.C. that has the expertise and the immediate concern to focus on the Korean Peninsula. Unfortunately, the experts are rarely those who have political power in Washington D.C. Nonetheless, there are some smart people who do think seriously about long-term issues and will have their chance to contribute to the debate.

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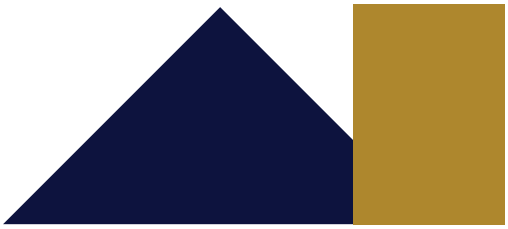

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