

# East Asia Security Framework: A Neo-liberal Institutional Perspective

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# Defining “East Asia”

- East Asia as a region
- Northeast Asia as a subregion
- Southeast Asia as a subregion
- Connecting Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia
  - Politics
  - Security
  - Economics
  - Society, culture

# Defining “Security”

- Fundamental security questions
  - Threats, threatened values, means of response, security agents and burden
- Traditional (military-focused) vs. nontraditional (non-military) security
- “National security” (state-centric) vs. “human security” (people-centric)
- Realist vs. liberalist theories

# Neo-liberal Institutionalism and National Security

- Classic realism
- Structural realism
- Neo-realism
- Neo-liberalism
- Neo-liberal institutionalism and national security
  - Overcoming the security dilemma through institutional constraints

# Case Study 1: Northeast Asia

- The Cold War Period: hegemonic stability theory, U.S.-centered “hub-and-spokes” alliance system vs. fractured Sino-Soviet alliance
- The Post-Cold War Period: end of ideological conflict, shift in national developmental strategy, economics-driven change in balance of power
- North Korea as an anomaly threatening regional peace and stability
- Six-Party Talks as a regional response

# Six-Party Talks

- Six-Party Talks as an institution
  - Focus on nuclear and missile development in the North
    - Deterrence and bargaining
  - North-South Korea dimension
    - Long-term goal or illusion?
  - Internal dynamics in the North
    - The military-first policy
    - Economic crisis
    - The political role of nuclear weapons and missiles
    - Succession from Kim Jong-il to Kim Jong-un
- Regional powers' interests
  - the United States, China, Russia, South Korea, Japan
- Global impact
  - Nonproliferation
  - Keeping global powers focused
- Prospects for permanent security institution
  - Addressing other security issues in Northeast Asia
  - Broader regional security concerns

# Case Study 2: Southeast Asia

- ASEAN: Institutionalization of Southeast Asia international relations
- ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a security institution for Southeast Asia
  - Intra-regional rationale and logic
    - Nation-building, state-building
    - Containment of intra-regional conflicts
  - Extra-regional rationale and logic
    - Balancing against big powers
    - Making ASEAN relevant to broader regional security concerns
- Prospects for an ASEAN-anchored East Asia security framework
  - Rising China and implications for regional security
  - China, Japan, US interests in the region



# Conclusions:

- Comparing Northeast and Southeast Asia
  - Insights from neo-liberal institutionalism
  - Northeast Asia
    - Big-power interests and rivalries constrain the effectiveness of the Six-Party Talks in dealing with the North
    - Absence of a common strategic vision among the big-powers beyond the North Korean problem limits the prospects for a permanent security institution
  - Southeast Asia
    - ARF has worked well to contain intra-regional conflicts and to deny dominance by extra-regional big powers
    - ASEAN countries' security concerns and those of extra-regional powers do not necessarily coincide and this limits the prospects of an ASEAN-anchored security framework for the whole East Asian region.

# Conclusions:

- A Common Institutional Framework for Northeast and Southeast Asia?
- In the foreseeable future, the further strengthening of security institutions in the region would require a careful, selective coordination between ASEAN-driven security agenda and broader East Asian security agendas.
- In the longer term, the currently state-centric security discourse needs to be replaced by a more people-centric security discourse. This in turn requires development of robust civil society in both Northeast and Southeast Asia. Civil society actors can then form transnational networks and place non-traditional security (including human security) issues that are common to the entire region on the regional security agenda, to be addressed by both state and non-state actors.
- In short, the realities on the ground need to change and render neo-liberal institutionalism more relevant.